



Religion: in the View of Sadhvis

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Abstract:

Jina or Tirthankar means conqueror (Chaudhury, 2003) i.e. one who conquered his five senses & destroyed all deeds attached with the soul & attained salvation or Moksha by own tenacious efforts. (Jain M. S., 2008) Followers of Jina are known as Jain & their religion is known as "Jainism". (Weintraub, 2014) Structure of Jainism erected on four pillars namely; Sadhus, Sadhvis, Sravak, Sravika, all four constitute together to form Jain Sangh. (Florin Curta, 2017) Sadhvis are one of the important members of Jain Sangh whom just like as Sadhus renounced worldly pleasures, took Diksha & dedicate their whole life in spreading the message of Mahavira or principles of Jainism. (K.C.Mcconnell, 2016)

Research is prominently focused on what is religion, in the view of Sadhvis. To highlight this work, researcher used field survey or ethnographic method with a questionnaire & took sample of 30 Sadhvis in Major Cities of Western Malwa Region such as Ratlam, Indore, Ujjain, and Neemuch. Researcher gets valuable knowledge & a unique way to define Jainism. There is no doubt in that history, view & knowledge of Sadhvis is not less important than Sadhus.

Keywords: Sadhvis, Religion, Moksha, Principles, Purity, and Character.

I. Introduction

Sadhvis are one of the important members of Jain Chaturvidh Sangh; also known as Aaryika, Mataji, & Samani in various sects of Jainism (K.C. Shashtri, 2008), they renounced worldly pleasures not only to attain salvation, but also for betterment of mankind. They are important not only because they took Diksha, but also because of their qualities such as honesty, tolerance, forgiveness, divine power, capabilities, discipline, progressive thoughts etc.

Sadhvis always wear minimally stitched white clothes, Sadhvis belongs to Sthanak wearing "Muhapati", a square or rectangular piece of cloth covering their mouth, and on the other hand Sadhvis belong to Mandir take "Muhapati" in their hands.

Both Sadhvis either or Sthanak Or Mandir have same aim of self-purification or self-realization, only difference is that one worship Tirthankar as incorporeal form and the other one worship in idol form. (Jain world)

From ancient times to present times their work, achievement, views not illustrated in a cleared manner, but they always provides power, divinity to Sangh. Few authors mentioned their qualities, records, rules, but did not mention their views & outlooks to define what Jainism really is?

Through this research work, researcher wants to illustrate the views of Sadhvis in understanding Jainism. Besides all problems & negligence, their glory, achievement, work always enlightens Jain religion.

Sadhvi Brahmi, daughter of First Tirthankar Rishabdev, profound in 64 types of arts & also founder of Brahmi Script, this fact shows that woman have right to get education & they are very capable to get high level of education. Sadhvi Brahmi also became Sadhvi Pramukh of 3 Lakh Sadhvis Sangh. Another Daughter of Rishabdev, Sadhvi Sundari was talented Mathematician. The 19th Tirthankar, "Mallinath", was also a female Tirthankar. Besides this we have also many examples of other Sadhvis such as Sadhvi Chandan Bala (Sadhvi Pramukh of 36 thousand Sadhvis & 3 Lakh Sravikas), *¹Sadhvi Yaksha (compiled two Chulikas of Jain Cannon), Sadhvi Ishwari, Sadhvi Yakini Mahtara (Inspiration for Acharya Haribhadra Suri) etc. enlighten the Sun of Jainism. (Hastimal, Fundamental History of Jainism, 1971)

II. Objectives:

Since the time; humans came into their whole existence, they have been associated with their culture & bound by faith towards god in form of Religion or Dharm, to follow the path of Religion & for betterment of life it is very essential to know



what the definition of their religion or Dharm, & what it actually tells about life, soul etc.

1. Through research, researcher hopes to achieve the actual definition of Religion & its path in the words of Sadhvis in a clear & easy language, so the common people understand it.
2. Researcher also wants to highlight the views of Sadhvis & their message for Mankind.
3. Researcher also wanted to know: "Is Initiation (Diksha) necessary to attain Moksha?"
4. What needs to be done in present times to attain salvation?

III. Methodology:

Researcher used ethnographic method for survey with a questionnaire form. In the ethnographic method researcher observed the activities of Sadhvis such as their Pravchan, Swadhyaya, Paatshala, Shivar etc. & also discussed about Dharm, its significance, relevance etc. Researcher took 6 months to complete research work in the major cities of western Malwa; Ratlam, Ujjain, Neemuch & Indore. Besides this researcher also visit library to complete literary work of research.

