Yashwant K. Malaiya

Chapter 8
Conflict Management in the Jain Nonprofit Organizations

Abstract: Jain nonprofit organizations include not only modern religious, educational, and charitable organizations but also some that have existed for a few centuries. They have encountered numerous internal and external conflicts. Many of these have been handled with considerable success, while a few have resulted in the demise of the organizations. The conflicts, the approaches used to resolve them, and the outcomes serve as examples that can lead to observations that can guide future management approaches.

Keywords: Jain, Digambara, Shwetambara, Hindu, Buddhist, conflict, resolution

Introduction

Background

The Jains in India form a very small minority, about 0.40% of the population in 2011, distributed among several states in India as well as overseas. They are divided into several sects, with the Digambara-Shwetambara division going back to the 3rd century BC, with new movements and divisions arising from time to time. They include more than 50 distinct communities from different regions of India. Externally, the Jains have interacted with other dharmic religions, including components of the Hindu society. After the Turkish conquest of India, the Jains interacted with the Muslim rulers and administrators. Some of the Jain organizations have encountered conflicts with the governments.

In many ways, the Jains have a notable record of surviving and even flourishing, suggesting that, in many cases, they were able to successfully resolve the conflicts on a long-term basis. Buddhism, which shares several common attributes with Jainism, virtually disappeared from India, even though the archaeological and literary evidence suggests its great strength prior to the Gupta dynasty. There is considerable disagreement about the causes of the decline of Buddhism; many scholars suggest that both internal and external factors were responsible.

In Jainism, the nonprofit organizations include the Bhattaraka organizations that manage institutions of higher learning and guided rituals and practices. Several of them flourished for several centuries and a few still exist. Modern organizations include more than 4,800 schools and colleges, including medical and engineering col-

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leges, as well as several recognized universities. In the United States, the Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA), founded in 1981, is a notable example of people from different sects and backgrounds working together. The Jains are generally noncombative in nature; however, conflicts do arise. As we will see below, some conflicts are not successfully resolved.

Conflicts and Conflict Outcomes

Conflicts between two groups that share some resources are common. Such conflicts are inherent because of human nature and the instinct for survival and propagation. The shared resources include those which have monetary value, such as land or buildings (including sacred temples or sites), management rights, objects that have symbolic values, and the population of followers. Conflicts among religious organizations and within an organization are common. Religious organizations are often nonprofit; still they encounter conflicts. Some groups believe that they have a duty, even a right, to grow, which may be considered to be divinely mandated or a consequence of them being the true or the righteous group.

Some conflicts are short; however, some can drag on for decades or centuries. The possible outcomes of a conflict can be one of the following.

i. Steady state: the status quo is accepted, and the two sides find a way to coexist.
ii. Acceptance of ebb and flood tides which implies a dynamic equilibrium.
iii. Gradual decline of the dominant group and possessions or rights of the dominating side gradually increase.
iv. The dominating side eventually triumphs (Choksey, 1988). The other side is decimated, or its members adapt the identity of the dominating side.

This article considers the Jain nonprofit organization. They include not only the modern organizations that are legally formed using accepted forms of constitution but also several old organizations that have a history spanning several centuries.

Jain Nonprofit Organizations

In north and western India, a significant fraction of the Jains are prosperous and public minded. They have founded a number of social, religious, and charitable organizations. The Jains' share of such organizations far exceeds their fraction of the population (about 0.4% of India's population). The Jains have a large number of educational institutions including village schools, formal schools, general and professional colleges, and in recent years a few universities. In the past, they were all nonprofit organizations.

It has been estimated that the Jain organizations run more than 4,800 schools and colleges. The universities include Jain University Bangalore, Mangalayatan University Aligarh, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun, and Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad. Medical colleges include Vardhman Mahavir Medical College, Delhi, and Mahaveer Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Bhopal.

One of the largest and oldest religious trust in India is the Anandji Kalyanji Trust. Established in 1630–1640 AD, it has run under the name Anandji Kalyanji ni Pedhi or Anandji Kalyanji Trust since the 1720s. It was originally founded to run the temple complex of Shatrunjaya Palitana, and it has gradually expanded to run about a dozen Shvetambar Jain complexes. It is still headed by the descendants of Shantidas Jhaveri, the Nagar-Seth of Ahmedabad.

