

## INFLUENCE OF JAINISM IN RAJASTHAN

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## ABSTRACT

Rajasthan is not just a land of heroes rather it is a land of religions which reflect the ages old culture. The harmony of power and devotion is the basic cultural features of this region. On the ground of liberal humanism, all the religions like Vedic, Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, Jainism and Islam have been flourishing in a harmonious stream preserving their own characteristics. Jainism however attained substantial development in Rajasthan since ancient times.

**KEYWORDS :** Jainism in Rajasthan, Anuvrat Movement, Bhakti movement, Samvat Shikhar Sanctity Movement

## INTRODUCTION

Jainism has influenced various dynasties and several castes of North and South India since ancient times. As a result of its cultural qualities and characteristics, it has preserved its influence in the country in an uninterrupted stream till date, on the grass root and royal road of which it has prevailed in the life of the people of this country for the last three to four thousand years, they are - its spiritual role, moral ideal and practical utility and balance.

Jain literature, art and architecture of Rajasthan have some indigenous characteristics of its own; together there has been an important contribution of all the people of the society in the development and spread of Jainism in Rajasthan. Various Jain acharyas, saints and shravakas had a close relationship not only with the general public but also with the kings and emperors of this land. Influential Jain shravakas numbered in the hundreds on various high positions persons such as pradhan, diwan, senapati, adviser and kiledar all have contributed a lot in the development and spread of Jainism in Rajasthan.

## Jainism In Rajasthan

Jainism has been dominant in Rajasthan from the very beginning. In some parts of Rajasthan, during the lifetime of Lord Mahavira, the knowledge of propagation and spread of Jainism comes from later Jain literature. It is known from a record of 1276 AD of Bhinmal that Lord Mahavir himself had come to Shrimal Nagar. The most concrete proof of the spread of Jainism in Rajasthan is considered to be the Badli inscription of the 5th century BC.

In the Maurya era, Chandragupta made many efforts for the spread of Jainism. King Samprati, the grandson of Ashoka, contributed significantly to the up gradation and development of Jainism. Mound of Mathura built in the second century of Vikram era has found ruins of very ancient stupas and Jain temples, from which it is known that Jainism existed in Rajasthan at that time.

From the remains of a Gupta period, Jain temple at Keshoraipatan, the Khadgasan statue of Lord Rishabdev found at Basantgarh in Sirohi region, the Mahavir temple inscription at Osian in Jodhpur region, the nearby Jain caves of Kota, the Parshvanath temple of Ayad near Udaipur and Jaisalmer proves that Jainism was not only propagated in Rajasthan, but it also had a good influence in all these areas.

In Kumarpal's time Jainism was specially promoted according to the inspiration of Hemchandra. The Jain temples of Abu, which are world famous for its architecture, were built during this period. The Jain temple of Ranakpur built in the 15th century is also grand and worth visiting.

The temples of Jaipur regional Shri Mahavirji and Udaipur regional Shri Kesarianathji have contributed significantly to

the influence of Jainism. These places of pilgrimage have become centres of reverence for all religions and classes.

## Contribution Of Jain Institutions

Jain institutions have contributed significantly in the development and spread of Jainism in Rajasthan. Jain authors of Rajasthan have given important information about the history and culture of Rajasthan in various texts of Jain literature written in Prakrit, Apbhransha, Rajasthani and Sanskrit. They promoted and spread patriotism, morality, and cultural awareness among the public. In Rajasthan, Nagaur, Chittor, Bikaner, Ajmer, Jaisalmer, Jaipur etc. have established literary forts in the form of book stores for the protection of Rajasthani literature and culture.

The contribution of Jain acharyas, sages, yatis, saints and scholars are especially remarkable in terms of protection and collection of texts in temples and upasaras. Compositions of many subjects like Kavya, Katha, Charit, Champu, Kosh, Memoirs, Translation, History, Famous Grammar, Verses, Alankar etc. are available here. Hundreds of compositions rendering religion and philosophy and moral ideals have been written. Jain writers of Rajasthan have been continuously creating literature in Hindi (Khari Boli) language as well. Due to the feeling of social reform, nationalism, modernisation being specially associated with the development of Hindi, the text and craft of Hindi Jain literature was also influenced by it. Noticeably Jain poetry in Rajasthani dialects has a perfection of literary grammar at the time when Khadi Boli. Hindi could not produce a single poetry in itself.

Jains have also contributed a lot in the preservation of folk literature in Rajasthan. By composing Pavade, Fagu, Charchari, Veli, Raas, Baramasa, Hiyali they developed and preserved these rich genres of folk life and saved this heritage from extinction. Vidyavilas Pavada of Hirachandsuri, respected Guru of Maharana Kumbha, is considered to be the first poem in Rajasthani related to folklore. The lives of many influential Jain saints and sadhvis of Digambara and Svetambara society have been inspirational.

