

Introduction to archaeology online course**13 April- 27 May 2026****Mode- Online**

The 30-session certificate course titled *Introduction to Archaeology* commenced on 13 April 2026 and was conducted successfully by Sambhasha Foundation. The Online Certificate Course in *Introduction to Archaeology* was an academically oriented programme designed to introduce participants to the fundamental concepts, methods, and scope of archaeology as a discipline. The course aimed to build a strong foundational understanding of archaeological practices through a thematic and chronological approach, situating material remains within broader historical, cultural, and environmental contexts.

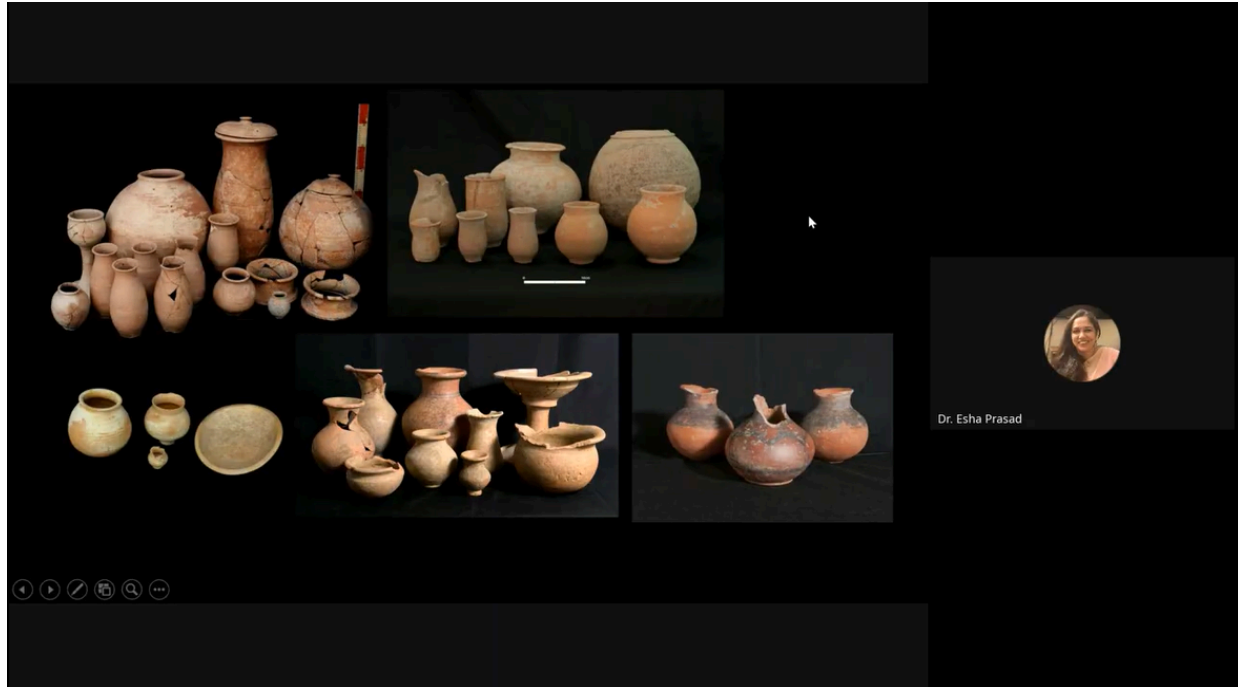
Conducted by Sambhasha Foundation, the programme brought together an interdisciplinary perspective by engaging scholars and practitioners from the fields of archaeology, history, anthropology, and heritage studies. This framework strengthened the academic outreach of the course and enabled meaningful knowledge exchange.

Course Objectives:

- To familiarise participants with the basic concepts, methods, and scope of archaeology as a discipline.
- To introduce key archaeological techniques including survey, excavation, dating methods, and documentation.
- To provide an overview of different types of archaeological evidence and their interpretation in reconstructing past human life.

The sessions were facilitated by a diverse faculty comprising senior scholars, researchers, and practitioners from across India, enabling participants to engage with multiple methodological and interpretative approaches while bridging the gap between academic scholarship and public understanding.

The course concluded successfully with the completion of all 30 sessions, providing participants with a comprehensive understanding of archaeology and its interdisciplinary nature. The programme ended with the distribution of certificates, marking the successful completion of the course and recognising the active participation of attendees.



