

## Revisiting Jaina School of Economic Thought for Modern Problems

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### Abstract

Mahavira, the 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara of Jainism has greatly influenced the world with his humanitarian teachings. Today, modern men are facing large number of problems and despite consistent efforts by social scientists, these problems are rising with each passing day. This paper attempts to highlight the reason of failure of modern economic ideas by comparing it with economics and political ideas of Mahavira and how these issues can be redressed by revisiting 2600 years old wisdom as shown by reputed scholar of Jain literature, Acharya Mahapragya. This research paper is an attempt to briefly present less talked Jain ideas of an ideal economic and political system that can take us to “The new normal”.

### Keywords

Minimalism, Relativism, Ethics, Co-operation, Community

### JEL Classification

A12, Z120, A130, D64

### Introduction

Economics is a science that deals with welfare of the mankind and has existed as discipline since ancient times. Modern Economics have too many schools of thoughts providing different insights to solve contemporary economic problems but despite having too many approaches and vast literature available in this field, modern men are being victimized with more and more problems with each passing day, this paper attempts to identify the core cause of woes of modern men and providing some practical solutions to address these problems as per ancient Jain wisdom as provided by realist thinkers like Mahavira and other great Jain scholars in different time periods and presented before the world by a great sage Acharya Tulsi and Mahapragya. Mahapragya was an erudite scholar of Indian & western philosophy, a facilitator of science & spiritualism and a great spiritual leader. He got designated as the "Second Vivekananda of India", wrote more than 150 books on diverse subjects. He tried to find solution to modern problems by reading and analyzing economic theories by several economists but he never rejected someone's conviction as he argued that one's view can be correct from one's standpoint but can't be certainly acceptable from other's viewpoint and thus, he believed respective viewpoints, whether contradictory or complementary must be taken altogether to comprehend the truth and reach the conclusion about the 'State of Bliss'. So Mahapragya certainly combined relative viewpoints by applying Mahavira's principle to establish 'Samanvaya' between them and led to the formal re-establishment of less-talked Jain school of Economic thought highlighting real meaning of prosperity as deciphered by realist thinkers like Mahavira and ways to achieve it.

His ideas of “Relative Economics” centered around a few virtuous tenets and this research paper focuses on highlighting these tenets and their wide application in solving modern day problems. It endeavors to cite economic arguments in favor of ideas given by Acharya Mahapragya in his works. His proposition centered around three core tenets of Jain Philosophy- Non-violence (Ahimsa), Minimalism (Aparigraha) and Relativism (Anekanta). These three form the very foundational aspects of an ideal economy. Economy as per Mahavira is not a zero-sum game as modern economists have made it, neither it can get depicted via mathematical models. Rather Mahavira being a realist thinker attempted to identify complex realities of modern world that crude economic models fail to present, he then presented the solutions. It is interesting to see how this trinity gradually changes the

world into a better place to live in by analyzing empirical evidences and implications of not adhering to these principles as we are witnessing today in this multipolar world. Such ideas may seem to be obsolete and crude at an instance but no one can argue that such ideals must not be taken into account while making economic policies for any nation but attempts by social scientists to incorporate these significant factors determining social and individual welfare are often rejected as being utopian, but deep study reveals that these have more impact on welfare than factors, modern economics takes into consideration. Of late, there have been scattered attempts by renowned scholars to incorporate these factors and they got desired results but such works remain dispersed, this paper tries to integrate all such factors altogether by combing relative standpoints to arrive at holistic ideas about human welfare.

### Literature Review

Ancient texts like (Hemchandra) and (Supriya, 2010) highlights economic and political system as set up by illustrated persons like Tirthankars, Chakravartis etc. (Sutra, 1957) is one of the 11 most important canonical scriptures of Jainism that gives biographical sketch of 10 great male devotees of Lord Mahavira who were renowned and wealthiest merchants of their times. They never became subservient to material resources instead gradually controlled their endless desires and preferred living an austere life and helping others with resources they had, this text is also important as it highlights the ancient way as suggested by Mahavira in the form of 12 vows of a Householder, also vividly described in other texts like (Umaswati, 2016). Though contributions made by Mahavira and his disciples are vividly described in many books like (Gyanchandra) but Mahavira's economic ideas are often less-discussed. (Mahpragya, 2008) and (Mittal) are two such great works devoted specifically to this particular field. After E F Schumacher published his book. (Schumacher, 1993) brought a path-breaking reform in the field of dehumanized economics as it underscored Buddhist ideas on Economics. (Jain) and (Ashok) too contributed significantly in this direction by drawing parallel between Mahavira's preaching of Ahimsa and economic and social well-being. In 21<sup>st</sup> century another most significant contribution made were (Shah D. A., 2017) and (Shah P. A., 2022) by Dr Atul K Shah from London School of Economics by bringing in limelight importance of Mahavira's Aparigraha in the field of Business and Finance.