1. Jain Jagrati Mahila Library: Ratlam
2. Acharya Ganesh Gyan Library: Ratlam
3. Kund-Kund Research Foundation: Indore
4. Jain Vishwa Bharati Institute e-library.
5. Jain e-library: Run by Jain education committee, USA.

IV. What is Dharm/Religion in the View of Sadhvis?

- Dharm or religion is a path for human beings; to bring them in a right direction & to

establish themselves in the home of Moksha Or salvation i.e. free from cycle of birth & death.

- Dharm/Religion is not that just stay hungry & do penance i.e. to take fast (Deny food & water). Real Tapa/ Penance is to control on five senses, one who can have control on his senses, the he has adopted Dharma in true form.
- To spread humanity, not to waste food, not do back biting, obey of elders, feeling of equality (Samta Bhaav, Sambhaav), all this defines religion.
- Religion is the same, which we follow by adopting equanimity in own nature & with this we keep on moving forward.
- To follow religion, it is essential to control on our anger, greed & desires.
- To control on above astringency, one should read the life stories of Tirthanakar & other liberated souls & do hard work (Purusharth) to follow their principles.
- If there is quarrel & unrest in the house, then there is no meaning to do Samayik, so it is duty of householders (laypeople), to maintain peace in their house & give religious rites to the children, so that they can make their life better. "बच्चों को कार भले न दे, लेकिन संस्कार अवश्य दे"
- For all Sravikas (Lay women), it is essential duty to protect their modesty & character purity: Because for them purity of Character is more important than religion, once they lose their purity, then they will be like dead person. "Don't get immersed in Fashion, Grow up with Good Character".
- It is requested to all pregnant women to give religious teaching to their children in the womb itself, so that they learn to stay away from evils in the womb itself.



V. Research Design:

To complete Research, researcher followed these steps:

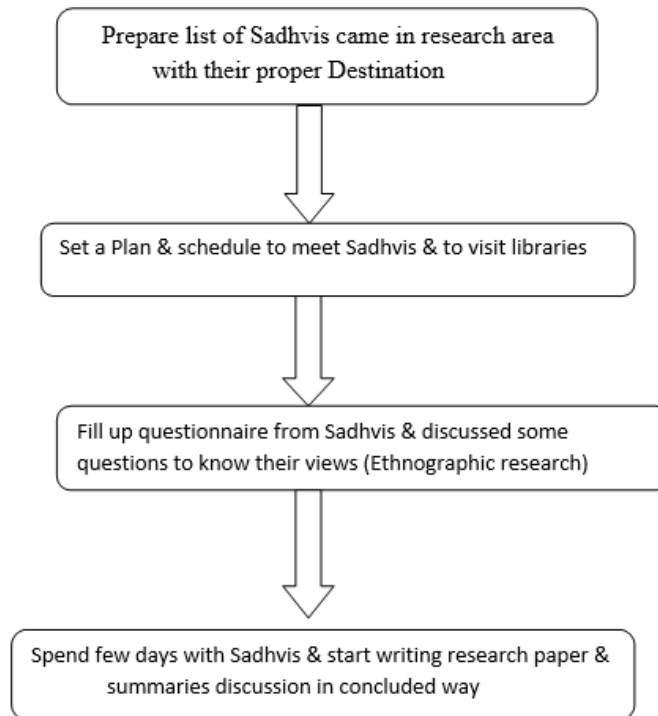


Figure 1: Process followed to do research

VI. Comparative Population of No. of Sadhus and Sadhvis in the region of all 24 Tirthankars:

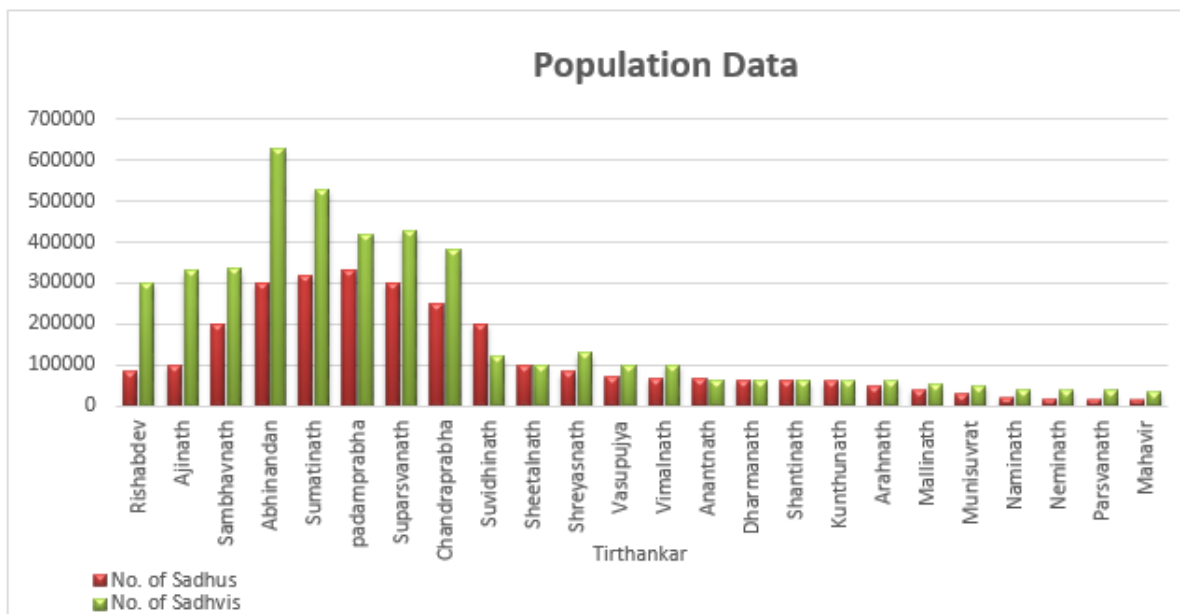


Figure 2: Comparison of Population of Sadhvis & Sadhus during all 24 Tirthankar Region (Source: Hastimal, A. (1971). Fundamental History of Jainism. Jaipur: Jain Itihaas Samiti, 576-577).



It is concluded from above chart; all Tirthankar gave equal chance to man & woman (in the form of Sadhus & Sadhvis also) to spread principles of Jainism & to attain Moksha. From Rishabh Dev to Mahavira Sadhvis did lots of work to spread message of Tirthankar & also very well lead the sangh of Sadhvi as Sadhvi Pramukh, Pravartini etc. With all divinity, compassion, unique capabilities & leadership in present times also they are working to maintain the glory of Sangh & for preservation of our valuable heritage of nation in the form of Jainism.

VII. Result & Discussion: (As per Questionnaire Survey)

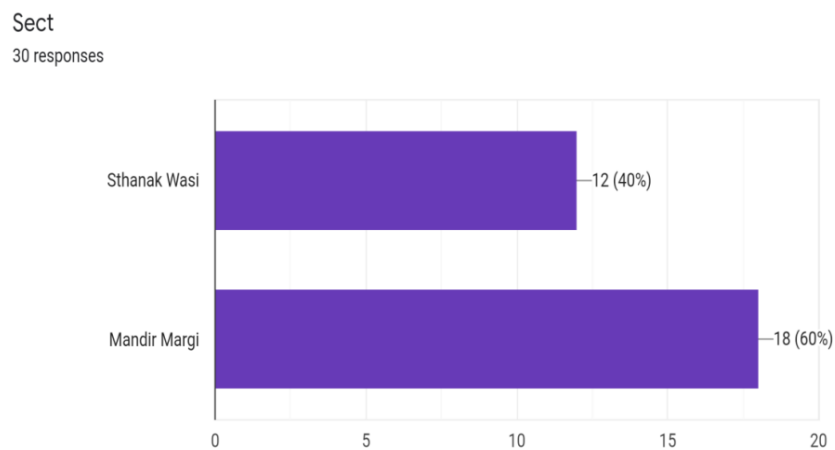


Figure3: Sect of Sadhvis (Source: Data collected through questionnaire survey)

Figure 3 reveals about sect of the Sadhvis, in which 60% belongs to Mandir Margi and 40% belongs to Sthanak Wasi. Majority of Sadhvis in Western Malwa is of Mandir Margi i.e. Mandir Margi Sadhvis do Vihar more as compare to Sthanak Wasi Sadhvis

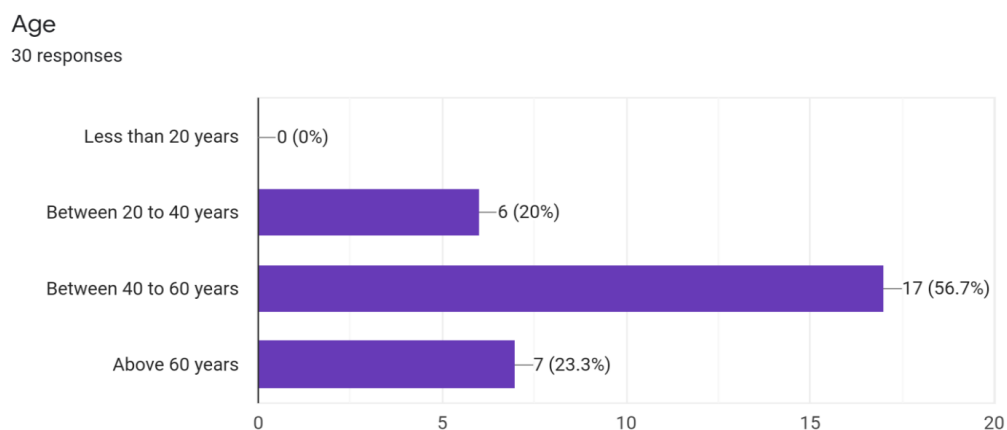


Figure4: Age of Sadhvis (Source: Data collected through questionnaire Survey)