Japanese Cultural Exhibition- Hinamtsuri and Kimonos

9 May 2026, 11.00am to 5.00pm

Mode: Offline

The **Japanese Cultural Exhibition** commenced at **11:00 AM** and concluded at **5:00 PM** on **9 May 2026** at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. The exhibition was organized with the objective of introducing visitors to the rich and diverse aspects of Japanese culture, history, language, and religion. It attracted a wide range of visitors, including students, researchers, cultural enthusiasts, and individuals interested in exploring Japanese traditions and heritage. The exhibition created an engaging and educational environment, encouraging visitors to gain a deeper appreciation of Japan's cultural practices and historical background.

The exhibition showcased various elements of Japanese culture through interactive and informative displays. Visitors were introduced to the Japanese writing system and were given the opportunity to experience writing in the Japanese language, allowing them to understand the uniqueness of Japanese scripts and linguistic traditions. Another major attraction of the exhibition was the Kimono experience, where visitors learned about the traditional Japanese attire, its cultural importance, and the process of wearing it. The exhibition also presented a timeline tracing the historical evolution and development of the Kimono, helping participants understand how clothing traditions changed across different historical periods in Japan.

In addition to language and attire, the exhibition highlighted important religious and cultural traditions practiced in Japan. Visitors gained insights into customs and festivals such as *Hinamatsuri* (Girls' Day), which introduced them to Japanese family traditions, symbolism, and festive practices. Through displays and explanations, participants were able to understand the significance of religion and ritual in shaping Japanese society and cultural identity.

To make the experience more engaging and interactive, several traditional Japanese games and cultural activities were organized during the exhibition. These activities encouraged visitor participation and created an enjoyable learning environment, allowing individuals to experience Japanese culture in a practical and immersive way rather than through observation alone. The interactive nature of the programme helped visitors connect more closely with cultural traditions and encouraged curiosity and cross-cultural understanding.

The exhibition served as an important platform for cultural exchange and education, helping participants broaden their perspectives on global cultures while fostering appreciation for Japanese heritage. It successfully combined historical learning, cultural engagement, and interactive participation, making the event both educational and enjoyable for attendees.

The Japanese Cultural Exhibition was successfully conducted through the collaborative efforts of Sambhasha Foundation and Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune. The programme concluded with positive participation and meaningful engagement, leaving visitors with a deeper understanding of Japanese history, traditions, language, and cultural practices.



Object Handling Session

18 May 2026,

Mode: Offline,

On the occasion of **International Museum Day** on **18 May 2026**, from **11:00 AM to 4:00 PM**, the “*Objects as Bridges*” Object Handling Session was organized by Sambhasha Foundation at the Gujarat Gallery of **Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum**, Pune. The program provided visitors with a unique opportunity to touch and experience different types of artefacts, including coins, stone tools, Darpan Sundari replicas, pottery, replicas of Indus Valley seals, and many more.

The main objective of the program was to offer visitors a hands-on experience with historical objects, which is generally not possible during regular museum visits due to artifact preservation concerns. Through this interactive approach, participants were able to engage more closely with history and cultural heritage.

The program was especially beneficial for children, as it helped them gain knowledge about history while encouraging curiosity, imagination, and creative thinking through direct interaction with artefacts.