### Foundational Issues

Economics has existed since the time of ancient civilizations and evolved consistently as any other science to serve human needs but eventually it failed to serve its purpose. Rig Vedas, Arthashastra were compiled before the birth of Adam Smith. Similarly, there were many Jain, Islamic and Buddhist texts that were composed explicitly or implicitly dealing in the sphere of economic and political life of community like 'Nitivakyamrutam' by Jain Acharya Somdevsurijietc. It is clear that Economics was created by men to ease his life on this planet but problems persist; income disparities are getting wider, environmental degradation is consistently rising, wildlife population has plummeted by more than 2/3 in past 5 decades. It is hereby argued if gravity of problems is compounding with each passing day, what solutions have been provided by Economics? Have solutions failed? Were these solutions proven to be short-lived as pioneers of modern economics like J M Keynes articulated "In Long run, we are all dead?" it can also be seen from "History of Economic Analysis" by Joseph Schumpeter who is considered as 'the most influential economist of 21<sup>st</sup> century' that in post-war scenario, Classical School of thought failed and John M Keynes provided the remedy but soon his theory became inefficient, soon other schools got developed but they too failed. This shows Economists have failed to provide a sustainable solution. Such criticism of present has been done by several great scholars of their time like Fukuyama in his article in 'Foreign Affairs Magazine' called for a serious intellectual debate in this domain. Acharya Mahpragya identified loopholes in the foundation of subject matter of economics that make it ineffective when it comes to providing full-proof solutions.

Adams Smith in his famous book ‘An inquiry into the nature and cause of wealth of nations’ defined Economics as “A science which inquiries into the nature and causes of wealth of nations” which clearly points towards material wealth which can never be sole determinant of prosperity. In another book ‘Theory of moral sentiments’ he presented the importance of morality and thus remarked “How many people ruin themselves by laying out money on trinkets of frivolous utility”. Despite knowing the importance of Morality, he never tried to highlight it in sphere of economics and it is here economics has got its foundational definition devoid of morals and ethics. Alfred Marshall presented another definition “Economics is the study of mankind in the ordinary business of life; it examines the part of individual and social action which is closely connected with the attainment and the usage of material requisites of well-being” but taking present scenario into account Has economics ensured that everyone material pleasure? Was it able to ensure minimum basic needs to each human? Lionel Charles Robbins said “Economics is the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses” but he himself made a contradictory statement “Humans want what they can’t have”. If Robbins knew peculiarity of human behavior, then how studying this behavior can help to redress all our present woes? If according to him, human behavior is so unrealistic, how will studying such behavior help us to reach practical and feasible solution? Samuelson who was another great economist of his time remarked “Economics is the study how men and society choose with or without the use of money, to employ scarce productive resources which have alternatives uses, to produce various commodities over time and distribute them for consumption now and for future among various people and groups of society. It analyses the cost and benefits of improving pattern of resource allocation” but a fundamental question that arises here is that Do scarcity of needed resources actually exist or it is human wants that make them vulnerable and soon extinct? Do men only need commodities to live happily? Jacob Viner has rightly pointed out “Economics is what an economists do” and this is due to the fact that each economist propounded his theory, identified loopholes of economic theories of prior scholars and presented how his theory provides remedy to existing issue but soon positive effects vanished then another economist came up with something new and this vicious cycle continues.

Another grave issue with modern economic theories is that it is overlooking fundamental truth of this universe that every living being is dependent on each other for their survival as highlighted by Acharya Umaswati in “Tattvartha Sutra”. So, while studying Market outcome, we are taking into consideration only two sides: Demand and Supply. Looking at hinder side, one shall realize there are many stakeholders which are being excluded while studying market outcomes owing to the narrow definition of ‘Economic Agents’ adopted by our modern economists that just includes consumer, producer, government etc. and overlooks other important parties. Take example of a factory where any commodity is being manufactured, while studying equilibrium we try to ascertain surplus obtained by producers and consumers but what about all those who got affected by its production in terms of emitted pollution, their unfulfilled demand and other reasons like poor people living near that Factory. This planet belongs to every living being, then why those who are not bearing any costs explicitly are being ignored? if someone argues concept of ‘Externality’ has been developed by economists to account such implicit costs then he/she must ponder is this concept sufficient to take into account such costs and even if you are accounting for the costs being borne by those remain outside the economic exchanges, is there any mode being developed to compensate them for the loss they had borne? Do creators of externality actually compensate the victims in real world?

