

JAIN UNIVERSITY

Declared as Deemed-to-be University u/s 3 of the UGC Act, 1956

RESEARCH RETREAT

18 – 19 August 2012

REPORT

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About the Retreat

Jain University has research students pursuing their doctoral studies in six domains: Languages, Social Sciences and Humanities, Science, Commerce and Management and Engineering and Technology. The University encourages inter-disciplinary research and has a rigorous course work schedule for all those who register for a Ph.D. Degree.

The University decided to organize a two day Research Retreat for all its Doctoral Students and Supervisors. The Retreat aimed at providing a platform for dialogue across discipline domains. The Retreat schedule was carefully planned to ensure that each doctoral student and supervisor benefitted from the two day interaction

Participation at the Retreat

The Retreat was open to Doctoral students in Jain University and the Doctoral Supervisors/ Guides. More than 300 participants registered for the Retreat. Those registered included doctoral students at different stages of their research work.

Programme Structure

Day 1 of the Retreat was devoted to four plenary sessions. The theme of each session was carefully chosen in order to cater to the needs of researchers from diverse backgrounds.

The Inaugural Plenary was addressed by Dr Chenraj Jain, President of the Jain University Trust. Dr Sandeep Shastri, Pro Vice Chancellor of Jain University welcomed all the participants and spoke of the Retreat as a fulfillment of a promise made to the President of the Jain University Trust more than a year ago. The President had spoken of the need to bring together all researchers at the University on a common platform. In his inaugural address, Dr Chenraj Jain complimented the Doctoral Students for having chosen Jain University as their research platform. He encouraged them to view research as a commitment which went beyond acquiring a formal degree. He underscored the fact Jain University aims at excellence and this fact defines our approach to research also. Dr.N.Sundararajan, Vice Chancellor, Jain University also

spoke at the Inaugural Plenary. Dr Mythili P Rao, Dean Languages proposed the Vote of Thanks.

The first plenary session was addressed by the renowned scientist Dr Rodham Narasimha. Professor Narasimha is currently an Honorary Professor and the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research. Dr Narasimha dwelt of the emerging frontiers of research and touched on the need for bringing together expertise from across different disciplines. He also made out a strong case for greater industry-academia collaboration for more meaningful and focused research. There was a brief interactive session at the end of the presentation. Dr N G R lyengar, Director, IIAEM, Jain University presided over this Plenary.

The second plenary speaker was Dr S.Sadagopan, Director, IIIT. He made out a strong case for Boundary-less Research. He underscored the need for researchers to have a strong passion to undertake research. He rightly emphasized that research for a degree was just a small part of the larger research agenda a scholar needs to have. There was a lively interaction session at the end of the presentation. Dr. Jayagopal Uchil, Director Planning and Administration, Jain University chaired the session.

The last plenary session on Day 1, had Dr M.S. Thimmappa, the former Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University and an accomplished and well recognized Psychologist speaking about his research journey. He began by complimenting Jain University for showcasing its Research Agenda so prominently. He drew the attention of the audience to the fact that a researcher needs to have a clear focus, an unwavering commitment and a deep desire to contribute to the enhancement of knowledge. Prof. N.V.H.Krishnan, Registrar, Jain University presided over the third plenary.

At the end of Day 1, participants reflected on the fact that the learnings from the day went much beyond their expectations and were eagerly awaiting the sessions of Day 2.

Day 2 of the Retreat began with five Faculty specific Plenary Sessions. The researchers in the Faculty of Languages dialogued with Dr Vanamala Vishwanatha, Professor of English Studies at the Azim Premji University. The doctoral students and guides in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities interacted with Dr R S Deshpande, Director ISEC on developments in Social Science Research. The Pure Science researchers had an interactive session with Professor M.R.N. Murthy Professor of Molecular Biophysics at IISc. The Engineering Sciences doctoral students and supervisors had a discussion session with Dr Krishnappa Banga, General Manager, Talent Transformation, Wipro Technologies. The Management researchers had a

lively interactive session with Dr Harry, a well known HR Consultant. For the Engineering stream there was a second Faculty Plenary, in which Professor S.K.Bhagavan, Consultant, Wipro Technologies spoke on Reinventing Engineering Education and Research.

Subsequent to the Faculty Plenary Sessions, the participants broke up into 20 Concurrent Sessions based on the specific discipline domain in which they were pursuing/ guiding research. At these, doctoral students who had completed their course, made presentations on the progress of their work. The presentations were followed by discussions in which both the doctoral supervisors and students participated. Fourteen presenters across discipline domains were selected for best presentation awards. They included Shireen Nedungadi (English), C.S.Varuni (Kannada), Jayaa (Cultural Studies), Saraswathi (Political Science), S.K. Maithri (Biotechnology), Vijaylakshmi (Microbiology), Asha Rajiv (Physics), Asha Crasta (Mathematics), Sowmya Puttaraju (Psychology), Shinu Abhi (Management), Muzameel Ahmed (Mechanical Engineering), Pushpavathi (Computer Science Engineering), Chandrashekar Badachi (Electronics Engineering) and Umesh (Civil Engineering).

The valedictory session saw the participants reflecting on the outcomes and learnings of the two day session. Doctoral students as well as Guides, complimented the University for arranging such a unique event which provided an opportunity for a dialogue across disciplinary boundaries. Many endorsed the fact that the Retreat was a reflection of the meticulous way in which the University took forward its research initiatives. They marveled at the imagination that went into the planning of the sessions and the attention to detail. The researchers who had won the best presentation awards received their certificates and cash prizes at the Valedictory. The valedictory speaker was Dr C. G. Krishna Das Nair, the Chancellor of Jain University. Dr Nair expressed satisfaction with the way the Retreat had been conducted. He highlighted the fact that the reflections of the participants were clearly indicative of the success of the programme. He hoped that the Retreat would be an annual event and a forerunner for many more research initiatives of the University. He made a strong case for further aligning the research activities to the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of the University with a focus on innovation and creativity. The President of the Jain University Trust, Dr Chenraj Jain also spoke at the Valedictory plenary and expressed satisfaction that the Retreat was a positive step in the direction of bringing together researchers from different disciplines. Dr Sudha Deshmukh, Dean – Science proposed the Vote of Thanks.

The Research Retreat was, in the words of the participants, an enriching Academic Retreat and a fascinating `Treat of Learning and Sharing Experiences`.