Study Group

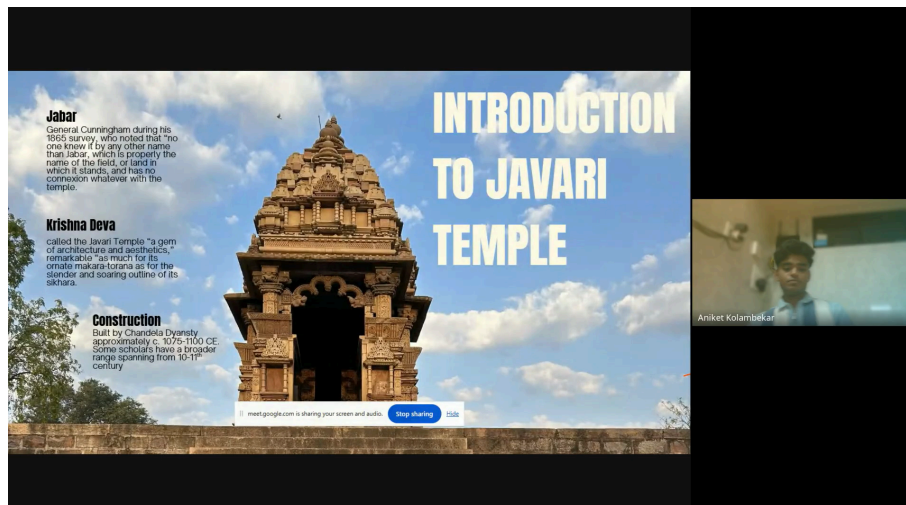
22 May 2026

Mode: online

Every month, Sambhasha Foundation organizes a Study Group Session. One such session, titled “*The Creature of Kala in Javari Temple, Khajuraho,*” was conducted by **Aniket Mohan Kolambekar**, a postgraduate researcher at the University of Mumbai who is currently completing the final semester of his master’s programme.

The session focused on the Javari Temple at the Khajuraho Group of Monuments (c. AD 1075–1100), which preserves a remarkable creaturely iconographic programme within Chandela Nagara architecture. The presentation explored how figures such as the makara, vyala, theriomorphic Nandi, and kirtimukha are not merely decorative motifs but significant elements of a cosmological scheme guiding devotees toward the transcendence of Vishnu in the garbhagriha.

The study group session was completed successfully and provided participants with a deeper understanding and knowledge of Khajuraho temple architecture, iconography, and monuments.



Museum Story Walk Raja Dinker Kelkar

23rd May 2026

Mode: Offline

Sambhasha Foundation organizes “*Museum Walks*” at Raja Dinker Kelkar Museum for adult participants. This programme attracts individuals from diverse educational backgrounds who share an interest in history and archaeology. During the museum walk, participants engage in interactive activities and games, such as treasure hunts to identify objects within the museum. Guides provide detailed information about the artefacts, encouraging interactive conversations and discussions with participants.

The programme conducted by Sambhasha Foundation focuses on creating meaningful interaction with participants while providing them with a basic yet strong understanding of history and archaeology. It is especially beneficial for individuals without an academic background in history or archaeology, as it helps them develop knowledge ranging from foundational concepts to a

deeper understanding of



these

subjects.



Pashupat 3-day Lecture Series

29, 30, and 31 May 2026

Mode: online

The three-day lecture series titled “*The Basics of Pashupata Shaivism: History, Philosophy, and Development*” was conducted from 29 to 31 May 2026, from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM in online mode. Organized by Sambhasha Foundation, the programme aimed to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of one of the oldest Shaiva traditions in India, focusing on the historical development, philosophical foundations, and iconographic dimensions of Pashupata Shaivism.

The lecture series was conducted by Dr. Yogesh Prabhudesai, an independent researcher and scholar specializing in Shaivism, temple architecture, and iconography. The sessions were designed to introduce participants to the evolution of Shaivism and its various branches, with particular emphasis on the Pashupata tradition and its contribution to Indian religious and cultural history.

The programme was structured over three days to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The first day focused on an introduction to Shaivism and its major branches, helping participants understand the broader religious context in which Pashupata Shaivism emerged. The second day explored the history and philosophy of Pashupata Shaivism, discussing its origins, doctrinal principles, and theological significance. The final day focused on the Pashupatas and their presence through iconography and inscriptions, enabling participants to examine the visual and textual evidence associated with the tradition.

The lecture series highlighted the development of the Shiva cult through historical, philosophical, and iconographic perspectives. It also provided participants with valuable insights into Shaiva traditions, temple iconography, and inscriptional evidence, fostering a deeper understanding of the religious and cultural significance of Pashupata Shaivism. The programme concluded successfully, enriching participants with academic knowledge and encouraging further

interest in the study of Indian religious history and heritage.