“One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, water, fire and vegetation disregards his own existence which is entwined with them” but modern Theory of Consumption, Production and Distribution deals only in quantifiable outcomes and pay no heed to qualitative aspects despite claiming that ends always are welfare of humans but do concepts like Consumer surplus and Producer surplus as taught in almost all institutions today really depicts welfare? Moreover, Lord Mahavira in ‘Samayvayang Sutra’ clearly stated

“Ege Aaya” showing the world that every living creature is same, so considering Human as sole proprietor of natural endowments is wrong as everything, we obtain from earth is a result of sacrifice by another worthy creature, then why we are omitting other living creatures in the study of economics? Many economists tried to incorporate qualitative variables in existing economic models and also accounted factors like indiscriminate degradation of environment that happens due to men’s selfishness. Noble laureates started presenting theories like “Doughnut Economics” through which they changed present perceptions in our society and highlighted the needs of environmental conservation but these versions together with newly propounded economic models can’t provide a substantial remedy as these have not attempted to identify the real problem, the problem world is facing is not indiscriminate depletion in quantity and quality of resources as it is a consequence of real problem being faced today, the real issue is unending and unrealistic wants of humans and this is what needs to be addressed now but modern economic is attempting to get demand fulfilled and thus ends up making situation gruesome. So instead of framing Circular or Regenerative economy to cater to reckless demands of present generation, we must realize and make others too that it is our reckless desires which causes all these problems not only methods being implemented to get these desires fulfilled. Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate remarked “...modern growth theory is concerned with rather esoteric issues. Its link with public policy is very often remote. It is as if a poor man collected money for his food and blew it all on alcohol”.

Mahavira was a visionary person having pluralist outlook to analyze the world around he never overlooked the necessity of material resources for any human but the very same time, he remarked “Ichha Hu Agasasama Anantaya” desires are endless just like the sky so preached his followers usage of resources judiciously so not to become submissive to materialistic pleasure from which today’s generation is suffering. It can be concluded here that though both ‘Theory of Consumer choice’ as developed by modern economists and theories propounded by Lord Mahavira talks about “Point of Saturation” and “Point of Bliss” but later is more practical as it considers holistic view about needs of the individual rather than studying only material desires and framing conclusion accordingly. Mahavira being a realist philosopher even attempted to identify 22 parishahas pertaining to the enduring of hardships while an individual attempt to be in the state of serenity (In other words, these are problems that obstructs the path of an individual trying to attain tranquility in his life). The 22 Parishahas mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of “Uttradhyan Sutra” are Hunger, thirst, cold, heat, insect bites, lack of clothing, dirt, refusal, abuse, bruises, begging, erotic, praise, faith-loss, depression, pride, lack of good beddings, anger, honor diseases and fear. Using jargons of economics, we can say that these 22 factors are the causes of Consumer Disequilibrium. When someone asked Lord Mahavira about King Shrenik and Puniya Shrivak. He placed Puniya above Shrenik despite knowing that economically Puniya can’t afford to live luxurious life like King of Magadha in palatial buildings full of wealth and servants and led an austere life without pompousness but with contentment. It was in later stage that one realizes that proposition by Mahavira was not wrong as the king of Magadha was sentenced to jail by his own son for the wealth he owned while Puniya lived and died peacefully. This also shows that modern theory of consumer choice clearly prescribes Consumption of good as necessary and sufficient condition to gain utility but Mahavira broadened the concept of utility by preaching Consumption of commodities is neither necessary nor sufficient condition to gain utility though consumption is integral for living beings but consumption of goods can’t be a sole determinant of one’s well-being.

### **Virtuous Economics of Mahavira**

*“Dhammo Mangal Mukithamm, Ahinsa Sanjamo Tavo  
Deva Vi Tam Nammam Santi, Jass Dhamme Sayamano”*

“These lines are from ‘Dashvekalik Sutra’ written by Acharya Swayanbahav and is one of the most revered sacred scriptures of Jainism. These lines offer a vivid description of ‘Dharma’ that should be established so to promote prosperity and happiness of all. ‘Dharma’ in the

above lines should not be misunderstood with sects, it stands here for virtues that lie high above sectarian beliefs. These lines envisage that Dharma is auspicious and the characteristics of Dharma are Non-violence, Self-control and sacrifice and even demigods bow down before propitious dharma symbolizing prosperity of all kinds lie where such Dharma exist. These lines actually conceptualize an ideal economic system. One can be confused at this that what these two lines have to say about an ideal nation, the needed explanation is given below.

Everyone wants peaceful life; violence can be a temporary solution to a problem but no one wants to live with violence as today all states proclaim maintaining harmony is duty of both Government and citizens. When one needs self-control? It is needed when one has plentiful options available before as it is only then one can exercise self-control to make judicious choice. Fundamental rights in our constitution clearly prescribe state must not infringe once individuality, so it implies state must endeavor to provide options to plebeians so they can exercise self-control but with this state must also try to guide them in right direction so to help them being enslaved by terrible desires and last but not the least it is people who creates state for their welfare so whenever needed they must come forward to make small or big sacrifices for other humans as Article IV of our constitution states. Just think if these virtues got embedded in social fabric of any country that nation would be no lesser than heaven on the earth. An ideal economics as per Mahavira shall be the one driven by Non-violence, Minimalism, co-operation and Ethics as it is only by using these as means, ends shall be favorable. All modern problems like Soaring corruption, Inflation, crime rates, poverty, environmental damage etc. can be easily solved if these virtues get due place while framing economic models and taking decisions.

