



The Indian Council for
Cultural Relations



Webinar
On
Issues and Perspectives in Indology

Organized by

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (New Delhi)
&
The Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (Pune)

Keynote Speaker
Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President, ICCR

Convener
Prof. Sharad Deshpande
Former Professor of Philosophy, University of Pune

19-21 November 2020 at 3.00 p.m. (IST)

Indian Council of Cultural Relations

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of independent India, founded the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on 9th April 1950.

The objectives of the Council are to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's external cultural relations; to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people; to establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture; and to take such measures as may be required to further these objectives.

The ICCR is about a communion of cultures, a creative dialogue with other nations. To facilitate this interaction with world cultures, the Council strives to articulate and demonstrate the diversity and richness of the cultures of India, both in and with other countries of the world.

The Council prides itself on being a pre-eminent institution engaged in cultural diplomacy and the sponsor of intellectual exchanges between India and partner countries. It is the Council's resolve to continue to symbolize India's great cultural and educational efflorescence in the years to come.

Message



It is my delight to be a part of the Indology Webinar which is organized by ICCR in collaboration with the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune. ICCR took the initiative of organizing the Indology Conference in the year 2015 and the first Indology Conference was held in New Delhi at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Subsequently, conferences were held in the years 2016 in China and 2018 at St Petersburg, Russia. In this series, a 3-day webinar on *Issues and Perspectives in Indology* is being organized from 19-21 November 2020, that is intended to develop a network of academic communication and conceptual construct through the creation of a common platform for discussing and understanding the methodologies utilized for studying the historical and comparative method based on Indian texts in the study of Indian society, its traditions, heritage and civilizational values.

I am sure the webinar will highlight the true spirit of Indian culture and its genesis and touch upon various aspects of Indian traditions, be it *Natyasastra*, *the Study of Sanskrit Sources*, or the *Indian Sculptural Tradition* or future prospects and importance of studying Indology and also help in identifying the challenges we are facing so as to acknowledge them and carve a way forward.

The present scenario has confirmed our belief in our Indian traditions, be it the “Namaskara” (the Indian way of greeting), Ayurveda (the importance of age old natural remedies), astronomy (jyotisha), Vedic mathematics or philosophy— the list is inexhaustible. It is high time that we identify and promote our knowledge systems and understand contemporary relevance of Indological research.

(Dinesh K Patnaik)
Director General, ICCR

Concept Note

Issues and Perspectives in Indology

Classical Indology during colonial era is marked by a thorough and painstaking scholarship of such eminent Indologists as William Jones, Henry Thomas Colebrooke, Max Müller and others in translating some of the key texts of ancient Indian civilization and making them available to the modern Western civilization. However, based on relevant observations, a strong argument in the recent past has developed challenging many presuppositions of classical Indology, especially its subtext that Indian civilization is mythical, esoteric and other-worldly, without a sense of history, devoid of scientific temper, incapable of developing theoretical and practical sciences. This argument invites a judicious and a non-biased re-examination of many theories in circulation as also exploration of hitherto unnoticed aspects of Indian civilization giving rise to 'New Indology'.

How should Indian scholars contribute to the generation of a new Indology in partnership with their confreres in the global arena in a manner which is true to the spirit and substance of India's rich, varied and living cultural heritage? What would be the appropriate epistemological underpinning of such a reconstructed *Bhārat-Vidyā* that could serve as a vehicle to understand India's civilizational self?

Focusing on these questions, a three day Webinar was organized by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) New Delhi, in association with Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) Pune, on 19-21 November 2020 to address some of the methodological, textual-historical, architectural, sociological, and environmental issues involved in understanding the complexities of Indian society with particular attention to desiderata including the identification and use of source materials, knowledge systems, and methods of translation and interpretation. The objectives of the webinar are (a) to focus on Indological research in contemporary perspective (b) to take forward some major debates in Indology, and (c) to stress interdisciplinary potential of Indology.

