

## Introduction to Ancient Indian Iconography- Marathi

November 3 to December 17, 2025

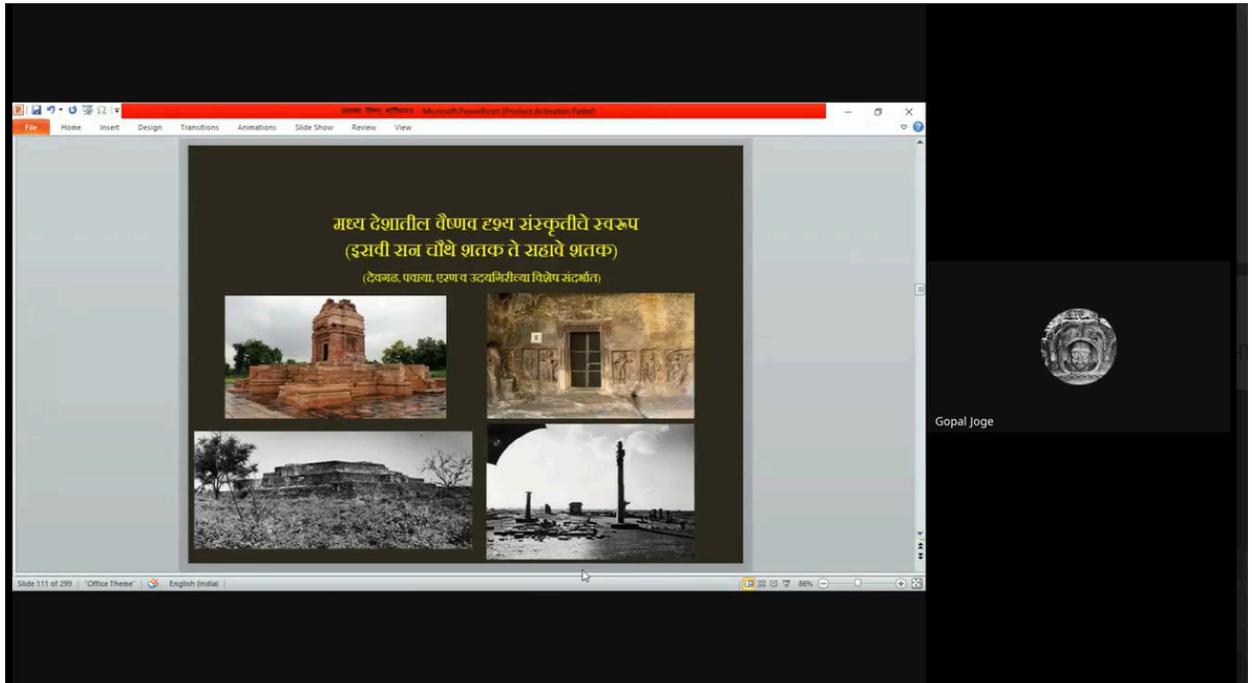
Mode - Online

The **30-session certificate course** titled *Introduction to Ancient Indian Iconography* commenced on **3rd November** and is currently ongoing. The programme is academically oriented, aiming to introduce participants to the iconographic traditions of Ancient India and to trace the development and evolution of symbols within the **Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain** traditions.

The sessions are being facilitated by an invited panel of **distinguished faculty from across India**, representing diverse specialisations in art history, archaeology, and cultural studies.

### Course Objectives:

- To familiarise participants with the terminology and conceptual framework of Ancient Indian iconography.
- To explore the semiotics of forms, gestures (*mudrās*), attributes (*āyudhas*), and narrative depictions.
- To understand the evolution and development of the sculptural culture in Ancient India.
- To interpret visual material in its historical and cultural contexts.