### **Minimalism in Economics**

Minimalism (Aparigraha) is subject with wide application in different aspects of life. It must not be misunderstood as a doctrine of “No Spending” instead must be analyzed with holistic outlook, so to comprehend its practicality in individual and social life. It basically refers to an ethical practice inculcated by someone willing that make him refrain from wasting his resources on fulfilment of futile materialistic desires and directing these towards higher pursuits. It’s implications of economic system must not only be taken at gross value but a cross-sectional analysis must be done taking into consideration its social, ecological, individual, political and other aspects. It helps in nourishing any economic system by raising humanitarian values like trust, compassion etc. It helps an individual to become master of material wealth he possesses instead of getting enslaved by material pleasure.

In Bastiat’s tale, a boy broke someone’s window and town people praised him as if he had some community service as expenditure shall be made to repair the broken glass and this shall generate a cycle of increased expenditure which shall stimulate economy as suggested by the Keynesian multiplier but results didn’t match predictions. ‘Broken Window Fallacy’ suggests that it is unrealistic to expect rise in economic output due to a broken window as amount spent on repairing is basically being redirected from some other cause. Similarly, economists used to argue that war boosts an economy but it was realized at later stages at war redirects expenditure on consumer goods to warfare goods and thus results in terrific losses. Now proponents of notion that Minimalism hurts economy in Short-run must understand that Mahavira clearly prescribed a good layman must not waste his resources on unending desires as he shall fell prey before materialistic desires but he also mentioned 9 Puniya that one can gain from good deeds like giving food, clothes, water, space, free services, helping one to sleep, having good talks and wishing good for someone. It is clear hereby that a minimalist just redirects his resources from fulfilling his futile materialistic desires to helping needy and strengthening social fiber of his nation.

Puniya Shrivak and his wife were great devotees of Lord Mahavira and had accepted 12 vows of being ideal Shrivak and Shrivika. They lived pleasurable life despite depravity of resources. They had a vow to feed a layman each day so to do so one of them fasted each day to feed the third person. This clearly shows resources are not at all scarce, it is us who have made our wants unlimited so to get them fulfilled. Prof. J K Mehta, who got praised by Joan

Robinson for his independent discovery of concept of Marginal revenue propounded the “Theory of want lessness” that defines economics “as a science which studies human behavior as a means to the end of want lessness”. Dr Atul K Shah from London School of Economics recently published his interesting book that highlights importance of Aparigraha in the field of economics.

“Consumption is sole end and purpose of all production” said Smith while another renowned classical economist John Say remarked “Supply creates its own demand” this clearly shows that these economists themselves were unaware of repercussion of satisfying unending desires, consumption can never be sole determinant of one’s well-being thus, instead of making futile efforts to satisfy reckless desires, this is high time to make people aware of negatives of becoming servant of materialistic desires. In “Freakonomics” Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner presented an excellent example to show how men in post-modernist world has been victimized by Consumerism, they wrote it was after the advent of Mouthwash in market, ‘Bad breath’ became a socially awkward situation, there can be many such real-life examples that can be cited to show how modern lifestyle is getting terribly affected by materialism and minimalism is the only solution to it. In the pursuit of sustainable development, Minimalism can help as it consists of an approach in which the development of a nation could be done with limited resources. Minimalism is the way to go for protecting resources for future generations. It’s also important to understand that there is an opportunity cost associated with each activity. In the long run, the cycle of overconsumption could lead to major problems in the economy, including low saving, low investment, and low wages, all of which will potentially create an unhealthy workplace environment in the manufacturing sector and could also lead to a vicious cycle of low income and hindered employment or income growth. Minimalism is thus nothing but just reallocation of scarce resources towards higher pursuits to maximize welfare of all rather than getting material satisfaction.

### **Non-violence in Economics**

“Jainism has contributed to the world the sublime of ‘Ahimsa’. Jainism deserves to be the universal religion because of its ‘ahimsa’ doctrine. The world stands in great need of acting upon Mahavira’s teachings” - Dr Rajendra Prasad, 1st President of India. Non-violence is considered as the heart of Jainism, Mahavira spent his entire life teaching his followers need of compassion towards each other, which modern world lacks today. Acharya Mahapragya argued that Dr Seth and Dr Marshall disassociated ‘Prostitution’ from production, they did not accept it as productive labor and thus used the viewpoints of ethics while writing about economy. If we think from the viewpoint of Lord Mahavira then many other things must also be excluded while calculating production. Three directives given by him are

- Ahimsappayane : Not to manufacture weapons
- Asanjuthahikarne : Not to assemble weapons
- Apavkammovades : Not to impart training for sinful works