Some of the oldest seats of the Digambar Jain *bhattartas* include the Hombuja Jain Mutt, founded around the 8th century AD, during the reign of Jinadatta Raya, founder of the ruling dynasty of Santara. It is notable that it arose around the same time as the Adi Skaracharya and flourished in the vicinity of Shringeri. The Mutt belongs to the Mula Sangha Balatkara Gana Saraswati Gachchha lineage that goes back to Lord Mahavira and his disciples. The lineage arrived in the north around the 11th century, eventually resulting in a dozen seats that survived until the early 20th century. They were largely responsible for training scholars, managing temples and tirthas, and the consecration of lakhs of Jain *pratimas*. Bhattaraka Jinachandra is said to have consecrated a lakh Jain pratimas which were then delivered to towns throughout much of India. They replenished the Jain community, which had suffered a devastating loss due to the iconoclasm of Alauddin Khilji.

During the 17th–18th century, a reform movement in Digambar Jainism called Terapanth gradually spread that opposed the dominance of Bhattarakas. The institution had decayed and was no longer producing capable scholars. Several conflicts during the 19th to the early 20th century have been recorded among the followers of the Bhattaraka tradition and their opponents. As a result, the prestige of the Bhattartaka seats declined and they became extinct in North India.

The Shranabelgola seat, associated with the Desi Gana lineage, was grounded during the Rashtrakuta rule. Somehow, it became financially insolvent and was bailed out by the Mysore Maharaja. When the previous Bhattaraka Charukirti ascended the seat, it was in a precarious financial condition. The Bhattaraka initiated a number of schools and colleges and a Prakrit research institute. When he was planning to start an engineering college, there was a local protest, because it was to replace a local polytechnic. However, the Bhattaraka prevailed.

Anekanta: Resolving Conflicts through Mutual Accommodation

Jainism inherently implies an anekanta-based perspective, implying that there may be some truth in other perspectives. As a result, the Jains, individually and as managers of organizations, are willing to work and accommodate with non-Jains. An example may be cited from a recent event. Mahavir ji is a famous Jain *tirth* in Rajasthan. Someone posted videos of its Hindu employees who had created a Govardhan structure of *gobar* for Janmashtami. The management responded by pointing out that such activities have long been permitted for at least a century, and local Hindus of Mina and other communities have traditionally participated in some Jain rituals.

It is interesting to note that Shwetambar Jain temples including those in Palitana, Ranakpur, Mt. Abu, etc., have traditionally employed Bhojak Brahmins to conduct worship, special rituals, and theatrical performances. The relationship goes back at least a millennium and likely much longer since some Kadamba copperplates mention donations to Bhoja officiants at Jain temples. The Bhojakas are regarded as the descendants of the Shakadvipi Brahmins, among whom are some of India's prominent astronomers. Astrologers and mathematicians like Varahamihir were born. One of the managers of the San Francisco Jain temple is a Bhojak.

There are many Hindu temples where some Jains serve as trustees. A notable example is the Dharamsthala Shrikshtra in Karnataka, headed by a hereditary *dharmadhikari*, who are Jain. The famous Manjunath Shiva temple was founded by a local Jain chief many centuries ago. An annual Sarva Dharma Sammelan is organized by the Dharmasthala institution.

Within modern Jain nonprofit organizations, both religious and charitable, internal conflicts are common. Many of them take the form of an established group trying to hold on to power using fair or unfair means. It is generally presumed that the established traditional practices, which presumably evolved on the basis of past successful compromises, and/or the written constitution constitute fairness. Conflicts are also caused by a group trying to capture power by unfair means.

The inscriptions left in Mt. Abu temples Vimal Vasahi and Luna Vasahi and in the Parshvanath temple at Khajuraho show the traditional conventions. In general, the wishes of the donor and his family are to be respected. After the donor, his family inherits the right to manage the temple. When the family has dissolved away due to deaths, migrations, or loss of wealth, the rights are inherited by their relatives, i.e., their *jnati (anvaya*) or the community. With the gradual dissolution of the community, the rights are inherited by the *shravakas* following the same sectarian tradition. When a sect dissolves (such as what happened to Kashtha Sangh within the Digambar tradition) the rights are inherited by a wider super-sect.

History of Conflicts

Conflicts Among the Jain Organizations and Groups

It is generally believed that the Jains are a single community. That is a consequence of the fact that the Jains are often willing to overlook the differences among them and work together. In reality, the Jain society is composed of at least 40–50 different communities distributed in different parts of India. Some are native Punjabis, and some are native Tamils. The Rajasthani (often termed Marwari) Oswals have now widely settled in different regions of India during the late Mughal and the British period.