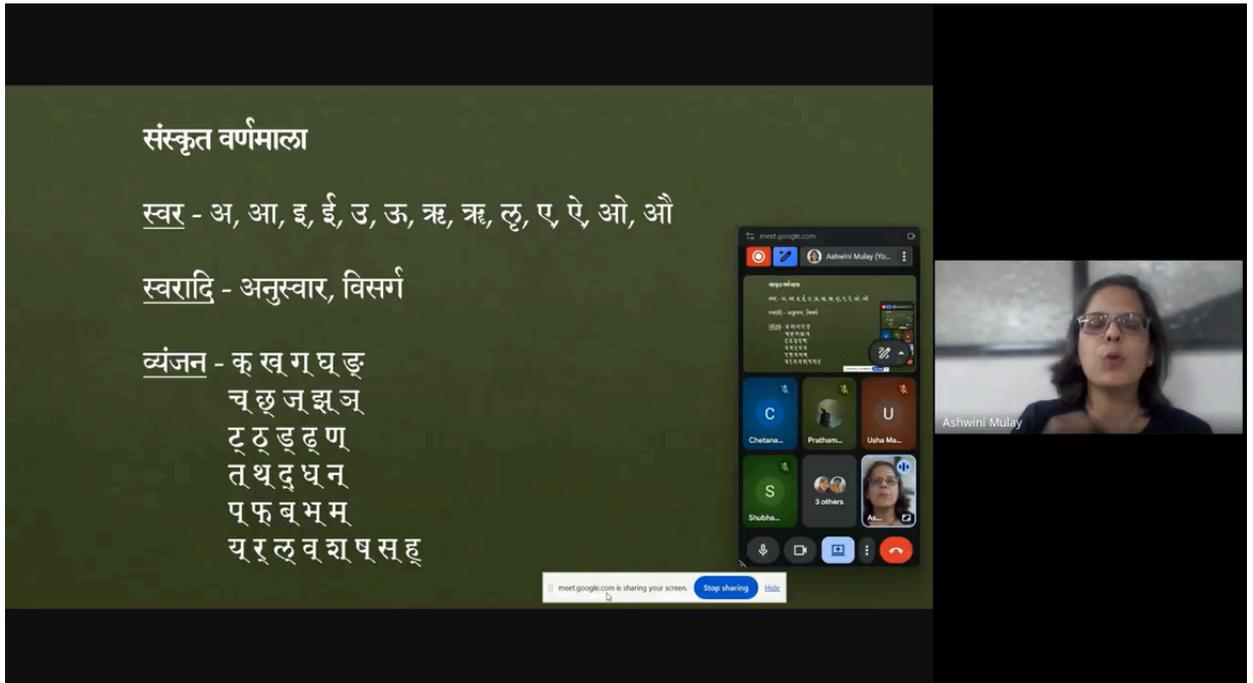
## Online Certificate Course in Sanskrit Language

December 6, 2025 onwards

Mode - Online

As part of its ongoing academic and outreach initiatives, Sambhāṣā Foundation is conducting a **Preliminary Online Certificate Course in Sanskrit Language**, aimed at introducing learners to the fundamentals of Sanskrit through a structured, accessible, and academically grounded approach.

The course is designed for beginners and interested learners from diverse backgrounds, offering a step-by-step introduction to **basic Sanskrit grammar, prose and poetry reading, and textual comprehension**. Emphasis is placed on learning through clear explanations, guided examples, and gradual progression, enabling participants to develop both confidence and clarity in engaging with Sanskrit texts.



## Art Deco- Heritage Walk

December 7, 2025

Mode - Offline - On site

Sambhāṣā Foundation organised an Art Deco heritage walk in old Pune to explore the history, evolution, and everyday impact of the Art Deco architectural style. The walk traced the movement from its global origins—its cultural backdrop, reasons for emergence, and spread—to its arrival in India, focusing particularly on Pune as an early centre of adaptation. Participants observed how the city adopted this international design language while blending it with local