Prof. Sharad Deshpande,
Convener

Schedule of Webinar

Date & Time: 19-21 November 2020

Platform: CISCO-Webex Platform of ICCR

Opening Day: Thursday, 19 November 2020 – 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. (IST)

- * **Welcome by Shri. Prashant Pise**, Deputy Director General, ICCR and **Dr. Shrinand Bapat**, Secretary, BORI.
- * **Introductory Remarks by Prof. Sharad Deshpande**, Convener of the Webinar.
- * **Keynote Address by Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe**, President, ICCR.

- * ***Presentations:***
 - i) **Prof. Michel Danino** (IIT Gandhi Nagar): *The Uneven Playing Field of Indology*
 - ii) **Dr. Joydeep Bagchee** (Hindu University, USA): *Prolegomena to Future Indology*

- * **Question & Answer Session**

Day 2: Friday, 20 November 2020 – 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. (IST)

- * **Prof. Sharad Deshpande** (Convener): **Introductory Remarks**

- * ***Presentations:***
 - i) **Prof. Arvind Jamkhedkar** (Chairman, ICHR) : *The Study of Sanskrit Sources and Medieval History of India*
 - ii) **Dr. Nanditha Krishna** (CPR Institute of Indological Research, Chennai) : *Integrating the Environment into Indian History*

- * **Question & Answer Session**

Day 3: Saturday, 21 November 2020 – 3.00 to 5.00 p.m. (IST)

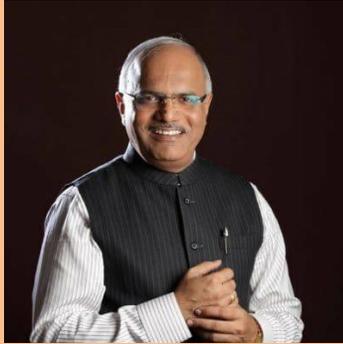
- * **Prof. Sharad Deshpande** (Convener) **Introductory Remarks**

- * ***Presentations:***
 - i) **Prof. Radhavallabh Tripathi**, (Former VC, Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth): *Why Natyasastra is neglected disciple of Indology*
 - ii) **Prof. Deepak Kannal** (MS University, Vadodara): *Tradition of Anonymity and Indian Sculptural Tradition*

- * **Question & Answer Session**

- * **Dr. Amruta Natu** (BORI): **Vote of Thanks**

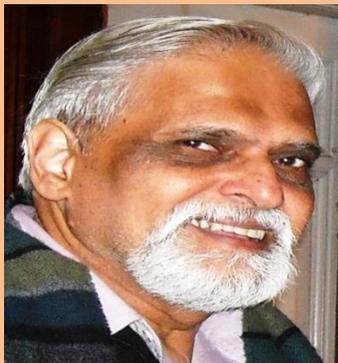
**Brief about the Participant speakers for the Three day webinar
On
*Issues and Perspectives in Indology***



Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President ICCR (Keynote Speaker)

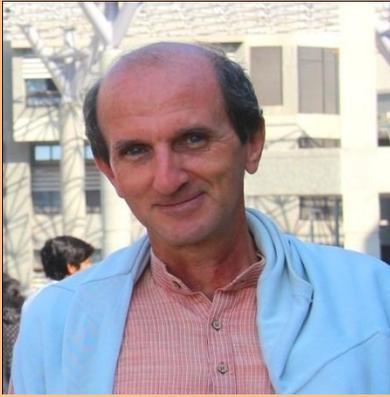
Key-Note

Abstract: The Greek and the Egyptian civilizations, very influential and also culturally rich once upon a time have ceased to exist in the course of history. But Indian civilization has survived over the last 5000 years or so despite disruptions and long periods of subjugation by foreign powers. The resilience of Indian culture lies in its extraordinary capacity to assimilate and even integrate religious beliefs, languages and ways of living from other cultures by keeping its core of values---religious, spiritual and ethical--intact. This remarkable feature of Indian culture invites Indologists to explore history of India's past with a fresh outlook using new methods of interpretation of Indian culture that comprises the rich philosophies of Vedanta, Buddhism and Jainism.



