

DECEMBER 2025 ISSUE

The India Centre

NEWSLETTER



FLAME
UNIVERSITY



DECEMBER, 2025

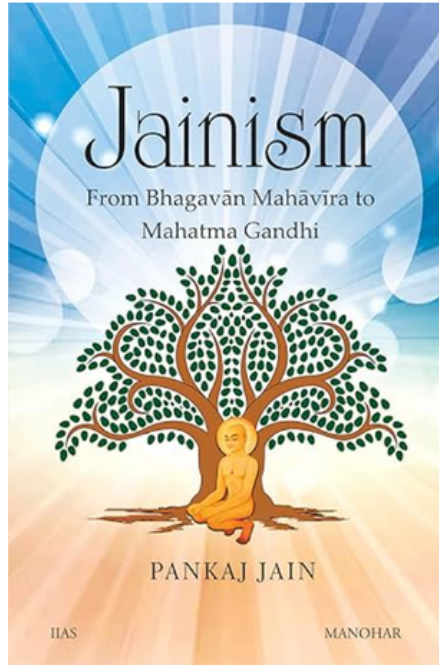


THE INDIA CENTRE NEWSLETTER

Contents

Research Highlights	01
Media Coverage	02
Events	04
TIC Happenings	05
Podcasts By Prof. Pankaj Jain	08
Meet Our Team	09

Research Highlights



Jainism: From Bhagavan Mahavira to Mahatma Gandhi

Book Blurb

This monograph offers a comprehensive exploration of his life, teachings, and enduring influence on Jain virtue ethics and environmental sustainability. Structured around the five Jain milestones – conception, birth, renunciation, omniscience, and liberation – the manuscript draws from primary Prakrit and Sanskrit texts, as well as secondary sources in English, Hindi, and Gujarati, to construct a detailed biography. It addresses the scarcity of English-language works on Mahāvira compared to those on Buddhism, emphasizing his role in shaping Jainism’s distinct identity. The introduction critiques the ‘imperialism of categories’, advocating for a dhārmic framework that intertwines philosophy, religion, and ecology, avoiding Western dichotomies. Jainism’s core virtues – Ahimsa (nonviolence), Aparigraha (non-accumulation), and Anekāntavāda (pluralism) – are explored as foundational to sustainable practices, influencing figures like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. The manuscript highlights Jainism’s environmental contributions, such as vegetarianism and animal sanctuaries, exemplified by institutions like the Sumati Jeev Raksha Kendra. It also engages with scholarly debates, critiquing Western Indology’s neglect of contemporary Indian sources and addressing sectarian disputes, such as Mahāvira’s birthplace and marital status. Supported by FLAME University and the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, this work underscores Mahāvira’s legacy in promoting nonviolence and ecological consciousness, offering a nuanced perspective on Jainism’s relevance to modern sustainability challenges. Through rigorous analysis and interdisciplinary insights, Jain’s monograph bridges ancient wisdom with contemporary environmental ethics.

Media Coverage

Is The American Dream Losing Its Sheen For Indians

Prof. Pankaj Jain & Prof. Anup Kumar

The article explores how the American Dream is gradually losing its appeal for many Indians. Tighter US visa rules, long green card backlogs, rising living costs, and concerns around safety and social acceptance have made migration less attractive. At the same time, India's growing economy, expanding startup ecosystem, better salaries, and improved quality of life are offering strong opportunities at home. As a result, skilled professionals and students are increasingly reassessing whether moving to the US is still worth the uncertainty, delays, and trade-offs it once seemed to justify.



Source: Shutterstock Images



Source: Pexels

From Sallekhana To Shanbaug: Rethinking Euthanasia In India

Akshata Nair, Prof. Shikha Sharma and Prof. Pankaj Jain

The article examines India's evolving euthanasia debate, highlighting Karnataka's recent move to legalize passive euthanasia in line with the Supreme Court's 2018 ruling. It contrasts this with the continued illegality of active euthanasia, raising ethical concerns about dignity and patient suffering. The piece references the Aruna Shanbaug case as a pivotal moment and draws on the Jain practice of sallekhana to argue for a more compassionate, culturally grounded approach to end-of-life choice and legal reform.