How can such disastrous commodities can be considered as goods when these can do no good to anyone and in today’s multipolar world nations have realized this truth and have gone for Disarmament as depicted by recent researches by SIPRI but economists all over the world still count such commodities while calculating GDP and other indicators. Lord Mahavira also identified 15 Karmaadan for the members of his Devout society and prescribed strict prohibition and limits in these 15 areas. Chanakya wrote “Dharmam Mulam Artham” wealth is important for any religion to flourish but there lies a need to build safeguards as today we see extinction of flora and fauna, climate change owing to vehicular pollution and killing of living species for consumption, soaring crime rates, ozone depletion etc. It is high time to enlist activities that one must be prohibited or limited down as Lord Mahavira did as per the need of his time and in the words of Mahapragya, it is “Economics of Restraint”. It is important to understand this basic fact that violence invokes fear and pain and to attain higher public welfare, we need to make every creature fearless to attain socially optimum results.

### **Co-operation in Economics**

Men must start respecting interdependence among living beings else his existence on this planet shall get endangered. Nash equilibrium here offer excellent lessons in this regard. Games like 'Battle of sexes' and 'Prisoner's dilemma' teaches how pareto superior outcomes can be attained just by co-operating with each other so, in individual sphere co-operation brings socially optimum results. Similar results are obtained in case of public sphere, by analyzing games like 'Tragedy of commons', it can be understood how altruistic nature shown by each individual can make results much better in both short as well as long run. Raj Chandra was a Jain mystic, philosopher, poet, scholar and reformer whom Gandhi identified as his "refugee in moments of spiritual crisis" in his Biography. He was a trader before renunciation and once one of his business acquaintances had huge losses, Raj Chandra visited him and demanded some old receipts but latter was reluctant to give him receipts fearing Raj Chandra shall take legal action but as Raj Chandra kept on insisting, he gave the receipts and Raj Chandra abruptly tore the receipts and said "Raj Chandra can drink milk of Cow but not blood of his brethren". This is what Mahavira visualized, an economic system based on Self-help, love, care and virtues unlike present regime that is enhancing gap between brothers. Today lot of research has shown how co-operation and Philanthropy has changed life of many people across the globe. AMUL is the best way to prove this point. Recent achievements of 'Self-Help groups' in poor nation like Bangladesh is great achievement of Muhammad Yunus, for which he was awarded Nobel Peace Prize. This highlights importance that we must associate to Co-operation in the domain of economics to get better results.

Acharya Tulsi tried to answer "How to Produce?" 2nd fundamental question in economics. He argued in post-modernist age, men are living in a detrimental dilemma that mechanization has favorably revolutionized their lives. Positive developments due to machinery can't be denied but it can be argued due to indiscriminate usage, negative effects have overshadowed its positive effects. Large scale unemployment, unending aspirations, environmental degradation, rise in morbidity and mortality have all increased trials and tribulations of modern life and no one can deny that all these are actually a consequence of excessive use of technology. Gandhi believed in Human-centric model of development as feared craze for machinery not machinery in particular as this 'Labor-saving' techniques will compel people to die of starvation and raise welfare of a few on expense of many. Unemployment and Poverty are root cause of every evil prevalent in the society and use of technology has resulted in unprecedented increase in 'Multi factor Productivity' but at the same time, in the rat race of attaining higher output growth, we have neglected the important facet of development i.e., to check whether fruits of development are benefitting only a few or everyone. It need not to be over emphasized that it is only owing to Digitalization and mechanization, section of people in the lowest strata of class hierarchy in this society are adversely affected which can be seen in the form of rising unemployment, starvation and poverty.

Jain idea of trusteeship is one of the oldest and most developed. Both Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave were highly influenced by teachings of Jainism and thus tried to promote virtue of brotherhood in their Bhoodan-movement also known as Bloodless revolution. Mahavira placed human above demi-gods and give householders (both men and women) due importance in his 'Chaturvidh Sangha' to make them aware of their responsibility for making this world a better place to live in. He motivated his disciples to give food, shelter etc. to needy persons by identifying these as a source of Punya. He preached that removing one's fear is the best deed a person can do. Even today, contribution of Jain individuals and institutions in philanthropic activities is commendable which is mainly a result of idea of trusteeship Jainism promote by clearly stating that one's soul need no belongings and it is impossible for a soul in its purest state to have belongings. Even Jain texts identify that one have no right on his body as he must have to surrender it one day, it nothing but 'Pudgala'. So, one must utilize his time and energy in maximizing his own as well as other's welfare.

### **Relativism in economics**

“When there is continuity, there is also a change” This is Anekantavad that Lord Mahavira preached to the world. Anekanta(Pluralism) is the theory that a reality is composed of plurality of attributes it does not admit absoluteness, Acharya Gyanchandraji, spiritual head of Arihantmargi Sangh define ‘Syadvad’ as “The thought of the observer affects the observation” while Einstein remarked “The results of observation are relative to the observer” and this shows the effectiveness of ideas of Mahavira and its contemporary relevance in 21st Century and Acharya Shri Mahapragya derived the doctrine of “Relative Economics” from ‘Relativism’ of Lord Mahavira that not only concerns with absolute economic prosperity but takes multiple aspects of well-being in account of multiple aspects of prosperity. Though the term ‘Relative economics was officially used by prof Trilok kumar of Manipal University.

