

# SCOPE OF RESEARCH IN JAIN STUDIES

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A man by nature has been a seeker, an inquirer, an investigator, an examiner and a scrutiniser. This is the background of research, inquiry, investigation, inquest, exploration, trial and analysis. The Vedic Aryans were mystified to see the natural phenomena around them and started their query : What are these stars and planets in the sky ? How this earth and sky are joined together ? How these variegated cows by eating green grass supply us white milk ? How this vast universe came into being? From existence? Or from non-existence ? It was a period of original research.

In European countries much emphasis is laid on research. In universities and Research Institutes numerous scientists and research scholars are occupied in carrying out their research work. In Germany, for instance, full six years or twelve semesters are assigned for Fundamental Research. In carrying out a research project, first of all, we have to speculate and ponder over the problem, i.e. what is the problem we are going to handle. This stage of speculation has nothing to do much with the proper subject of research. Further, we have to pass through various stage in course of our research work. First, there is observation, we contemplate and take cognizance of the subject. It is called darsana or perception in Indian philosophy. Then comes the study of the problem, i.e. what is our problem which we are going to study and what are the main issues which we are going to discuss and the puzzling questions which need a solution. After going deep into the problem comes the stage of intellectual thinking. This is a long process of research which continues from beginning till end. This process is essential for the constant development of the research is not difficult, nor complicated but very easy, simple and at the same time practical. We go to buy vegetables in the market. We visit certain shops, inquire about the price, examine the stuff and ultimately pay the price and purchase it. It was a part of our research but the whole process was so quick that we could not differentiate the various stage we have passed through. We come across aeroplanes, motor-cars, bullock-carts and other moving vehicles. Here we observe a wheel a solid rigid circular ring connected by spokes to a centre part of a wheel. It is

designed to turn around an axle passed through the centre. Its turning around produces force that provides energy, movement or direction. We have a spinning wheel, a water wheel and so on. It takes us to a potter's wheel, a device composed of a revolving, treadleoperated horizontal disk upon which potter's clay is modelled for making pottery. This was a very useful substantial research in the life of a primitive man for which he had to apply his brain. Take another instance; we come across electric machines, an atom bomb, a furnace and so on. We try to think deeper and reach the root of such performances. We find that the fire-cult played an important role in the life, of the ancient Indians. As the fire was a necessity for life, they used to generate it with the primitive manner of fire-drill. It consists of two friction-sticks (arani) of which the one is a small board the others a pointed stick which is turned round in the small board until a flame comes out. This fire-producing implement is still popular among the tribal people. When the fire was generated the ancient Indians used to shout with joy while reciting hymns in praise of the fire. This was another useful research in the life of a human being.

A researcher has to be pitilessly just to truth and not consider anything of value except truth. He develops an objective attitude in place of the subjective one, pertaining to an individual element in one's own experience. He has to accept hard and straight thinking and avoid soft or emotional or sensational thinking. A true research must prove logically derived conclusions and not defend at all costs pious wishes and pleasing imaginings. He should try to announce what is true, never mind whether it pleases or irritates. Haribhadrāsuri, a prominent Jain scholar has stated: "The reasoning of a man of obstinate inclination follows his intellect, whereas the intellect of the one who does not side with partiality follows his reasoning." आग्रहीबत निनीषति युक्तिं, तत्र, यत्र मतिरस्य निविष्टा । पक्षपातरहितस्तु युक्ति, यत्रि, तत्र मतिरेति निवेशं ॥ Foreign scholars, particularly the Germany, have made a substantial contribution towards Jainism and Prakrit studies. The readers might be aware that about a century ago from now, F.M. Maxmuller (1823-1900), a professor of Comparative Religion in the Oxford University, was a General Editor of the



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Sacred Books of the East Series (S.B.E.), comprising 40 volumes, out of which 31 contained the translation of important Indian texts. Maxmueller was invited to deliver a series of cambridge lectures in England to young English men who were recruited for the Indian Civil Service and had to work in India in the British administrative service. These young men, ignorant of Indian culture, did not like Indians and called them natives as an indication of disrespect. Native is a man 'who is considered as not amenable to the recognised principles of self-respect, uprightness and veracity'. Professor Maxmueller, in order to emphasise the richness of Indian culture, delivered these lectures, which later were published under the Title "India What It can Teach Us." He exhorted these young men saying: "If I were to search the world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow in some parts a very paradise on the earth I should point out to India."