या सृष्टिः स्रष्टुगद्या वहति विधिहृतं या हविर्या
व होत्री ये द्वे कालं विधत्तः श्रुतिविषयगुणा या
स्थिता व्याप्य विश्वम् ।

यामाहुः सर्वबीजप्रकृतिरिति यया प्राणिनः
प्राणवन्तः प्रत्यक्षाभिः प्रपन्नस्तनुभिस्वतु
वस्ताभिस्ताभिरीशः ॥१॥

- अभिज्ञानशाकुन्तलम् १-१

Meaning – the first creation (Jala) of the creator; the one who accepts the ritualistic oblation (Agni); the two figures that create time (Candra & Sūrya); Sabda/sound is whose property, who is all pervading (Akāśa); the one who is the base of all (Pṛthvi); because of whom all the living beings live and move (Vāyu) – thus being the eight figures, may that Siva protect us.

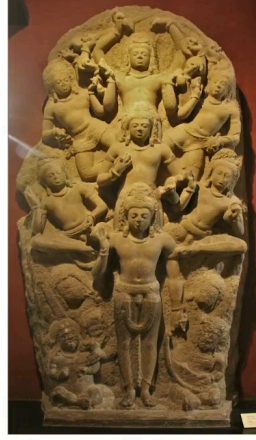


Image source: CSMS, Mumbai, Internet



Yogesh Prabhudesai

Research Projects

Oral History Documentation Project

Nitsure Life Documentation

The Balkrishna Nitsure Life Documentation Project focused on recording the life, craft practices, 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 represented a rare example of a self-taught artisan who consciously chose to practice craft solely for personal fulfilment rather than for commercial gain.

The documentation highlighted his transition from professional life to full-time engagement with woodcraft after retirement, reflecting his sustained commitment to handcrafted processes, patience-intensive carving techniques, and the use of found or reclaimed wood. His work demonstrated a deep sense of dedication, creativity, and craftsmanship, rooted in personal passion rather than economic motivation.

The Balkrishna Nitsure Life Documentation Project was undertaken using an oral history-based documentation methodology, as Balkrishna Nitsure was no longer alive. To reconstruct his life, practice, and philosophy, detailed conversations were conducted with his family members, friends, former students, associates, and neighbours. These interactions enabled the project team to develop a multi-vocal understanding of his personality, creative process, values, and everyday life experiences.

In addition to oral testimonies, the project included site-based documentation through visits to his former residence and workspace. During these visits, observations were recorded regarding his working environment, tools, spatial organisation, and the material traces of his craft practice. This approach allowed for a more holistic understanding of his relationship with craft and the spaces in which he worked.

The documentation project contributed significantly to preserving the legacy of a non-commercial and self-motivated craft practice while demonstrating the importance of oral history methodologies in recording and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. The project was concluded successfully, and all documentation processes were completed, ensuring the preservation of Balkrishna Nitsure's life, work, and contributions for future reference and research.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

The On-the-Job Training (OJT) initiative by SAMBHĀṢĀ Foundation is conceived as a step towards strengthening the capacity of the social sciences field by nurturing informed, skilled, and socially sensitive young researchers. By engaging students in ongoing research, heritage initiatives, and field-based projects, the programme contributes to building a sustainable knowledge ecosystem grounded in practical experience and critical inquiry. Through hands-on exposure to fieldwork, documentation, market research, and data interpretation, students not only develop individual competencies but also contribute to the long-term growth of the field by addressing current gaps, emerging needs, and methodological challenges.

The programme provides guided mentorship and opportunities for interaction with scholars, researchers, and subject experts, enabling participants to develop fresh perspectives and innovative approaches. This process reinforces both the academic and societal relevance of social science research and encourages participants to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings.

As part of the training and guidance process, a dedicated session on Research Methodology, Research Ethics, Literature Review, and Bibliography was conducted for the OJT candidates. These sessions helped students understand the importance of ethical research practices, systematic literature analysis, and academic documentation, thereby strengthening their research skills and analytical abilities.

During this period, all OJT projects successfully completed the phases of data collection and fieldwork. Following the completion of field-based activities, students undertook the process of data organization, analysis, and report writing. Final adjustments and the compilation of comprehensive project reports were carried out to ensure proper documentation and presentation of research findings.

This month, the OJT projects were completed successfully, reflecting the dedication and active involvement of the participating students. Upon successful completion of the programme, certificates were distributed to the students in recognition of their participation, commitment, and contribution to the research projects. The documentation of each project was also completed successfully, marking the conclusion of the OJT programme and highlighting the practical learning experiences gained by the students throughout the training process.