Being a virtuous sage, Mahapragya never rejected anyproposition abruptly. He praised Keynes, Smith, Marx, Gandhi and other economic thinkers for their far-sightedness as they endeavored to solve problems of their times. He argued that no ideology can be termed as totally wrong. Keynes visualized a nation with no poverty, at a glance his ideas about comfort and material prosperity seem commendable but he lagged significant truth that it is not evitable that possession of resources and comforts will make someone happy automatically. Similarly, Marx was praised as he had accomplished a lot by dismantling the existing perception in the society that the poor is poor because of his deeds and thus tried to bring change in the lives of ‘Have-nots’ just like what Mahavira did during his time by ending existing faith of society in Destinyand bought positive changes in the society but Marx overlooked the significance of Non-violence and Spiritualism and this at later stages became major short-comings of his ideas. Acharya just like Mahavira never rejected someone’s belief but instead argued that one’s view can be correct from one’s standpoint but can’t be certainly acceptable from other’s viewpoint and thus respective viewpoints, whether contradictory or complementary must be analyzed together to comprehend the truth and make conclusions. So Mahapragya certainly combined relative viewpoints and added Mahavira’s viewpoint to establish ‘Samanvaya’ between them in his theory of “Relative Economics” to fill the void that economists were unable to identify yet so to bring Real Prosperity in the world as deciphered by Mahavira.So, accepting Relativism in this field shall not only enhance efficiency of economic models as more facets of reality will be taken into account, it shall end up giving better results. It shall also end up differences that exist in perspectives put forward by different economists, instead of identifying loopholes in each other’s outlooks, they shall try to end up differences by complementing each other’s efforts.

Considering the example of Indian economy, in post-independence period ensuring economic development was the main problem that worried policymakers. Prashant Chandra Mahalnobis, a reputed statistician got opportunity to be at the helm of economic policy-making under the leadership of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. Mahalnobis plan which formed the foundation of 2nd five-year plan was basically revised version of Feldman’s ideas which provided base for Russian economic planning. He argued for huge emphasize on Heavy-goods industry to bring material well-being in Agriculture sector and determine Long-run position of economy. But some of the great economists of the time like Vakil and Brahmananda were not happy with Mahalnobis’s proposition as they felt ensuring availability of ‘wage-goods’ is the necessity for both better living standards and deriving higher industrial output, so they propounded their ‘wage-good model’ also known as ‘Bombay Plan’. Analyzing these contrasting models, one can comprehend that both ends at better living standards of Indian citizens and higher per-capita growth, difference lies only in means. So, a rationale decision-makers must respect relative viewpoints and endeavor to incorporate them in decision. Principle of ‘Anekanata’ is greater than any other religious tenets, it is of high importance in the field of economics as we see too many debates goings on between different schools and thus, need of getting economists on common and better decision is consistently rising.



### **Ethics in Economics**

In Jaina ethics there is no conflict between man's duty to himself and to society. Here the highest good of society is the highest good of individual. Mark D. White who is renowned for his remark “the decline of the individual” owing to huge emphasis on material prospects in modern economic and political system authored a great book “Economics and virtues” with Jennifer A. Bake showing how any economic system can be better by incorporating virtues. “Society is endangered not by the great profligacy of a few, but the laxity of morals amongst all”. Said Alexis De Tocqueville. Modern economics is completely devoid of ethics being material centric and it is due to this tendency, whole world is suffering today terribly. There is around 1.6% annual increase in registered crime cases in our nation. Everyday newspaper shows horrific news are a by-product of modern economic growth. Foreign travelers like Fa-Hien, Magasthenese etc who visited India centuries ago mentioned about prosperity and well-being of Indian state. Fa-Hien mentioned that there were no locks in houses at that time describing no fear of wealth getting stolen but today situation has worsened. Mahavira never accepted that a society without any problems can exist but he conceptualized a society having strong moral foundations. Gandhi too heavily supported this idea of Morality. He even wrote if one has a job of 9 hours and waste his office hours, he must not accept remuneration for those wasted hours as it is no lesser than thievery. “Bribery, crimes and violence would surely be wiped out if we follow the beautiful and inspiring teachings of Lord Mahavira. Instead of finding fault with others we would look to our own weakness and drawbacks. This would at once set right the whole world” – Lal Bahadur Shastri, 2nd prime minister of India

### **The Third Pillar**

Raghuram Rajan, former chief economist of IMF in his recent book “The Third Pillar” showed his deep concern about the fate of world economy as he argued in modern economics, owing to excessive significance assigned to the role of market and state, it is community that is getting side-lined, which will have adverse consequences in the long run. Despite knowing the fact that both state and markets exist to serve community but ultimately in this play between state and markets economists have neglected the society but Mahavira being a realist thinker placed ‘community above any other factor and thus created a system of Checks and Balances by forming “Chaturvidh Sangh” to extend moral, political and financial support to his disciples. Great thinkers like Deen Dayal Upadhyay propounded theories like “Integral humanism” to draw the attention of world towards human beings as world was getting too much engrossed in the debate between capitalism and communism. Scholars who studied the Medieval and Modern Jain community were amused to see the ties and system of love, care that connect all individuals together.