From Gaṇeśa to Gītā: Ten dharmas for modern leaders

Prof. Pankaj Jain

The article argues that modern leadership can draw vital lessons from India's dharmic traditions, blending insights from Gaṇeśa's wisdom and the Bhagavad Gītā. It outlines ten principles—such as foresight, duty, compassion, non-violence, service, equanimity, interconnectedness, truth, discipline, and humility—that counter today's crisis of trust, greed, and ego. These timeless values encourage ethical, resilient, and purpose-driven leadership relevant in business, politics, and society



Source: iStock

Media Coverage



Source: [Getty Images](#)

Janmashtami: A festival for Krishna and the Earth

Prof. Pankaj Jain

The article reflects on Janmashtami not just as the joyous celebration of Lord Krishna's birth, but as a reminder of his profound connection with nature. While devotees celebrate with music, dance, and rituals, the piece urges eco-friendly practices—using natural clay idols, biodegradable decorations, and sustainable prasad serving—to honour both Krishna and the Earth. It calls for blending spiritual devotion with environmental responsibility, turning the festival into an opportunity for community action such as clean-ups, tree planting, and reduced waste.



"Illustrated Manuscript of Dakhinpat Sattrā (Bhagawat)," by Unknown Author, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0,
[Source](#)

From Ahimsa to Sustainability: The Indian Way of Eating

Akshata Nair, Prof. Shikha Sharma and Prof. Pankaj Jain

The article highlights how India's plant-based food traditions, rooted in ahimsa (non-violence) and compassion from Buddhism, Jainism, and Hinduism, reflect deep ethical and ecological values rather than mere culture or religion. It argues that vegetarianism supports sustainability by reducing emissions, conserving resources, and promoting health and coexistence. Comparing India with meat-centric Western diets, the piece suggests global lessons in making fresh, local produce accessible and prioritizing compassion in food choices—offering a model for sustainable eating worldwide.

Events

International Symposium on Academic Study of Religion



In collaboration with Wellesley College, the India Centre at FLAME University hosted an international symposium on the Academic Study of Religion, on August 7- 8, 2025.

Objectives

Despite its unparalleled religious diversity and its historical role as the birthplace of several world religions, India still lacks a robust academic infrastructure for studying religion. The upcoming symposium addresses this gap by fostering critical, interdisciplinary, and inclusive approaches that move beyond purely theological interpretations. It seeks to promote the academic study of religion as a rigorous field in India, initiate dialogue across disciplines such as anthropology, psychology, history, and philology, and bring attention to majority and minority religious traditions.

Thematic Panels included:

- Anthropological Approaches to Religion: Exploring ritual, identity, and community in religious life.
- Psychological Perspectives: Addressing religion's role in mental health, trauma, and personal growth.
- Philological and Textual Studies: Examining sacred texts and traditions across religions.
- Historical Studies: Tracing the evolution of religious institutions and interfaith dynamics in India.

With contributions from scholars worldwide, this symposium served as a landmark event to reimagine the academic study of religion in India. It drew on global insights while grounding discussions in the subcontinent's rich and pluralistic religious heritage.

TIC Happenings


LECTURE: SEPTEMBER 2025







INDIA KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS


PRAYER IN THE PERIPHERY

HOST
PROF. PANKAJ JAIN
 Head of Department - Humanities & Languages; Director, The India Centre, FLAME University

SPEAKER
PROF. MICHAEL HATCHER
 Faculty of Philosophy and Critical Thinking, FLAME University


25TH AUGUST 2025

11:00 AM (IST)

ZOOM

In this talk, drawing from philosophical theology and phenomenology, Prof. Hatcher explored the concept of “Prayer in the Periphery,” an inquiry into the possibility of unceasing prayer as envisioned in 1 Thessalonians [5:17](#). Through the lens of contextual and marginal awareness, as articulated by Gurwitsch and Arvidson, he examined how individuals might attune themselves to the divine voice while navigating the rhythms of everyday life.