Soon the interest developed in Germany about the study of Indian studies and as a result the chairs of Indology were established in Bonn, Tuebingen, Gottingen, Muenschen and Hambrug. Hermann Jacobi (1850-1973), a pupil of A. Weber (1825-1901), was a distinguished German scholar and a pioneer in the field of Jain and Prakrit studies, who for the first time established that Jainism was not only an independent of Buddhism but even older. He was only 23 when he made a trip to India in search of Jain manuscripts. Subsequently he translated some of the important Jain Sutras under XXII and XLV volumes in the Sacred Books of the East Series. His another monumental work was "Ausgewaehlte Erzaehlungen in Maharashtra" (Selected Stories in Maharashtra) which was published in 1886. The important work on Prakrit studies was dedicated by him to his revered, guru Weber. Jacobi was conferred an honorary title of 'Jain Darshan Divakar' (The Sun of Jain Learning) in a Jain Conference held at Ahmedabad. In order to satisfy his queries about his studies he had a correspondence with Muni Shri VijayaDharmasuri. Jacobi gained so much popularity in his own country that his Bronze Placket, designed by an Italian artist, was hung with pride in the houses of scholars of Indology. This memorable Placket is still preserved in the Department of Indology of the University of Kiel where he had worked as a professor.

Richard Pischel (1849-1908) had specialised in Prakrit Studies. He wrote his monumental work "Grammatik der Prakrit-Sprachen" (Grammar of Prakrit Languages) in 1874. As much of the Prakrit literature

was not available in print, Pischel had to work hard in reading the hand written manuscripts. This work has been translated into English and Hindi. Pischel also worked in the university of Kiel for a number of years. He was invited to deliver a series of lectures on Prakrit grammar and literature in the Calcutta University. He had already reached Madras but unfortunately he developed ear trouble and died. Among other Jain scholars of genius, mention may be made of E. Leumann (1859-1931), W. Schubring, Johannes Hertel, Helmuth von Glasenapp, L. Alsdorf, K. Bruhn et al. Some of them could not get an opportunity to visit India, the land of their dream, still they devoted themselves to the study of Indology and left their mark in the world of scholars.

During the tenure in the University of Kiel in 1970-74, as a research scholar and a teacher, the present author got an opportunity to meet some of them and observe their methodology of research. Generally they carry their research work independently without any team as such. They are provided with all kinds of research facilities and an upto date library; most of them have their own library too.

Alsdorf, who recently died, was a distinguished scholar of Jainism. After the death of his guru Schubring, he occupied the Chair of Indology in the university of Hamburg. He visited India several times when he made an extensive tour of important places, including Jaisalmer, Patan, Ahmedabad, Kolhapur, Belur et al. He came into contact with Muni Shri Punyavijaya Maharaj, a renowned scholar of Jain Agamas. He presented Alsdorf a copy of the Vasudevahindi by Sanghadasagani Vacaka, published in 1930-31. Alsdorf was so much fascinated by this work that he read a scholarly paper entitled 'Eine neue Version der Verlorenen Brhatkatha des Gunadhya' (A New Version of the Lost Brhatkatha of Gunadhya) in the International Oriental Congress held in Rome in 1938. Later on the present author wrote his work titled "The Vasudevahindi--An Authentic Jain Version of the Brhatkatha" during his tenure in the university of Kiel, which has been published by the L. D. Institute of Indology, Ahmedabad in 1977.

There is a vast scope of research in Jain Studies and Prakrit.

We have to work hard to point out under what conditions and situations the universal principle of Ahimsa was made a grit of the teachings of Mahavira and how can this principle successfully be implemented to maintain peace and harmony in this world heading towards confrontation.