Within the Jain society some of the conflicts are well known. The Digambara-Shwetambara divide is believed to have started after Acharya Bhadrabahu, after whom two lineages separated and gradually drifted apart (Vijaya, 1943). Some of the well-known Acharyas such as Samantabhadra as well as some of the works like the Tatvartha-Sutra and Bhaktamar Stotra are claimed by them both. There was a lineage called Yapaniya that flourished in Konkan for a few centuries as well as nearby regions that appeared to have shared some of the scriptural tradition of the Shwetambaras but did not take of wearing of the clothes.

Because of the separate geographical distributions, the major sects are largely disjoint in terms of professing jnatis, the standard texts, tirthas, and temples. Thus the relationship has generally been cordial, with minimal interaction. There has been little or no proselytization within the other sect, although a few small social groups have switched the sects. The major disputes among them are due to two main reasons.

1. Some of the sites predate the split, including Pawapuri, the nirvana site of Lord Mahavira (Shri Pawa, 1927), Sammet Shikhar, the nirvana site of the 20 or the 24 tirthankaras, and Mount Girnar, the nirvana site of Lord Neminath.
2. The migrant merchant Jains started settling in some places where the local Jains were less wealthy. After a period of harmonious coexistence, the wealthier migrant Jains were able to acquire extensive worshipping and management rights.

The evidence suggests that historically, the two major sects have recognized each other and have frequently collaborated. There are also examples of a majority group providing assistance to a smaller group, who are recent migrants. Vividha Tirth Kalpa of Jinaprabha Suri (Jinaprabha Suri, 1934), who was a Shwetambara muni, finished in 1332 AD, included Digambara tirthas including Sjravanabelgola, Manikyaswami of Kulpak, and Shripur Antariksh Parshvanath (Panchal, 1981; Shah, 2018). In Jinaprabha Suri's time, Kulpak in Telangana was the center of the Digambar Kranur Gana, and Shripur was the local Digambar Setwal and Chaturtha communities. Vividha Tirth Kalpa mentions that the pilgrimage organized by Dandanaka Vimal included both Shwetanbar and Digambar munis. In Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan, the Shwetambara temple has allocated one room for the Digambara pratimas belonging to the Digambar

Saraogi community. Very successful examples of Shwetambar-Digambar cooperation are seen in the United States, where almost all Jain temples jointly house pratimas of both sects as well as meeting rooms for the non-murti worshipping Sthanakwasi and Terapanthi sects and the new Shrimat Rajachandra sect.

The Digambar-Shwetambar disputes at the nirvana sites such as Pawapuri (where Lord Mahavira attained nirvana), Samet Shikhar (20 of the 24 tirthankaras, including Lord Parshvanath), and Girnar (Lord Neminath) led to court cases and eventual settlements.

Many of the old temples have historically drawn pilgrims and worshippers from afar. In the past, the local Jains served as a host and facilitated the distant Jains in a spirit of *sadharmi-vatsalya*, i.e., spirit of affection to the coreligionists. Because of past precedents, the newer group attained rights of worship and even management.

A well-documented case is that of Bahubali Hill near Kolhapur (Carrithers, 1988; Jerryson, 2020; Singh, 1984). Paul Dundas writes (Dundas, 2002):

> Sometimes the passions engendered spill over and have ramifications beyond purely Jain concerns, as in the well-publicised case of Bahuball Hill, a pilgrimage spot of local significance near the town of Kolhapur in south Maharashtra. There, what seems to have been the original permission granted in 1869 by the Digambaras, the owners of the hill, to the Svetambaras to erect a temple of their own at Bahuball Hill gradually developed through friendly competition between the two sects in the building and renovating of sacred buildings to a situation in the early 1980s where the quarrel over control of the site came to involve politicians of all hues, both regional and national, and was articulated in terms of patriotism and communalism against a background of violence, peace marches and fasts conducted by Digambara monks.

Another famous temple claimed by both sects is the Antariksh Parshvanath temple at Sirpur, mentioned by numerous Digambar and Shwetambar authors, starting with the ancient Nirvana Kanda and Vividha Tirth Kalpa. To avoid violent confrontations, the administration had kept the chamber with the main Pratima locked for many years. The Digamber Jain community in the region around Kulpak gradually disappeared and the temple is now managed by the Shwetambaras. With the modern medium of communications, print and now internet, claims of ownership and the accounts of the conflicts have been widely distributed that leave out the facts contrary to the claims.