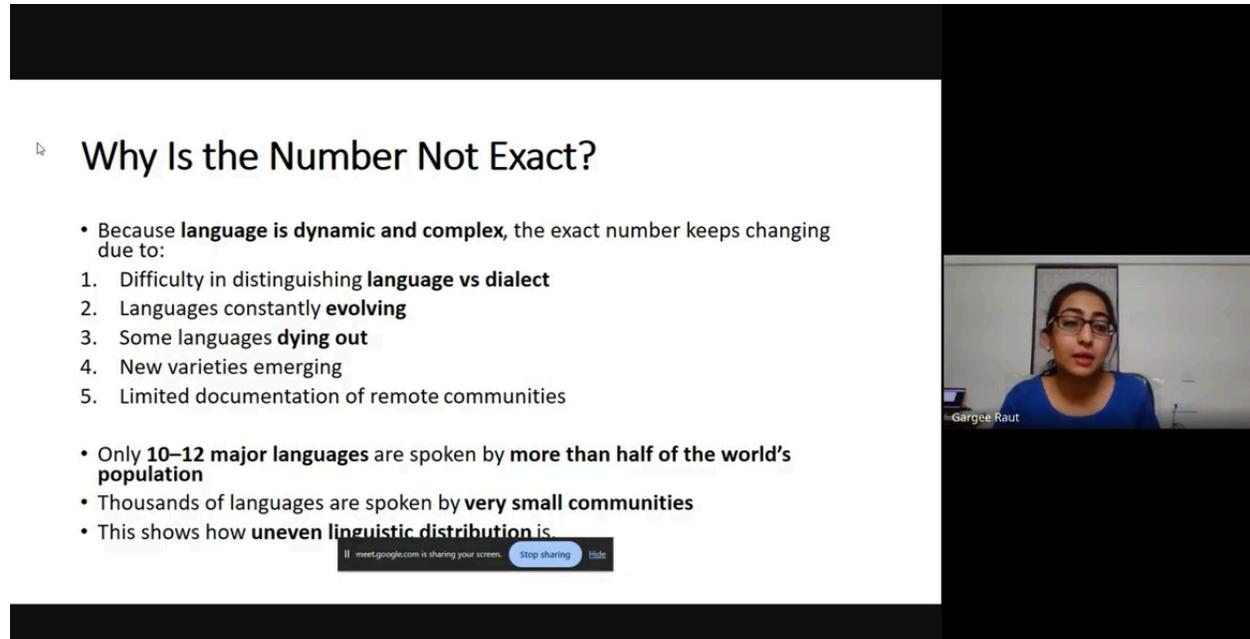
aesthetics, resulting in buildings that feature Indian traditional motifs, cultural symbols, and regional materials within the Art Deco framework. The walk also highlighted the visual harmony between Pune’s older wada architecture and later Art Deco structures, showcasing a unique urban landscape where heritage and modernity stand side by side.



**Study Group**  
**December 26, 2025**  
**Mode - Online**

The December 2025 edition of the Sambhasha Study Group featured a session titled “**Languages: A Fun Introduction to Linguistics,**” conducted by Gargee Raut. The session offered participants an engaging and accessible introduction to how languages function, moving beyond technical theory to explore language through everyday experiences. Topics such as quirky grammatical patterns, the stories behind words, and the process of language acquisition in children were discussed through interactive activities, games, and relatable examples. The session encouraged curiosity, laughter, and active participation, helping learners appreciate

linguistics as a dynamic and fascinating field. Overall, the study group successfully presented language not merely as a tool of communication, but as a living, creative, and deeply human phenomenon.



**Why Is the Number Not Exact?**

- Because **language is dynamic and complex**, the exact number keeps changing due to:
  1. Difficulty in distinguishing **language vs dialect**
  2. Languages constantly **evolving**
  3. Some languages **dying out**
  4. New varieties emerging
  5. Limited documentation of remote communities
- Only **10–12 major languages** are spoken by **more than half of the world's population**
- Thousands of languages are spoken by **very small communities**
- This shows how **uneven linguistic distribution is**

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Gargee Raut

## Research Projects

### PGKM School Project based learning programme ‘Exploring Maharashtra’ Grade V

Building on the success of the previous year’s project-based social science learning programme conducted with Grade VI students of PGKM school, this ongoing initiative aims to explore the impact of early experiential learning in shaping foundational social science understanding among younger learners. Observations from earlier programmes have indicated that introducing students to the study of their surroundings and their formation through activities, interaction, and storytelling significantly enriches the overall learning experience.

In response to this, Sambhasha Foundation has designed a customised curriculum titled **“Exploring Maharashtra,”** developed specifically for Grade V students, conducted with Grade V students of PGKM school. The programme adopts a project-based learning framework that connects key concepts of social science with students’ lived experiences, thereby emphasising the relevance of historical and geographical knowledge in their immediate surroundings.

The programme is being implemented in close alignment with the school’s monthly interdisciplinary themes to ensure that learning remains both meaningful and integrated. By linking social science concepts with other subjects such as environmental studies, language, and

art, *Exploring Maharashtra* seeks to create a holistic and contextually rich educational experience for young learners.

