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Anekantavada : The Philosophy of Co-existence

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Abstract : *There are countless social problems relating to language, region, autonomy, casteism and sectarianism. Again there are problems like poverty versus affluence and equality versus disparity. They remain unsolved because the viewpoints of those engaged in solving them are not relativistic and reconciliatory. In this project we have tried to solve these problems from the point of view of Anekantavada. It is the philosophy of Jainism which advocates mutual co-existence of the animate and inanimate objects and advocates relativity of knowledge. The philosophy of Anekantavada will help us to analyse the problems from multiple angles and solve them by*

reconciling the different aspects in the light of the Ultimate Truth. Hence a new society can be built on the basis of interdependence, sensitivity and right vision. The philosophy of Anekanta can put an end to hatred, jealousy and discord among human beings and can check violence and killing (of animals, plants, trees, insects) so that a new society can be built on the values of tolerance, love, peace, harmony and universal brotherhood.

Keywords : *Anekanta, Pudgala, Co-existence, Syadvada.*

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Introduction :

Anekantavada is an important philosophy of Jainism which conveys the message of mutual co-existence of animate and inanimate objects. Jainism believes that the whole universe can be divided into two categories, Jiva i.e. soul and Ajiva i.e. matter. These two, jiva and ajiva, exhaust between them all that exists in the universe and Jaina philosophy is based on the nature and interaction of these two elements. They hold that animate and inanimate objects or jivas and ajivas

that are found in the world have independent existence and innumerable characteristics; yet they can live together peacefully.

The Jaina metaphysics is a realistic and relativistic pluralism. It is called Anekantavada or the doctrine of manyness of reality. Matter and Spirit are regarded as separate and independent realities

Anekantavada is related to the theory of Syadvada. Syadvada is an epistemological theory according to which knowledge is relative to one's stand point and every judgement is partial not absolute. The epistemological doctrine of Syadvada advocate tolerance and harmony. Anekanta conveys the relativity of substance and modes both of which are independent. Anekantavada is the philosophy of mutual co-existence and it is the need of the hour.

Significance of the study :

- (i) We find in this world that human beings, are not living together peacefully; leave apart their co-existence with inanimate objects. In this scenario, the philosophy of Anekantavada or the co-existence between animate and inanimate i.e. jiva and ajiva or matter and spirit will be of great help.
- (ii) Theft, murder, violence and honour killing are the common social evils prevalent in the society because of the wrong thinking of the people. Anekantavada will help in solving these problems too.
- (iii) Naxal and terror attacks in almost all parts of the world has led to the feeling of insecurity among the people. Trees are being cut down for money and the result is global warming which will make life impossible on earth in the coming generation. In this scenario, the philosophy of Anekantavada will provide right vision. It will deliver the message of love and mutual co-operation between matter and spirit (animate and inanimate).

Objectives :

- (i) To attain right vision based on the philosophy of Anekanta so as to put an end to hatred, jealousy and discord among human beings.
- (ii) To check violence and killing of animals, plants, trees, insects.
- (iii) To build a new society based on the values of tolerance, love, peace, harmony and universal brotherhood.

Methodology :

This work will be descriptive and theoretical based on the study materials collected from various libraries in Patna and from the Internet.

Discussion :

On the basis of the discussion of the different aspects of Anekantavada we can say that the philosophy of Anekantavada is of great importance in present times. As we know today the society is faced with common social evils such as theft, murder, violence and honour killing because of the wrong mindset of the people. So there is need to change the mindset of the people by adopting the path of truth, non-violence, tolerance and co-operation.

Again, we have also seen that there were terror attacks in almost all parts of the world which has led to the feeling of insecurity and fear among the people. So the philosophy of Anekantavada will help in curbing such violence by following the path of universal brotherhood, peace and love.

Moreover, selfishness and egoism are the root causes of all evils which prevail in society. They have resulted in hatred and jealousy among people. So, Anekantavada emphasises that it is necessary to understand and respect the feelings of one another based on unity and harmony.

Further, trees have been also cut down all over the world that has leading to global warming. It has created an imbalance between nature and living beings. In this aspect Anekantavada advocates that there is need of mutual co-operation between animate-inanimate i.e. living and non-living beings

so that the life our future generation becomes possible on earth.

Suggestions :

1. People should follow the theory of Anekantavada for the progress of society and preservation of mankind.
2. The philosophy of Anekantavada helps people to undergo a change in their behaviour and mindset.
3. Everyone should respect each other and understand the dignity of human beings for a better and peaceful society.
4. We should reconstruct a new society based on the values of tolerance, love, peace, harmony and universal brotherhood.

Conclusion :

After understanding the different aspects of Anekantavada we can conclude that though there are innumerable objects in the world both animate and inanimate i.e. living and non-living yet all are real according to Jainism. Hence, everything in the world is important and should be given the freedom to exist peacefully. In this scenario, the philosophy of Anekantavada will provide right vision. It will deliver the message of love and mutual co-operation between spirit and matter (i.e. animate and inanimate).

We can conclude that Anekantavada is the philosophy of mutual co-existence and it is the need of the hour.

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