

A RESEARCH PROGRAMME



Chidrūpam

चिद्रूपम्



*Addressing the Hard Problem of Consciousness — a structured dialogue
between ancient Upanishadic wisdom and modern scientific inquiry.*

CONVENED BY

Vedanta Bharati

Vedanta Institute of Studies and Research

The Hard Problem

A question that has resisted every instrument science has built.



The study of Consciousness — formally known as Consciousness Studies — has emerged as one of the most sought-after interdisciplinary fields in contemporary science. Neurologists, physicists, mathematicians, and AI researchers are converging on a single stubborn question: what is the precise relationship between physical processes in the brain and subjective experience? Philosopher David Chalmers named it the *Hard Problem of Consciousness*.

GNWT

Global Neuronal Workspace Theory

Consciousness arises when information is broadcast across a global workspace. Elegantly explains attention and reportability; does not account for why this broadcast is accompanied by subjective experience at all.

IIT

Integrated Information Theory

Consciousness is identical to integrated information — denoted Φ . Provides a mathematical measure; contested on whether high Φ values are sufficient, or even necessary, for subjective experience.

HOT

Higher-Order Theories

A mental state is conscious only when accompanied by a higher-order representation. Accounts for meta-cognition; struggles to explain the phenomenal feel of first-person experience without presupposing it.

RPT

Recurrent Processing Theory

Consciousness arises from recurrent, feedback-driven neural signalling. Empirically well-supported on visual awareness; addresses the mechanism of Consciousness rather than its fundamental nature.

Despite this formidable body of research, **none of these theories has resolved the Hard Problem — they describe the mechanics of Consciousness without arriving at its nature.** No computational or neurological account, however detailed, has yet bridged that explanatory gap. Chidrūpam proposes that the missing dimension is not more data — it is a different epistemological starting point.

In a parallel tradition spanning millennia, Vedanta and Indian philosophy approach the same question from the inside — not by theorising about Consciousness, but by describing its very **swaroopa: its true nature, directly.**

"Let the Upanishadic techniques serve not as dogma, but as logical blueprints for discovery."

H.H. SRI SRI SHANKARA BHARATI MAHASWAMIJI · PEETHADHEESHWAR, YADATHORE SRI YOGANANDA
SARASWATI MUTT

Where Lab Meets *Upanishad*

Modern science observes the function. The Upanishads describe the Observer. Chidrūpam brings them into structured, Advaita-anchored dialogue.

MODERN SCIENCE

Observing the Function

- * **Brainwave analysis** — gamma synchrony, sleep-wake transitions, and the profound stillness documented during Samadhi states.
- * **The observer effect** — micro-intervals of neural silence as windows into the substrate of awareness.
- * **Kosha mapping** — correlating each layer of the human system with distinct physiological and neurological measurements.
- * **Theoretical frameworks** — GNWT, IIT, HOT, RPT, each offering partial illumination of the mechanics of awareness.

VEDANTIC WISDOM

Describing the Observer

- * **The swarūpa of Consciousness** — not what Consciousness does, but what it is: Sat-Chit-Ananda, the ground of Being, Awareness, and Bliss.
- * **Neti-Neti (Not this, Not this)** — systematic elimination as a rigorous inverse empirical protocol.
- * **The Witness (Sākshi)** — the constant unchanged across waking, dreaming, and deep sleep: the defining signature of Consciousness itself.
- * **Four principal Upanishads** — Chandogya, Brihadāranyaka, Māndukya, Taittirīya — approaching the question through cosmogony, dialogue, and state-analysis.

The Taittirīya Upanishad introduces the Pañcha Kosha model — five concentric sheaths constituting the human person. Modern science's Kosha mapping programme uses these as its research framework; each sheath is a domain of inquiry, each elimination a falsifiable hypothesis:

Annamaya	Prāṇamaya	Manomaya	Vijñānamaya	Ānandamaya
Gross physical body — constituted of food; sustained by the five elements. Inert and perishable.	Vital-force sheath — the five Prāṇas animating all physiological processes. Subtler than the physical; not the Ātman.	Mental sheath — cognition, emotion, and sensory processing. Corresponds to psychology and cognitive neuroscience.	Intellective sheath — the discriminating faculty, judgement, self-reflection. Higher-order cognitive functions.	Bliss sheath — subtlest conditioned layer; deep sleep and profound ease. Associated with default-mode network activity.