## **Ethnoarchaeological Survey of Traditional Communities in Pune**

### **Mode - Offline**

The research project of the Ethnoarchaeological Survey of Traditional Communities in Pune commenced this month. Pune, often referred to as the “Cultural Capital of Maharashtra,” is home to diverse traditional communities who have preserved their ancestral professions. These professions, ranging from pottery and metalwork to weaving and making jewellery, show the rich cultural heritage of the region. However, with rapid urbanization and modernization, many of these traditions are at risk of fading away. The purpose of this project is to conduct an ethnoarchaeological survey of 10 traditional communities in Pune. The aim is to document their cultural practices, tools, techniques, and the historical significance of their professions. This study will help in understanding how these professions have evolved over time and the challenges faced by these communities today. The fieldwork is scheduled every Wednesday, when the old town is explored in search of these communities. This month, the communities like Burud (basket makers), Tambat (coppersmiths), Kumbhar (potters), and Attarwale (perfume makers) were being surveyed.

This month, we have successfully documented the traditional practices of two communities as part of our ongoing ethnoarchaeological project. The documentation has been carried out digitally, with the processes visually represented through detailed illustrations. These have been compiled into informative brochures. Additionally, the script for the documentary is in its final stages, and we look forward to beginning production soon.





### **Nitsure Life Documentation**

The *Balkrishna Nitsure Life Documentation Project* focused on recording the life, craft practice, and philosophy of Balkrishna Nitsure, an independent woodcraft practitioner based in Pune. Trained in basic technical skills during his schooling and professionally engaged as a typist for several decades, Nitsure represents a rare example of a self-taught artisan who consciously chose to practise craft solely for personal fulfilment, rather than commercial gain.

The documentation captures his transition from professional life to full-time engagement with woodcraft after retirement, highlighting his sustained commitment to hand-crafted processes, patience-intensive carving techniques, and the use of found or reclaimed wood. The *Balkrishna Nitsure Life Documentation Project* is being undertaken using an oral history-based documentation methodology, as Balkrishna Nitsure is no longer alive. To reconstruct his life, practice, and philosophy, detailed conversations are being conducted with his family members, friends, former students, associates, and neighbours, allowing for a multi-vocal understanding of his personality, creative process, and everyday life.

In addition to oral testimonies, the project includes site-based documentation, with a visit to his former residence and workspace, where observations were recorded regarding his working environment, tools, spatial organisation, and the material traces of his craft practice. e. The documentation contributes to preserving the legacy of a non-commercial, self-motivated craft practice and demonstrates the value of oral history in recording intangible cultural heritage.

### **Documentation of Old Talims in Pune**

Sambhāṣā Foundation has initiated a new project to document the old Talims of Pune, many of which were established during the Peshwa period. These Talims are not merely wrestling schools but historic institutions that nurtured physical discipline, moral values, and social leadership. They significantly shaped community identity and played an important role in Maharashtra's

social and political awakening. However, with rapid urban change, modernization, and declining patronage, many traditional Talims face the threat of transformation or disappearance. This makes systematic documentation crucial to preserve their histories, practices, and cultural relevance for future generations.

### **Oral History Documentation Project**

This month, Sambhasha Foundation continued its oral history documentation project through detailed conversations with **Ms. Athale**, a century-old woman whose life journey spans the pre-independence, independence, and post-independence periods of Indian history. A degree holder in Political Science, she emerges as a well-informed and politically aware citizen whose observations offer a valuable, impartial lens into India's evolving socio-political landscape.

Ms. Athale hails from a family that actively supported reformist ideologies, which shaped her worldview and civic engagement from an early age. Her life experiences are further enriched by her residence in multiple regions across India, owing to her husband's service as an army doctor. This geographic mobility allowed her to witness regional variations in social practices, political awareness, and everyday responses to national events, all from within domestic and community spaces.

The project involves in-depth conversations not only with Ms. Athale but also with her daughters, enabling a layered understanding of her life, values, and intergenerational perspectives. These narratives collectively offer insight into how political ideas, national movements, and social reforms filtered into everyday household life rather than remaining confined to public or institutional domains.

This documentation aligns with what historian **Gerda Lerner** described as “the history of the majority”—the histories of representative individuals whose lived experiences, though not extraordinary in a conventional sense, collectively shaped social consciousness. Ms. Athale's testimony reveals how political ideologies were understood, negotiated, and practiced within domestic spaces, offering an essential counterpoint to elite or event-centric historical narratives.