### **Solving for Economic Inefficiency**

Vilfredo Pareto was an Italian economist and philosopher who was behind several important contributions to economics, particularly in the study of income distribution and in the analysis of individuals' choices. In welfare economics, the idea of Pareto efficiency is very simple: If there is no way of improving the situation of one person, without making that of another person worse, the solution found is Pareto-efficient. This concept dominates the field of welfare economics and equilibrium analysis. The basic idea of this important concept derives its foundation from the assumption of perfect Competition, violating any one of these results in inefficient or socially undesirable outcomes. This happens mainly in three cases namely case of externality, public goods and asymmetric information. In the former two, divergence between private and social optimum is a major factor that led to undesirable consequences in the name of ‘Market failure’. While the last problem itself results into two cause of concern- Adverse selection and Moral hazard. Adverse selection is problem of hidden information while later is problem caused by hidden incentives.

Jain doctrine of karmas indeed solve these major issues by bringing positive changes in one’s mindset and actions, by changing one’s preferences from individualistic to altruistic due to

which one start seeing his benefit in benefit of others and his harm in harm of others. Problem of externality get addressed by such mindset and similarly, free-riding problem that arise in case of public goods get redressed by ideas of Minimalism and Altruism. Change of incentives that distort market outcomes in Insurance and Banking sector will not arise if one believes in Karmic philosophy of Mahavira.

### **Two Way Approach: Individual and Structural**

- The Foundation of Peace is System
- The Foundation of System is Co-existence
- The Foundation of Co-existence is Harmony
- The Foundation of Harmony is Truth
- The Foundation of Truth is Fearlessness
- The Foundation of Fearlessness is Non-violence
- The Foundation of Non-violence is Self-restraint

Modern economists focus all their attention on markets and Government and their role in any economic system but Mahapragya identified structural flaw in modern economic doctrine and thus he identified an alternative approach to address contemporary problems, which is not lop-sided but two-dimensional. In other words, this two-way approach can also be bifurcated into two complementary facets, first one denoting Structural aspects of the model and the later one denoting Individual facet highlighting the Microeconomic foundations of the concerned model. In this way, the structure of this model looks like any other modern economic model having some Microeconomic foundations, some hypothesis concerned with real-world phenomenon and sophisticated model to prove the claim but model propounded by him is much different from any other economic model propounded by any other economist till date. These tenets by Mahapragya and Kalam are of very high importance in today's world and needs elaboration. It is interesting to note that this model comprises of two simultaneous yet sequential approaches. Individual after adopting minimalist practices in life become more fearless and also make others fearless as after adopting these practices, they become non-violent and thus harmless to their fellow humans, flora and fauna. Fearlessness promotes truth and thus human relations become more harmonious than ever. This harmony shall in turn result in co-existence and this will enable formation of system which will ensure peace. Now after individual's role in this model, there comes need of government which have primary obligation to ensure smooth functioning of this process. Time and again it has to intervene in order to accomplish better results. Formation of good system, maintaining harmony, promoting minimalism etc. are some of its essential duties.

### **Ancient solutions for modern problems**

We have discussed two-dimensional approach that Mahapragya and Dr Kalam identified but this approach is actually based on ancient conduct that Mahavira prescribed for lay followers. Previous sections vividly described the need to change economics and importance of Non-violence, Minimalism, Relativism, Ethics and Co-operation in the domain of economics but how can these virtues get promoted in modern ecosystem? There is need to revisit the code of conduct as prescribed by Mahavira. Acharya Tulsi, who was one of the great social reformers of his time strongly emphasized the adoption of Anuvrats by masses to bring positive changes in society. These 12 vows are nothing but pathway towards the attaining the economy based on virtues that are explained above. These vows help in correcting the differences that arise between private and social goals, thus making an individual life viable for himself and society. In other words, these vows can ensure one's own betterment and betterment of society as whole.