It displays the age of Sadhvis, most Sadhvis is of 40 to 60 years of age group, 7 Sadhvis is of 40-60 years of age and 6 Sadhvis is of 20-40 years of age, none of Sadhvis is of less than 20 years of the age.



Education before Diksha

30 responses

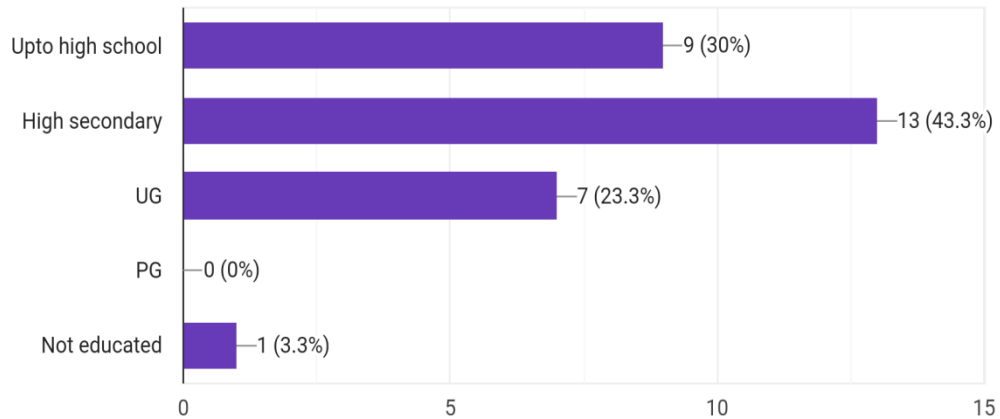


Figure5: Education of Sadhvis before Diksha (Source: Data collected through questionnaire survey)

Given figure stated about the education of Sadhvis, 13 sadhvis completed high secondary, 9 were educated up to high school and 7 were educated up to Graduation.

Time spent in sobriety

30 responses

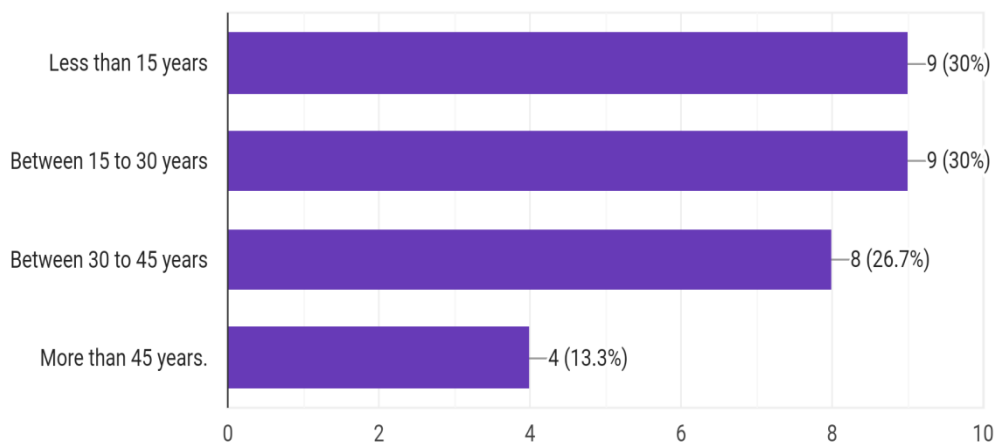


Figure6: Time spent in sobriety by Sadhvis (Source: Data collected through questionnaire survey)
Figure display that most of sadhvis spent 15-30 years in life of sobriety.



How much time do you spend in religious discussions?