Prof. Sharad Deshpande (Convener)
Former Professor of Philosophy, University of Pune

Abstract: Among all humanistic disciplines Indology is probably the most vulnerable to positions, perspectives and even political ideologies, However, there is a need to have a fresh approach to many existing views and theories giving rise to "New Indology"; which, on the one hand will be free from colonial mind-set with its many contested presuppositions about Indian civilization, but at the same time it will succumb to extreme positions on India's past, its value systems, religious beliefs and cultural practices. The New Indology will have to work on the vast "middle ground" that exists in between extreme positions.



Prof. Michel Danino *Visiting Professor I.I.T. Gandhinagar*

Abstract: *The Uneven Playing Field of Indology*

This presentation argues that current Indological studies are inflected by Western dominance. This dominance is institutional and systemic but also conceptual. While “Western” Indology has accomplished much of great value, it has also harmed India’s self-perception. Indeed, behind these challenges lies the problem of how to deal with a living civilization and culture(s). Sensitivities have been trampled upon and too often Indian society, traditions, thought and belief systems have been sought to be labelled, categorized and theorized, rather than understood on their own terms. Indian civilization has been too often regarded as a milch cow expected to supply endless streams of data that Indian scholars were more often than not incompetent to make sense of. There has to be a road towards better attitudes and more fruitful and lasting work, and this presentation will conclude with a few suggestions on the way forward.



Prof. Joydeep Bagchee, *Hindu University, America*

Abstract: *Prolegomena to Any Future Indology*

The word “Prolegomena” in the title honors Sukthankar’s landmark 1933 discussion of the Mahābhārata textual tradition, appended to the first volume of his critical edition of the Mahābhārata. Sukthankar’s “Prolegomena” marked a watershed moment in the history of Indology. Sukthankar not only demonstrated that Indian scholars could learn and assimilate innovations in textual criticism and philology; he also proved that these methods, when applied objectively could validate and preserve the transmission and traditional reception of Indian texts. This presentation contrasts Sukthankar’s careful philology with the ideological interventions German scholars made in ancient texts in the name of historical reconstruction. I will show how methods such as “text-historicism” and “contamination criticism” have failed to produce objective, unbiased results.



Prof. Arvind P. Jamkhedkar, Chairman, Indian Council of Historical Research Govt. of India

Abstract: *The Study of Sanskrit Sources and the Medieval History of India*

While studying the Medieval History of India hardly any sources in Sanskrit are used whereas for the later medieval period the sources used are mostly in Persian in the form of *fermans*, Royal accounts maintained by Court, etc. which depicts socio-political aspects of later medieval period. In the case of the earlier part of the medieval period, the tendency is to brand the literature in Sanskrit and other Indian languages as poetry not reflecting socio-political aspects of life of the medieval society. However, studies like the study of Jagannath Cult, the study of ‘agrahāra’ inscriptions in the context of Rashtrakuta land grants, a study of the Śivālaya-māhātmya’ of the Śiva-Purāna shed light on the socio-religious life during the medieval times. ‘Āmalī-grāma-māhātmya’ in the Sahyādri-khanda of the Skanda-Purāna offers a mixture of certain myths of Gond origin and the political role of the Gond chiefs in the post-Yadava medieval period.



Dr. Nanditha Krishna C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation Chennai.

Abstract: *The Environment and Indian History*

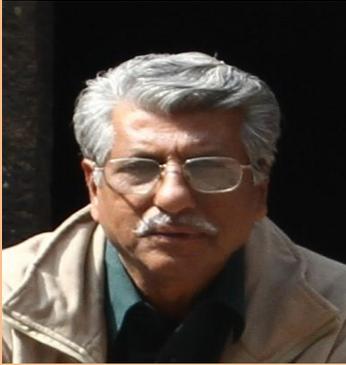
The impact of the environment on the history of India has been tremendous, such as the impact of the climate on the Indus Saraswati Civilization; the evolution of the Vedas from the region of the dying Saraswati to the resource rich Indo-Gangetic Plains; the forests of India as gleaned from the Ramayana; urbanization in the Mahabharata; and so on. The growing study of the impact of the environment on historical events and vice versa has led scholars to re-examine Indology. It behooves us to re-examine Indology from the perspective of the integration of environment and culture on the one hand, and the decimation and gradual desertification of the land and impoverishment of the people on the other, from the wealth of materials in our literature about the dependence of human beings on nature and their duties towards plants and sentient beings.