TIC Happenings

WEBINAR: OCTOBER 2025

The paper focuses on human-river entanglements as they emerge in the textual and lived religious traditions of various Indian communities. In this paper, Prof. Pritha Chakraborty argues that the understanding of religion and ecology in India requires engaging with both the mythical/sacred and experiential/secular frameworks that shape Hindu life and its ecological implications. In this light, the paper explores the rich and complex representations of the River Ganga across diverse Indian literary and cultural traditions. The lecture will provide insights into the diverse representations, ranging from her portrayal as a goddess in Puranic literature to her presence in the folk and vernacular traditions of West Bengal, as well as the experiential narratives of riverine communities in Varanasi and West Bengal. It traces the depiction of Ganga as a goddess in Puranic and epic literatures to the Mangalkavyas and Puthis of West Bengal and Bangladesh, underlining the regional adaptations and religio-cultural aspects of the river. It also engages with the oral narratives and folksongs of the Nishads, Doms, Kaivartas, and Namashudras, who draw sustenance from the river, highlighting the religious, ecological, and economic significance of the river among the Antaja riverine communities. It concludes with a discussion on Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*, underlining how Indian river fiction connects the multiple currents of the river to depict the entanglements of human and nature.

LECTURE: OCTOBER 2025

In the era of AI, Geeta Chandran propounds DI - Dance Intelligence as a human and humane response to the world of learning, aesthetics, and inner beauty. Based on her over five decades of engagement with Bharatanatyam, the lecture explores linkages between body and mind; forging relationships between solo dancing, group dancing, and choreography; actualising the connections between the artist and society; and using dance as a medium for expressing abstract notions of Joy, Beauty, Values, Aspirations, Mythology, and Spirituality.

Her vision of Di probes the continuing relevance of classical tradition in a world of changing values; showcasing the aesthetics of Bharatanatyam and its history, how the tenets of the dance can be employed as a means of communicating issues of contemporary concern, even while exploring linkages between history and continuity, between external body and internal mind-space, between yesterday and tomorrow, between artist and audience.....between roots and wings.

TIC Happenings

WEBINAR : NOVEMBER 2025

FLAME UNIVERSITY | THE INDIA CENTRE

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

CONTRADICTION IN BHEDĀBHEDA VEDĀNTA: A PARAconsistent AND DIALETHEIC ACCOUNT OF JĪVA'S ACINTYA BHEDĀBHEDA THEOLOGY

HOST
PROF. PANKAJ JAIN
Head of Department - Humanities & Languages, Director, The India Centre, FLAME University

SPEAKER
RICARDO SILVESTRE
Professor at the Federal University of Campina Grande

20th NOVEMBER 2025
06:00 PM (IST)

ZOOM

Dr. Silvestre presented a lecture titled "Contradiction in Bhedābheda Vedānta: A Paraconsistent and Dialetheic Account of Jīva's Acintya Bhedābheda Theology." In this presentation, he explored Jīva Gosvāmin's philosophical framework and its relevance to contemporary discussions on consciousness within the distinctive Vedānta tradition.

The session helped bridge classical Indian metaphysics with modern philosophy of mind, examining concepts of oneness, consciousness, and reality. Key questions such as the explanatory gap and causal exclusion problems were also be addressed.

WEBINAR : DECEMBER 2025

FLAME University's India Centre hosted the 37th webinar on India Studies, featuring Dr Shylaja B S., Visiting Scientist, Bangalore Association for Science Education, Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, Bangalore. Titled 'Ancient Indian Astronomy-efforts to achieve the right model of planetary motion.' the talk will outline the methods used by Indian astronomers to predict planetary positions and trace how these techniques advanced from Aryabhata through later scholars. The session will highlight the analytical approaches and scientific progression embedded in this longstanding tradition.