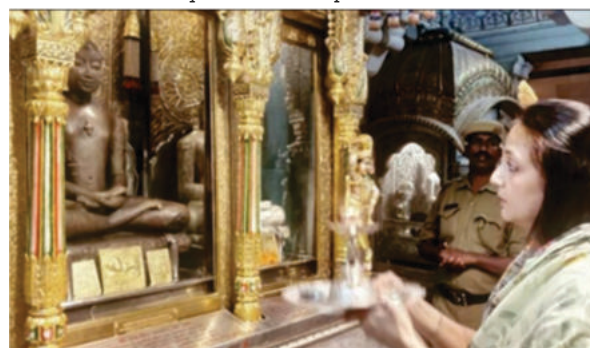


Figure 1: Digambar Jain Atishay Kshetra Shri Mahaveer Ji. Karauli (Rajasthan)

### Jain Temples In Rajasthan

Jain temples are considered to be central to India's culture due to their excellent architecture, craftsmanship, opulence and prosperity, their inner atmosphere that awakens calm and sacred feelings, protection of scriptures, etc. and the centre of meditation. They hold a unique place in history. The Jain temples of Rajasthan are a symbol of the flourishing, glory of Jain culture and the worship, charity, grandeur etc. of the Jain followers. Jain rulers, vaishyas, mahamatyas, amatyas, ministers dandanayaks have given special cooperation in the all-round development and construction of Rajasthan in the field of governance and political field, literature, craft, architecture and art. During the time of Maharana Kumbha, there has been good progress in language, literature, art and music in Rajasthan. The contribution made by the Jain society with body, mind and wealth during the freedom movement is memorable in history.

### Social Contribution Of Jainism

Jains have played an important role in the social, religious, educational, political and economic trends of the new construction of Rajasthan after independence. People are given as much help as possible by various philanthropic organisations and trusts. Along with practical education, many Jain educational institutions, Swadhyaya Mandals and hostels are working for moral education. In the direction of the improvement of public health, many hospitals and dispensaries have been opened in different areas where medical facilities are provided to the patients free of cost and at subsidised rates.

Jain monks and nuns do not travel on foot during the four months of the rainy season. In this period, various programs of spiritual awakening are made especially through various types of worship like Tapa, Tyag, Pratyakhayan, Sangha-Yatra, Pilgrimage, Muni-Darshan, Upvas, Ayambil, Masakhamana, Samvatsari, Kshamaparva. This makes personal life clean, healthy and generous and in social life, feelings like brotherhood, friendship and affection increase.

The Bhakti movement which was explored in entire India had a magnificent and thumping contribution of Jainism in Rajasthan. 17<sup>th</sup> century appeared with the discovery and 'Pran Prathistha' of Lord Mahavira in Shri Mahavir ji in Karauli Rajasthan. This temple nourished and flourishes as an institution improvising Jain philosophical influence, rectifying social evils of medieval times and working for the upliftment of economy as a religious tourist pilgrimage centre.

Jainism has often been pointed as a role model for its admirably eco-friendly example. Incorporating some of this eco-friendliness into its design for ethical vow taking, the Jain-inspired Anuvrat Movement, founded in 1949 by Acharya Sri Tulsi today offers some arguably vital relevance for the urgent modern tasks to live eco-consciously. Mahatma Gandhi was deeply influenced by Jain tenets such as peaceful, protective living and honesty and made them an integral part of his own life. With the dawn of 2023 the Samvat Shikhar Sanctity Movement rejuvenated the Jain iconography of eco sanctity. As the political decision to convert this sacred place into a tourist destination was firmly opposed by Jain community globally in order to prevent this sacred place from all heinous practices of modern tourism. It is identified and confirmed from this evaluation and assessment that Jainism not only increased the cultural dignity of Rajasthan but also left a glorious, indelible, auspicious and memorable impression on the colourful cultural history of the whole of India.

### Findings

1. Rajasthan has a growth in its past for the Jain philosophers and spiritual preachers at par excellence.
2. Medieval architecture which imparted new characteristics was illustrated and cherished by Jain school of art in

Rajasthan also.

3. Jain social voluntaries in the pre and post-independence period have been giving there social welfare services constantly.
4. The royal dignitaries of war trodden Rajasthan remarkably adhered and nurtured the expansion of Jainism.
5. Jain institutions like temples and Upasaras proved to be literary arbiters and conservators of various classical languages as well as local dialects.

### CONCLUSION

This paper throws light on the various aspects of the society and culture in Rajasthan. The Jain religion represents the most ancient religion which was called by various names such as Aryas, Vratyas, Shraman, Nirgranthas etc. Although Jainism forms a relatively very small sect in India, but has its roots in the pre-historic past (antiquity) while it is fully alive today. It is remarkable that the vision of Jainism has been on the multi-faceted development of Rajasthan. It has not only considered the material success of human life but also emphasises on the meaning and self-purification.

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