**Prof. Radhavallabh Tripathi, Former Vice-Chancellor,
Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Delhi**

Abstract: *Why Nāṭyaśāstra is a Neglected Discipline in Indology?*

Nāṭyaśāstra (NS) is a systematic presentation of the conceptual frameworks as well as the theories and the practices of theatre that had evolved during a few millennia in India in BCE. It casts an everlasting influence on the regional theatric traditions not only in India but on the theatric traditions of many other Asian countries too. During medieval period the *NS* has sunk in oblivion, the living traditions of its practice being disrupted at least in Northern India. The re-discovery of *NS* in nineteenth century became one of the most exciting events in the global history of aesthetics and theatre. Despite attempts at collecting the manuscripts of the *NS* and preparing critical editions, *NS* has remained a neglected discipline in Indological studies. This presentation aims at examining the reasons for an over-all apathy and indifference towards *NS* in the world of Indology.

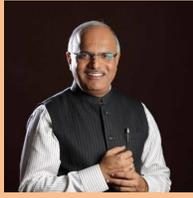


**Prof. Deepak Kannal Former Professor of Art History and
Aesthetics, M.S. University of Baroda**

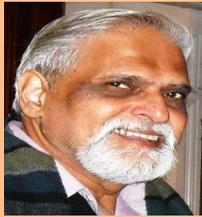
Abstract: *Tradition of Anonymity and Indian Sculptural History*

Ancient Indian Sculpture is one of the most neglected areas in Indian Art Historical studies. The Europeans were curious about the historical details but looked at it from the patronizing Orientalist perspective and did not consider Indian art as a classical tradition. As a result, the Indian artist was never given a status of a master. This presentation attempts to give a broad framework of the intrinsic study of Indian sculptural tradition based on the actual remains, their formal characteristics and stylistic evolution, morphological developments particularly from an Indian perspective with due awareness of the culture specificity of the evolutionary patterns. It tries to identify a number of masters and attribute a certain corpus of sculptural creation to each of them.

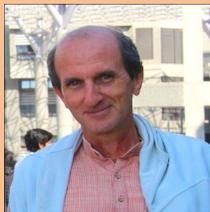
Brief about the Participant speakers:



Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe is the President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha and also Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resources Development. An activist-researcher at the core, Dr. Sahasrabuddhe is the Vice President of Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini which is South Asia's only training and research academy for elected representatives and voluntary social workers. Dr. Sahasrabuddhe is currently the National In-Charge of twin departments of the party, viz Policy Research and Good Governance. A freelance journalist, Dr. Sahasrabuddhe is a regular contributor to several English and Marathi dailies and weeklies and a blogger as well. The University of Mumbai awarded him a doctorate in Politics in 2009 for his thesis 'Political Parties as Victims of Populism and Electoral Compulsions: A Quest for systemic Solutions' which was later published as a book, titled 'Beyond a Billion Ballots.'



Professor Sharad Deshpande's teaching and research career in Indian and Western philosophy at University of Pune spans over four decades. He has held Tagore Fellowship at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, British Council Visiting Fellowship at U.K., Visiting Fellowship at Maison De Sciences, Paris and a Visiting Professorship of Indian Council of Philosophical Research. Prof. Deshpande has widely lectured on various philosophical topics in Indian Universities. Prof. Deshpande's publications include eight books and a vast number of research articles in various journals and anthologies. *Philosophy in Colonial India* (ed) is his recent publication.