Dr B. S. Shylaja worked on the binary stars with Wolf-Rayet components for her doctoral thesis. She continued her research on comets, dwarf novae, and magnetic and metallic (Am) stars. She has authored 150 research papers in astronomy and the history of astronomy. After joining the Planetarium, she engaged in educational activities, including teaching on weekends, producing sky theatre shows, and conducting outreach. She worked on various interactive demonstrations and models and taught a range of age groups. Currently, she is working on the history of astronomy in India, focusing on medieval-period manuscripts, stone inscriptions, and temple architecture.

FLAME UNIVERSITY | THE INDIA CENTRE

INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

ANCIENT INDIAN ASTRONOMY - EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THE RIGHT MODEL OF PLANETARY MOTION

HOST
PROF. PANKAJ JAIN
Head of Department - Humanities & Languages, Director, The India Centre, FLAME University

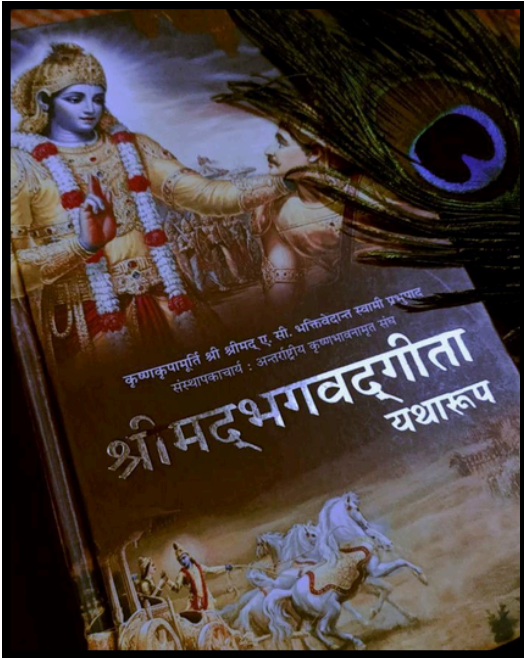
SPEAKER
B. S. SHYLAJA
Visiting Scientist, Bangalore Association for Science Education, Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium, Bangalore

24th NOVEMBER 2025
04:00 PM (IST)

ZOOM

Podcasts by Prof. Pankaj Jain

Bhagavad Gita Explained



Prof. Pankaj Jain's Bhagavad Gita series on YouTube is a thoughtful, in-depth exploration of one of India's most influential philosophical texts, presented with academic rigor yet remarkable clarity. Across the series, Prof. Jain approaches the Bhagavad Gita not merely as a religious scripture, but as a living philosophical guide that speaks to contemporary concerns such as ethical leadership, personal responsibility, social harmony, and environmental awareness.

Each episode carefully situates the verses within their historical, cultural, and textual context, while also drawing connections to modern life, making complex ideas accessible to a wide audience. What sets this series apart is its balanced perspective. The discussions combine philological insights, comparative philosophy, and practical interpretation, allowing viewers to engage with the Gita beyond ritualistic or dogmatic readings. Prof. Jain highlights how concepts like dharma, karma, detachment, and action can be applied to everyday decision-making, professional life, and societal challenges.

Designed for students, educators, and curious learners alike, the series encourages reflective thinking and dialogue rather than passive consumption. Overall, this YouTube series serves as a valuable intellectual resource for anyone seeking a deeper, nuanced, and contemporary understanding of the Bhagavad Gita.

Meet Our Team

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Pankaj Jain

Design: Avishi Goel

Advisory Board (in alphabetical order): Prof. Balaji Kalluri
Prof. Melody Kshetrimayum
Prof. Neelima Shukla-Bhatt
Prof. Tarinee Awasthi
Prof. Vinod Vidhwans



Gate No. 1270, Lavale, Off. Pune
Bengaluru Highway, Pune - 412115,
Maharashtra, India.
<https://www.flame.edu.in/>

EVERLASTING
impact