A large list of about 60 temples with Shwetambara-Digambara disputes has been compiled by Bhushan Shah (2023). The list includes several famous disputes as well as numerous obscure ones that will surprise many, for example, claims that Shrvanabelgola and Ellora caves are disputed.

Among the Digambaras, the Terapanth sect, founded by Amra Bhaunsa Godika at Sanganer during 1664–1667, has now become dominant in North India, and the older institutions led by Bhattarakas, which came to be termed Bispanth, have declined. The 1915 Digambar Jain Directory mentions that the Bhattarakas of Nagaur (Rajasthan) and Malkhed (Maharashtra) were encountering opposition. Eventually, the North India Bhattarakas were unable to find successors, and the institution became

extinct in North India. The Jains have traditionally worshipped shasan devatas, such as goddesses Ambika or Padmavati, and their images are almost invariable and found in the older temples. Gradually, they have been moved to less conspicuous spots in the temples or even removed from temples, causing complaints by their worshippers.

In recent years, many old Jain temples have been entirely dismantled to build larger and modern temples. It is said that most of the Shwetambara temples considered to be ancient are actually modern constructions. The practice is now gradually spreading among the Digambaras as well. That has caused opposition by a few Jains who would prefer to preserve the historicity of the temples. In some cases, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) became involved. Most Jains are driven by faith and not by a love of historicity; thus the opposition is usually moot.

Jainism and Hinduism share a common cultural and social background. While some Jain communities are exclusively Jain, several, such as Agrawals in the North, Shrimals in the West, and Bant and Arasu in the South, can be either Jain or Hindu. In many cases they have traditionally intermarried. Shri Ram of the Ikshvaku clan and Shri Balaram and Shri Krishna of the Yadu clan are *shalaka purushas* in Jain puranic history. Many Indian rulers supported both Hindu and Jain sects, and some of them such as Chalukya Kumarpal and Rashtrakuta Amoghavarsha were devout Jains. The term Hindu was applied to the Jains until the late 19th century, when the British administration started conducting census, which included religious affiliations.

Developments in South India

In spite of the claims in Sankara Digvijaya, there is no evidence of a king Sudhanva, who is said to have forced heretics to abandon their faith. Accounts of atrocities inflicted on the Jains in Periyapuranam are also not supported by the archaeological findings. A cause of the decline of Jainism in Tamilnadu appears to be the defection of Appar and the fact that many of the Saiva Siddhanta principles are similar to Jainism. In Karnataka, the Lingayat movement was opposed to both Jainism and orthodox Hinduism. There is evidence that Jainism lost many adherents to virashaivism. Still Jainism continued to flourish in several Jain centers in Karnataka. Digambar Jain monasticism in North India was revived in the early 20th century because of the arrival of Digambar monks from the bilingual adjoining Karnataka-Maharashtra region.

Jain Support of Hindu Shrines

There are numerous examples of Jains supporting and, in some cases, even constructing Vaishnava, Shaiva, and Saur temples. The Dwarakadhish temple of Mathura and Manjunath Shiva temple at Dharasthala were constructed by Jain families. The in-

scriptions at Sun temples at Shrimal, Vidisha, and Ranakpur mention donations by local Jains.

Modern Disputes

The general spirit in India is to honor and accommodate diverse sects. However, there have been many examples of old and modern disputes between Jains and non-Jains.

The disputes at Mount Girnar have been widely documented. There have been disputes between the Buddhists and Digambara Jains in the remote past, Digambaras and the Shwetambaras in the late medieval period, and between the Naga Sadhus and the Digambara Jain during the past one and a half centuries regarding the fifth peak. The charan paduka are regarded by the Digambara Jains as representing the nirvana site of Lord Neminath, the 22nd Jina, and by the Naga Sadhus as *charan paduka* of Dattatraya. There was an uneasy peace until an enclosed structure was constructed and a large idol of Lord Dattatraya was placed at the site.

In several cases, a small innocuous shrine was constructed that was overlooked for a few decades by the land-owning side, which eventually gradually grew into a full-fledged temple. In some cases, when monetary settlement did not work, resolution was obtained by giving a part of the land.

In some parts of India, where Jainism and Buddhism have declined, the local people have continued to worship Jain and Buddhist statues after transforming them into local deities. While this bothers some Jains, it may be seen as a form of accommodation and continuance of veneration.

