

National Conference

on

Environmental Crisis and Solutions in Indian Knowledge Systems (Vedic, Buddhist and Jain Perspectives)

In collaboration with School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi Sanskrit Academy

राष्ट्रीयसम्मेलन

भारतीय ज्ञान परम्परा में पर्यावरण: समस्या और समाधान
(वैदिक/बौद्ध/जैन परिप्रेक्ष्य में)

संस्कृत एवं प्राच्यविद्याध्ययन संस्थान तथा दिल्ली संस्कृत अकादमी के संयुक्त
तत्त्वावधान में



Date: 18th March, 2026 (Wednesday)



Timings: 09:30 A.M. Onwards



Venue: Auditorium 1, Convention Centre, JNU

Secretary

Delhi Sanskrit Academy,
Delhi

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Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/hqzgPC5TKukvuEhV9>

(Registration is Free)

Concept:

We face significant environmental challenges for which modern solutions exist. However, embracing ancient Indian techniques from Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain traditions can provide holistic approaches to addressing these issues. By studying ancient literature in Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit, we can learn to lead healthier and more balanced lives. The Vedas were among the first to emphasise the importance of protecting and preserving a clean environment. Therefore, this conference aims to highlight the significance and relevance of India's traditional knowledge in fostering a friendly and healthy environment in today's world.

The environment is essential for human life, and people are deeply connected to the natural world around them. Everything in nature—such as the earth, air, water, plants, and animals—provides what we need to live and thrive. Currently, the world is facing a serious environmental crisis that affects both rich and poor countries due to pollution. Consequently, environmental issues are being discussed everywhere, from small villages to national parliaments. Pollution is among the most significant problems caused by modern technology. In India, the situation is particularly dire and cannot be ignored any longer.

Indian saints gave guidance on how to avoid polluting the environment. However, people often ignored these teachings—sometimes because they didn't know what the scriptures said, and other times because they didn't understand their true meaning. Vedic literature shows awareness about protecting the environment and warns against actions that harm nature. In ancient times, people lived in close harmony with nature. They saw natural forces—like Agni (fire), Varuna (water), and Vayu (wind)—as divine beings and prayed to them for protection, especially during natural disasters.

However, in modern times, people have started to exploit nature—partly out of need, but mostly out of selfishness. Industrial growth and modernisation led to greed, resulting in the overuse of natural resources and environmental pollution. Some of the major problems include:

- Overuse of natural resources
- Industrial pollution
- Deforestation
- Excessive use of harmful chemicals
- Using natural resources without care
- Relying on old methods to solve new problems
- Lack of enough funding
- Government delays and bureaucracy
- Rapid growth in infrastructure

These actions have greatly damaged the environment. Since we are the link between the past and future generations, it is our duty to leave behind a healthy environment for those who come after us. All countries want to develop, and that's natural. But development must be balanced and sustainable—it should not harm future generations. To achieve this, we must control our greed and live in harmony with nature, just like our ancestors did during Vedic times. The Vedas teach us that the relationship between humans and nature is sacred, like the bond between a mother and child. Earth was seen as the universal mother, and all living beings as her children.

Buddhism encourages us to think deeply, analyse, and understand the environment as an essential part of our lives. This way of thinking can help us face challenges like climate change more effectively. Buddhist insights show how they can contribute to environmental protection.

One key idea is that the environmental crisis is not just physical—it is also a crisis of the human spirit. Spiritual well-being and environmental health are deeply connected. Inner peace can lead to outer balance; this is a core belief in Buddhist thought.

Jainism provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the environmental crisis, grounded in its core principles of Ahimsa (non-violence) and Aparigraha (non-possessiveness and limiting consumption). By recognising all life forms—such as earth, water, air, and fire—as interconnected souls, Jains advocate for sustainable living practices, dietary restrictions, and minimal consumption. These efforts aim to combat climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Seminar Objectives:

- To identify and classify the environmental issues mentioned in the Vedic literature.
- To encourage research opportunities for students interested in environmental issues in Indian knowledge systems.
- To explore the solutions to environmental problems as described in the classical Sanskrit literature.
- To examine how ancient Indian knowledge can be applied to solve today's environmental challenges and to explain the importance of scientific wisdom from Buddhist and Jain traditions.

Sub-themes of conference:

- Vedic wisdom: Concepts like Panchamahabhuta (five elements), sacred rivers, and nature worship promote harmony with the environment.
- Buddhist teachings: Emphasis on Ahimsa (non-violence), interdependence of all life, mindful consumption, and respect for all living beings.
- Jain philosophy: Rigorous Ahimsa leading to non-violence toward even microscopic life forms, sustainable living, and strict vegetarianism.
- Traditional agricultural and water conservation practices, inspired by these systems.
- How these philosophies promote sustainable lifestyles and can inspire modern environmental solutions in India.
- Cosmic unity and ecological interdependence in Vedic thought (R̥gvedic hymns to Earth, cosmic order ṛta, nature as sacred organism).
- Concept of Prakṛti, Pañcamahābhūta and ecological balance in Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature.
- Doctrine of dependent origination (Pratītyasamutpāda) and environmental interdependence in Buddhist Nikāyas.
- Jain ontology of living and non-living substances (Jīva–Ajīva) and environmental ethics in Āgamas.
- Spiritual ecology: environment as extension of consciousness in Indian philosophical traditions.
- Ahimsa as ecological ethics in Jain Āgamas and Buddhist texts.
- Environmental awareness across Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain traditions.
- Aparigraha (non-possession) and sustainable consumption in Jain philosophy.
- Dharma and ecological duty in Vedic literature and Dharmashastra traditions.
- Asceticism, restraint, and minimalism as ecological lifestyles in monastic traditions.
- Sacred geography: rivers, mountains, forests, and sacred groves in Indian traditions (ritual protection, biodiversity conservation).

- Earth as mother (Bhūmi-sūkta traditions) and reverence for nature in Vedic hymns.
- Compassion toward all beings (Jīva-dayā) and biodiversity preservation in Jain practices.
- Buddhist monastic ecology: forest traditions, landscape ethics, and ecological mindfulness.
- Traditional ecological knowledge in agriculture, water management, and resource use in ancient India.
- Āyurveda and ecological health: environment–body–mind interrelationship.
- Dietary ethics, vegetarianism, and biodiversity conservation in Jain and Buddhist traditions.
- Seasonal rhythms, cosmology, and ecological time in Vedic and Buddhist texts.
- Indian Knowledge Systems and climate crisis: philosophical insights for modern sustainability.
- Reinterpreting Vedic, Nikāya, and Āgamic teachings for environmental policy, ethics, and education.

Papers can be presented in Sanskrit/Hindi/English, and certificates will be provided to the successful presenters. All interested faculty, scholars, and students can fill the registration form. <https://forms.gle/hqzgPC5TKukvuEhV9>

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