Professor Michel Danino has been living in India since 1977 and is an Indian citizen. An independent student of Indian civilization, he authored or edited several books on proto-historical India (including *The Lost River: On the Trail of the Saraswati*, Penguin Books 2010), Indian culture (including *Indian Culture and India's Future*, DK Printworld 2011) and knowledge systems. Since 2011, he has been teaching courses on Indian civilization and heritage at IIT Gandhinagar, where he is currently visiting professor. In 2017, he was awarded *Padma Shri* by the Government of India.



Dr. Joydeep Bagchee a Berlin-based Indologist, philosopher, and scholar of intellectual history. His research primarily focuses on the reception of Indian texts in the West in both the colonial and post-colonial periods. Prof. Bagchee holds a PhD from the New School for Social Research, New York in Philosophy. Together with Prof. Vishwa Adluri, he is a co-author of the *Nay Science: A History of German Indology, Philology and Criticism: A Guide to Mahabharata Textual Criticism* He has also co-edited the volume: *Argument and Design: The Unity of Mahabharata*. Prof. Bagchi teaches courses in Orientalism, Race theory and the history of Humanities at the Hindu University of America.



Dr. A.P. Jamkhedkar has a Master's degree in Sanskrit and Linguistics and Ph.D in Ancient Indian Culture from Deccan College, Pune University. His teaching and research career spans over five decades. He was Director of Archaeology and Museums Government of Maharashtra (1977-97). He is associated with Asiatic Society of Mumbai, and presently, he is the Chancellor of the Deccan College, Pune (Deemed to be University) and the Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research.

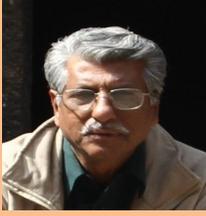


Dr. Nanditha Krishna is a historian, environmentalist and author based in Chennai. She is currently the President of the C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar Foundation. She has been a Professor, University of Madras and a D.Litt from Vidyasagar University, West Bengal. She has been documenting India's Ecological Heritage Traditions. In 1990, she was deputed to the Archaeological Survey of India's restoration of Angkor Wat in Cambodia. She has researched the Khmer temples and reported on the restoration process. She is the author of twenty three books, including *Hinduism and Nature, Sacred Plants of India* and *Sacred Animals of India*, published by Penguin India.



Professor Radhavallabh Tripathi is a former Vice-Chancellor of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan (Deemed University, Delhi) and has served as Professor at

Harisingh Gour University, Sagar (M.P., India). He was a Fellow at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, and a Visiting Professor at Silpakorn University, Bangkok. Presently he is Karnataka Chair of Orientology at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune. Widely acclaimed for his original contributions to the study of *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Sāhityaśāstra*, Prof. Tripathi has authored large number of books, critical essays and translations of Sanskrit plays and classics from Sanskrit into Hindi. He has received many national and international awards including the Sahitya Akademi Award and UGC Veda-Vyas Samman. Prof. Tripathi has delivered lectures in various institutions in USA, Russia, and many European countries and also Nepal, Bhutan and Iran.



Professor Deepak Kannal is an Art Historian, a sculptor and a teacher. He taught at the Department of Art History and Aesthetics, Faculty of Fine Arts, MSU of Baroda. His publications includes two books and a monograph, five edited volumes- three of them co-edited, three edited journals, and more than seventy papers and articles on Art and Aesthetics. He has participated in many National/Inter National seminars, has delivered series of lectures for coveted institutes in India, US and UK and was invited on prestigious chairs instituted by various Academies, Museums and Universities.

Prof. Kannal is a recipient of a number of awards, scholarships and distinctions in Sculpture, Theatre and Art History including the Charles Wallace fellowship at Cambridge, UK, National Lalitkala honorable mention, Gujarat Lalit Kala awards, A.P. Council National award, The Gujarat Gaurav Puraskar, Raja Ravi Verma Samman and the Tagore National Fellowship under which, he is working on the correspondence between Indian Linguistic Theories and Indian sculpture.