In some regions of Rajasthan an anti-Jain movement, Anoop Mandal, has spread a section of the backward communities. The book *Jagat Hitkaririni*, written by Anoop Das in 1909, represents the Jain religion as rakshasa (devilish). They organize anti-Jain demonstrations and have been blamed for a number of attacks on Jain monks (Bhat, 21). The movement has taken the form of a religious sect, and thus it enjoys immunity from legal actions. In Mumbai, the MNS party has organized antivegetarian protests (DNA, 2015).

Jain and Buddhist Disputes

The Pali texts frequently refer to the promotion of Buddhism among the followers of Nirgranthas (monks following Lord Mahavira), although the early Jain texts are largely silent. Buddhism in India was declining during the 5th to 10th centuries, when modern Jain society as emerging (Shah, 2017). Thus there are very few mentions of any interaction between the two traditions. Some Shwetambara texts mention dis-

putes between Buddhists and Jains over the Deva-nirmita Stupa at Mathura and at the Shatrunjaya Hill. There is evidence of a Buddhist cave at Ellora taken over by the Jains. In Tamilnadu, Kanchi was a major center of both Jainism and Buddhism. The celebrated Jain scholar Akalanka from that region is said to have studied under the Buddhist masters pretending to be a Buddhist and eventually defeating Buddhist scholars in disputations.

In some regions the archaeological evidence (such as at Ellora caves and in Sanchi-Devagarh region) suggests that Jain activity increased as Buddhism declined. This can be seen as the persistence and survival of the Shramana tradition in the form of Jainism.

Jains and Abrahamic Religions

The Jain community has been remarkably robust against the proselytization by Islam and Christianity. There have been converts but they are quite rare. Generally weaker sections of the society are more amenable to conversion, whereas the Jains are often well educated and well to do.

Some Jain mint masters and treasurers have been employed by the Khiljis and Mughals, but they resisted the pressure to convert.

Jainism in North India faced cataclysmic iconoclasm during the Khilji rule with widespread destruction of temples and pratimas, bringing Jain worship to a halt during the 14th and 15th centuries. That was remedied by two developments at the end of the 15th century. A wealthy Jain named Jivaraj Papdiwal consecrated about 100,000 pratimas and had them distributed throughout India. The second was the emergence of a non–idol-worshipping sect, which relied entirely on the monks and not the temples. It is notable that at several sites, the Jains hid the most precious pratimas in underground chambers (*bhoyras*) right before the Khalji invasion. They were discovered a few centuries later.

Jains and Administration

Generally the Jains are an extremely law-abiding people, and thus the conflicts with the administration are rare. But they do happen.

During most of the Mughal Rule, the Jains and the Hindus were prohibited from constructing structures identifiable as temples. In Delhi, there is a Jain temple named Lal Mandir right in from the Red Fort. Since building a *shikhar* was prohibited, it originally did not have one until it was added in the 1970s. During the declining years of the Mughal rule, the emperor permitted a Jain temple named Naya Mandir to be constructed in 1807 with a low dome. The temple was surrounded by Jain homes, and

thus the shikhar is not seen from a distance. In Bhopal, the Chowk temple did not have a shikhar until well after India's independence.

ASI is charged with protecting the historicity of the temples under its protection. Generally the Jains honor ASI's mission, although sometimes the Jains resent the meddling by ASI in the repair or enhancements of the temples.

In some cases, in the Jain sectarian disputes or disputes with non-Jains, some of the Jains have sought to exert political influence. The Jains form a very small and insignificant voting block; however, there are often some respected Jain politicians or administrators who are willing to intervene on behalf of their community.

Conclusions

The Indian traditions are nonexclusivist, and traditionally the diverse religions and sects are respected. However, conflicts will arise from time to time. For conflicts to be resolved, the two sides must be willing to accept compromises, as dictated by the game theory. Classical Indian literature mentions four strategies: *sama*, *dana*, *bheda*, and *danda*, which are persuasion, giving money, using diplomacy, and, if everything fails, use of force. The last strategy, which includes legal action or government intervention as well as physical force, can result in an uncertain outcome if the opponent is equally powerful.

It is perhaps best if each side sees the point of view of the other side and thus reaches a compromise. If an organization wishes to avoid wasting time, effort, and resources, it should participate in promoting a climate where the differences can be discussed freely in a friendly way. Jainism has survived and flourished in India in spite of being an extremely small group, suggesting that many conflicts can be resolved without resorting to aggression.

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