30 responses

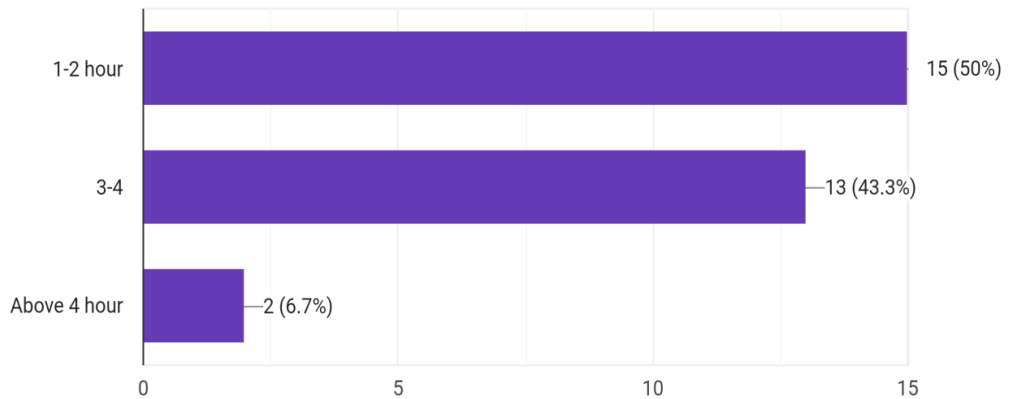


Figure7: Time Spend in religious discussions by Sadhvis (Source: Data Collected through Questionnaire Survey)

It stated that 15 Sadhvis spend 1-2 hours in religious discussions and 13 Sadhvis spend 3-4 hours and 2 sadhvis spend 4 hours.

Whether taking Diksha is essential to attain Moksha?

30 responses

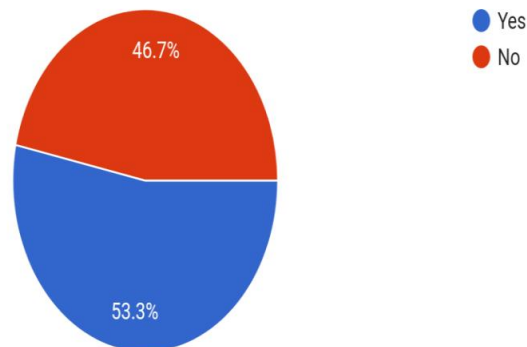


Figure8: Whether taking diksha is essential to attain Moksha? (Source: Data collected through Questionnaire Survey)

53.3 % says that diksha is essential to attain moksha , where as 46.7 % says that diksha is not essential to attain Moksha.

VIII. Outcomes of Research:

Through the research work, many points cleared & researcher also get views of Sadhvis in context of religion, they are:

- Figure3 shows Sadhvis belong to which sect, out of total 30 Sadhvis, 12 belongs to Sthanakwasi & 18 belongs to Mandir Margi.

- Figure 4 shows Sadhvis whom researcher surveyed, belongs to different age group, in which majority of Sadhvis between 40 to 60 years of age.

- Figure 5 shows education of Sadhvis before Diksha shows that majority of Sadhvis educated up to Higher Secondary.



- Figure 6 shows that majority of Sadhvis spent 15 to 30 years in sobriety.
- Figure 7 shows the time spent by Sadhvis in religious discussions with lay people; majority of Sadhvis spent 3-4 hours for welfare of mankind.
- Figure 8 shows that 53.3% Sadhvis told that it is not essential to take Diksha, to attain Moksha, only “Bhaav Shuddhi” is important, if one opinion/ thoughts are pure, then deeds will be pure & character will also be pure, as a result one will be able to attain Moksha like as ²Mata Marudevi had attained Moksha without Initiation (Diksha).
- Majority of Sadhvis told that, “There are many, who listen & understand religion, but there is a shortage of those who adopt religion in their life in a true manner. Sadhvi Sangh is working for this purpose, so that no. of people adopting religion in their life: continues to increase & religion also grows further.
- Religion is not for pomp & show, but for inner Purification i.e. purification of actions, heart & words. Before do penance one should understand knowledge & philosophy of religion with purity of character. So it is duty of all lay people to do hard work to purify their character in a whole way i.e. by heart, words & deeds.

Acknowledgement:

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IX. Conclusion:

As per analysis of survey of Sadhvis it is concluded that, do hard penance & Chanting the names of Tirthankar is not religion, but religion is the way of living a life without anger, greed, jealousy & unwanted desires etc.

The true followers of Religion will be those, who will adopt religion not for the sake of pomp & show, but for inner purification & attainment of Moksha.

Religion will progress in true sense only, when all the lay people will explain the importance of their religion to the new generation & when the new generation joins the Paatshala & Shivir, than they will be able to preserve the heritage in the form of religion. Message of Sadhvis for lay people; “Keep the Feelings of Compassion, Kindness & Friendship in yourself, connect yourself with

religion & inspire your children to be associated with the religion”.

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² Mata Marudevi: Mother of First Tirthankar Lord Rishabh Dev.