1. Ravivaar Peth Art Deco

As part of On-the-Job Training (OJT) at Sambhāṣā Foundation, candidates are engaged in a research and documentation project focusing on Art Deco architecture in the Raviwar Peth area of Pune. This project involves studying the historical background, evolution, and local adaptation of the Art Deco architectural style, tracing its global emergence and examining how it was interpreted within the urban and cultural context of Pune.

The work includes field documentation of Art Deco buildings in Raviwar Peth, with careful observation of architectural features such as geometric forms, streamlined facades, decorative motifs, balconies, and material usage. Particular attention is given to identifying how international Art Deco elements were blended with Indian traditional motifs, regional symbols, and locally available materials, resulting in a distinctive architectural expression unique to Pune.

The project also examines the coexistence and visual relationship between earlier wada architecture and later Art Deco structures, highlighting the layered urban fabric of the area. Through systematic documentation, photography, architectural observation, and contextual research, this project contributes to understanding Raviwar Peth as an important site reflecting Pune's transition into architectural modernity while retaining its cultural continuity.





2. Documenting the Talims of Pune

Sambhasha Foundation has engaged students as part of an ongoing research project, **Documentation of the Talims of Pune**—traditional community spaces that historically functioned as centres for physical training, social interaction, and cultural exchange. Through guided field visits, oral history interactions, and archival exploration, students are actively documenting the architectural features, historical backgrounds, intangible traditions, and present conditions of selected Talims. These spaces, once central to wrestling (kushti), martial arts training, and local socio-political life in pre- and post-independence Pune, are being studied to trace their evolution and assess their relevance within contemporary urban contexts. By involving students in recording these narratives, the project not only builds research capacity but also contributes to preserving an often-overlooked dimension of Pune’s cultural identity before it fades from collective memory.



4. Documenting the Sugandhis (Attar Makers) of Pune

This research project focuses on documenting the Sugandhi community of Pune—the traditional artisans engaged in attar (natural perfume) making. For generations, these families have preserved the delicate art of distilling and blending fragrances using natural ingredients such as sandalwood, rose, jasmine, and vetiver.

The project aims to explore the cultural, historical, and sensory dimensions of attar-making in Pune, tracing its journey from temple rituals and ceremonial use to everyday life, festivals, and contemporary markets. Through interviews, field documentation, photographic records, and tool documentation, students will capture the craftsmanship, oral traditions, trade practices, and lived experiences of the Sugandhis. By preserving these narratives, the project highlights an important form of intangible heritage that connects memory, identity, and Pune's old factory and artisanal culture.

5. Chronological Mapping of Indian History

Understanding history through a chronological framework is fundamental to comprehending the evolution of cultures, political systems, and artistic traditions. This project focuses on developing accurate and comprehensive chronological timelines of Indian history, ranging from broad national narratives to region-specific and theme-based studies.

Students will work on creating a general timeline of Indian history as well as more focused timelines such as the Timeline of Maharashtra, Timeline of Ancient Indian Art and Architecture,

and period-specific timelines covering phases like Prehistoric, Mauryan, Satavahana, or Maratha history. The project involves extensive research to identify accurate dates, dynasties, events, and cultural milestones, supported by reliable academic sources and site-specific examples.

Through this exercise, students will gain a deeper understanding of India's historical chronology while learning to analyse, verify, and visually represent historical data. The project also introduces timelines as interpretive tools that help connect political, cultural, and artistic developments across time.

This month, the OJT projects were completed successfully, reflecting the dedication and active involvement of the participating students. Upon successful completion of the programme, certificates were distributed to the students in recognition of their participation, commitment, and contribution to the research projects. The documentation of each project was also completed successfully, marking the conclusion of the OJT programme and highlighting the practical learning experiences gained by the students throughout the training process.

BITS Design School Community Projects

The BITS Design School Community Projects are community-based initiatives that encourage students to work on socially relevant ideas and contribute to solving real-world challenges. These projects aim to address pressing community issues while helping students develop practical and meaningful solutions that positively impact society.

During this month, students actively participate in brainstorming sessions to identify impactful project ideas and explore possible methods for implementation. The discussions focus on understanding community needs, identifying social challenges, and developing innovative concepts that create meaningful change. Through collaborative learning, critical discussions, and guided mentorship, students work towards shaping research-driven and socially beneficial projects that aim to create sustainable community impact.