Anuvrat Movement—a social reform campaign established in 1949 by the late Jain Shvetambara Terapanth mendicant leader, Acharya Tulsi. Anuvrat, a series of 'small vows' of ideal conduct that Mahavira prescribed for his lay followers, something he envisioned would

beneficially impact both individual as well as society alike. Anuvrata Movement was a purely non-violent movement like 'Satyagraha' that inculcates positive behavioural changes, aimed to promote the welfare of human beings. Mahavira advocated that one should live his life in a way that causes the least injury to other living beings. According to him, one can lead such a life by inculcating the following three jewels:

- Right knowledge (Samyaga-gyan)
- Right belief (Samyaga-darshan)
- Right conduct (Ssamya-charitra)

From the last jewel emerges five basic vows of Jainism which are as follows:

These Vratas are further classified as Mahavratas and Anuvratas. Mahavratas or Greater vows are prescribed for monks and nuns. Anuvratas or Lesser vows are prescribed for lay followers of Jainism.

Jain scripture expects lay Jains to follow twelve vows:

- ❖ 5 Anuvratas: austerities in minute principles
  - Ahimsa (a vow of non-injury)
  - Satya (a vow to speak truth)
  - Asteya (a vow to not steal)
  - Aparigraha (a vow of non-acquisition)
  - Brahmacharya (a vow of chastity or complete abstinence)
  
- ❖ 3 Gunavratas: austerities in virtues
  - Dik Vrata - Limited area of activity vow
  - Bhoga-Upbhoga Vrata - Limited use of consumable and non-consumable items vow
  - Anartha-danda Vrata - Avoidance of purposeless sins vow
  
- ❖ 4 Siksavratas: austerities in knowledge
  - Samayik Vrata - vow for Meditation of limited duration
  - Desavakasika Vrata - vow for limiting space
  - Pausadha Vrata - Vow of living Ascetic's life for specific duration
  - Atithi Samvibhaga Vrata – vow for charity

## Conclusion

It can be thus concluded that though several attempts have been made by renowned modern economists to redress problems being faced by the world by contributing heavily in development of discipline like economics etc. but despite all these endeavors have failed as problems not only persisted but also increased with the passage of time. So there lies an ever-rising need of revisiting ancient wisdom given by noble enlightened souls like Mahavira so that an ideal economy with strong ethical foundations can be created where people can complement each other's efforts to ensure everyone's survival and welfare, it shall be state where each creature, whether small or large can live without fear. One can argue whether creation of such ideal state is unrealistic but it must be understood that Mahavira's propositions are very much practical but due to prevalent consumerism and materialism, it is cumbersome to accomplish such a state where everyone can flourish. But as someone has rightly said – "When there is a will, there is a way" it is not at all impossible to create an economic system complementary to eco-system based on humanitarian values. Shri Vimalsagarsuri, another influential Jain spiritual master of 21<sup>st</sup> century clearly states "Any system got its foundation on some principles, not utopian ideas and if principles lack virtues,

then the foundation of system shall get dwindled in the face of odds”. Jains have highest per-capita in India. Despite just 0.4% of Indian population, they contribute 24% of total income tax, around 50% of total philanthropic donations, run 12000 out of 16000 gaushalas, have highest literacy rates and so on. Now exemplary success of Jain communities in all sectors clearly provides enough evidence to prove Mahavira’s tenets can assure success in all aspects of life. Timberg and Das, through an investigative study of life history of some of the giant business tycoons like Jagat Seth, Laxmichand Seth etc showed how Marwari Jains relied on centuries old system for conserving and growing capital which catapulted them in good position along with a strong sense of Business ethics. Motishah seth was another great personality in the history of Jain Dharma. He was so rich and influential that even British used to loath him for his wealth and despite being so wealth, he led a simple life and spent heavily to help poor and needy, his ‘Pinjrapole’. His generosity like that of many others are still a source of inspiration to modern men that Life exists much beyond consumption and production and thus one must not only consider monetary activities while study human well-being.

Philanthropy, Charity, giving voluntarily and freely...call it what you like, but it is truly a jewel of an American tradition” – John F Kennedy

Above statement clearly proves how important helping each other is. Co-operation has helped men to accomplish some heinous tasks and it is what is needed today not cut-throat competition. Modern economists are now endeavoring to influence consumer decisions in order to help them choose, what is actually good for them and society. “Nudge: improving decisions about health, wealth and happiness” by Nobel Laureate Richard H. Thaler and Harvard Law School professor Cass R. Sunstein was an incredible attempt in this direction. Many others are working in this direction but modern economics despite being on the way of becoming welfare-oriented humanized doctrine, is still far away from ideal economy as per Mahavira. There was a time when scientist community used to mock on a few propositions like water possess life etc by Mahavira but as science innovations continued, all propositions which previously seemed unrealistic got proved, Acharya Mahapragya thus argued a time shall come when life on this planet shall get so disturbed by complexities that everyone shall be forced to adhere to Mahavira’s realistic teachings to ensure their survival, so it is better to start incorporating these valuable principles in our lives on war footings. Though cumbersome but such changes are possible only when each and every one tries to realize existing system will endanger our existence on this planet soon, both Individual efforts and Major policy changes are needed so to reform prevalent system being driven by unending desires, so it become able to cater to needs.

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