BRIHADĀRANYAKA UPANISHAD 2.3.6 · ŚANKARA BHĀṢYA

नेति नेति — न ह्येतस्मादिति नेत्यन्यत्परमस्ति

neti neti — na hy etasmād iti nety anyat param asti

"Not this, not this — for there is nothing higher than this 'not this.'"

*When all adjuncts and superimpositions are removed, what remains is saindhavaghanavat ekarasa prajñānaghana — a homogeneous, undivided mass of Awareness, like a solid lump of salt: nothing but saltiness throughout. The aim of Chidrūpam is the **gradual convergence** of scientific evidence and Upanishadic insight around a coherent, verifiable account of Consciousness — one that neither tradition could reach alone.*

A Structured Journey

Not an event. A sustained programme with defined phases, growing institutional participation, and rigorous output.

I

Q2 – Q3 · 2026

Foundation & Assembly

Assemble the Core Team across neuroscience, physics, mathematics, and Advaita Vedanta. Define research themes anchored in Upanishadic frameworks. Establish academic partnerships with premier Neuroscience Institutes, Engineering and Technical Institutes, and Centres for Consciousness Studies. Conduct foundational roundtables and scholarly consultations.

II

TIMELINE TO BE SET BY CORE TEAM

Structuring & Governance

Constitute the Advisory Council from premier Neuroscience Institutes, Engineering and Technical Institutes, Centres for Consciousness Studies, and Centres for Advanced Research at national and international levels. Finalise interdisciplinary research clusters. Launch the research grant framework.

III

TIMELINE TO BE SET BY CORE TEAM

Global Convening

Host the inaugural International Consciousness Conference in India. Publish proceedings and position papers from research clusters. Present findings to the global Consciousness-research community.

IV

TIMELINE TO BE SET BY CORE TEAM

Sustained Programme

Establish Chidrūpam as an ongoing, institutionally anchored Research Programme. Launch a dedicated digital knowledge platform and peer-reviewed publication pathway. Continue outreach to expand the international scholar network.

The timelines for Phases II, III, and IV will be confirmed and updated by the Core Research Team once constituted in Phase I. The roadmap above reflects the directional intent; the Core Team — together with advisory structures — will refine milestones as the programme takes shape.

Research Domains

01	02	03	04
<i>Neuroscience</i>	<i>Physics</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Interdisciplinary</i>
EEG and fMRI correlates of the Observer state across waking, dreaming, and Samadhi transitions.	A formalism for the Infinite Remainder when discrete objects are systematically removed.	Non-dual formal systems capturing the Upanishadic description of the Witness.	Protocols translating Upanishadic deduction into measurable physical consequence.

Vedanta Bharati

Founded 1999. Recognised Research Centre, Tumkur University. An institution that has been pursuing this question across multiple decades and multiple disciplines.

200+

*scholarly publications · Sanskrit,
Kannada & English*

100+

*structured residential retreats with
leading research institutions*

40k+

*students engaged · Dakshinaasya
Darshini · Bengaluru 2026*

20+

*active Ph.D. scholars across
Darshana Shastra, Sahitya &
Jyotishya*

- i. **Academic Research & Knowledge Creation** — Among India's most prolific producers of Vedantic scholarship; the *Advaita Kosha* compendium; annual *Vidwath Goshtis*; recognised Research Centre under Tumkur University since 1999.
- ii. **Applied Adhyatma & Inner Sciences** — Structured residential retreats engaging medical doctors, surgeons, psychiatrists, IT professionals, lawyers, and educators; baseline and outcome assessments in formal partnership with NIMHANS and NIAS (National Institute of Advanced Studies). The direct institutional precursor to Chidrūpam.
- iii. **Youth & Value Education · Dakshinaasya Darshini** — An inquiry-based knowledge laboratory placing Indian Knowledge Systems in dialogue with modern science. Bengaluru 2026: 180+ schools and colleges, 40,000+ students in person; being scaled nationally.
- iv. **Cultural Mobilisation** — Mass *Stotra Parayana Mahabhiyanas* mobilising 1.5 lakh+ participants per event — including events graced by the Prime Minister of India. India Book of Records: largest coordinated Shiva Panchakshari recitation (1.6 lakh+).

"Don't just study the brain — solve the mystery of the one who uses it."

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Join the Mission

To participate as a researcher, advisor, or institutional partner.

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