TANTRAYUKTI

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & PAPER PRESENTATION COMPETITION

2026-27

ONE VISION. SIX PILLARS. A POWERFUL NATION.

ABOUT BHARAT KI SOCH

BHARAT KI SOCH IS A PREMIER NEW DELHI-BASED THINK TANK DEDICATED TO BRIDGING THE COUNTRY'S PROFOUND CIVILISATIONAL WISDOM WITH CONTEMPORARY POLICY DISCOURSE. WE SEEK TO REINTERPRET AND REVITALISE OUR KNOWLEDGE TRADITIONS SO THAT THEY MAY MEANINGFULLY CONTRIBUTE TO ADDRESSING PRESENT-DAY CHALLENGES AND SHAPING THE NATION'S FUTURE.

ABOUT TANTRAYUKTI

ROOTED IN THE ARTHAŚĀSTRA TRADITION, TANTRAYUKTI IS THE SYSTEMATIC EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF ANCIENT BHARAT FOR COMPOSING, INTERPRETING AND ANALYSING SCIENTIFIC AND STRATEGIC TEXTS. OFTEN TRANSLATED AS "RESEARCH METHODOLOGY" OR "METHODOLOGICAL DEVICES". IT EMBODIES RIGOROUS INQUIRY, LOGICAL REASONING AND ANALYTICAL PRECISION.

SIX PILLARS OF THE CONFERENCE

1. GOVERNANCE (Praja-Dharma) — Ethical Statecraft, Institutional Integrity & Civic Duties
2. ECONOMY, COMMERCE & FINANCE (Vārttā) — Wealth Creation, Trade, Finance & Sustainable Prosperity
3. HEALTH, NUTRITION & WELL-BEING (Āyuṣa) — Holistic Health, Nutrition, Mental Well-being & Preventive Care
4. AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY (Kṛṣi-Tantra) — Sustainable Agriculture, Food Systems & Rural Resilience
5. ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY (Prakṛti-Rakṣaṇam) — Sustainable Agriculture, Food Systems & Rural Resilience
6. NATIONAL SECURITY (Rāṣṭra-Surakṣā) — Defence, Strategic Stability & National Resilience

KEY INFORMATION

ELIGIBILTY	Faculty members, research scholars, postgraduate students, policy professionals, defence & security experts and independent scholars.
ABSTRACT SUBMISSION	31 AUGUST 2026
ABSTRACT REQUIREMENTS	300-500 words, five keywords, and a brief author biography.
FULL PAPER LENGTH	5,000 - 5,500 words
PRESENTATION MODE	Hybrid. International participants may present virtually.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

FIRST PRIZE
SECOND PRIZE
THIRD PRIZE

Selected papers will also be considered for publication in the forthcoming Tantrayukti Conference Volume and/or the Bharat Ki Soch Journal.

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ROOTED IN CIVILISATIONAL WISDOM | DRIVEN BY ACADEMIC RIGOUR | SHAPING POLICY & PRACTICE FOR BHARAT

Creative Economy, Soft Power and India's Cultural Narrative

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In an era where a single social media trend can shift global perceptions, the creative economy has emerged as one of the most potent instruments of soft power. The twenty-first century belongs not merely to the strongest economies or largest armies, but to the stories that define their purpose and the values they protect. This is the domain of the creative economy, where knowledge and culture become currency and universal traditions become quiet instruments of global influence.

For India, this is not unfamiliar territory. Long before the term "soft power" was coined, ancient courts understood that knowledge, art and wisdom travel where armies cannot. Today, as the world searches for authenticity amidst digital noise, India's knowledge systems and living traditions such as meditation, yoga, classical dance, Ayurveda and folk arts are emerging as strategic assets. The question is no longer whether India has soft power, but whether it can wield it with the same sophistication as its Mauryan, Gupta and Chola predecessors.

The Ancient Blueprint of Cultural Diplomacy

Indian knowledge systems travelled abroad through the spice trade, but Ashoka used narrative building on peace with telling effect. His rock edicts name Hellenistic rulers including Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt and Magas of Cyrene, with whom he exchanged ambassadors and ideas. Medicinal herbs and the Charaka Samhita travelled east and north. The Sassanian emperor Khosrow I (Anushirvan, reigned 531-579 CE) sent his physician Burzuya to India to acquire scientific texts. Burzuya returned with the Panchatantra, translated into Middle Persian, initiating a chain of translations that carried Indian narratives to Arabia and Europe.

The Gupta period continued this legacy. Chess (Chaturanga) travelled to Persia and became Shatranj. Indian musicians performed in Sassanian courts. When the Smithsonian notes that "manuscripts, paintings and painters circulated throughout north and central Indian courts," it describes a pre-modern creative economy where cultural production was inseparable from political relationships.

The lesson is profound. Reciprocity matters. Cambodia's Angkor Wat, the largest temple in the world, carries the imprint of Vedic philosophy and testifies to technology exchange that remains unsurpassed. Vedic philosophy, Ayurveda and various cults permeated Tibet, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. In return, India received Greek astronomy, Arabian numerals and Persian wisdom. Artisans, physicians and musicians were the original cultural diplomats. Trade and commerce rode on these exchanges, as did technology transfer, especially in construction. State patronage was peripheral; it was the spirit of venturing out and seafaring that permeated Indian knowledge systems into distant lands. The Guptas and Cholas provided homeland security and allowed diverse expressions of thought. Classical exchanges between 'Advait' and 'Dwait' are a prime example.

The Contemporary Landscape

Today, India's creative economy, spanning performing arts, wellness, design and digital creativity is valued at approximately $30 billion, employing nearly 8 percent of the national workforce. With the world's largest youth population and a median age of 28, India stands at a demographic and cultural crossroads.

Yet India holds only 2 percent of the global media and entertainment market. Policy observers note that as a rising economic power, India's stories must be heard and seen worldwide. The wellness market, valued at $4.5 trillion globally, remains under-leveraged despite yoga's universal appeal. India's 40 UNESCO heritage sites and rich intangible heritage draw millions of tourists, contributing 9 percent to GDP.

Recent policy discourse has underscored the creative economy as an essential lever for India's future growth, innovation and inclusive development. The Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT) is a welcome step, but the soft power dividend will not come from infrastructure alone.

Why Living Traditions Are the Invisible Asset

India's classical and folk traditions such as 'Odissi and Bhangra', 'Kathakali and Warli', 'Ayurveda and folk medicine' offer something mass-produced global culture cannot: Authenticity. In a world weary of algorithms, a genuine Gond painting, a Mohiniyattam recitation or an Eri silk shawl from Meghalaya carries the story of a specific community, place and way of life.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has long sent cultural troupes abroad, imagine every embassy hosting weekly yoga sessions, classical music gatherings or Ayurveda workshops, not as occasional events but as sustained practice. Imagine diplomats gifting handcrafted moonj baskets instead of mass-produced memorabilia. These are invitations to experience India's wisdom first-hand.

Strategic Recommendation

Ancient India excelled at systematizing knowledge through Vedanta, classic epics, Panini's grammar and Sushruta's surgical compendium, making it transmissible and scalable. Living traditions today remain largely undocumented, existing in muscle memory and oral transmission, vulnerable to disappearance. The challenge is preservation and access. Digitizing these practices into an open platform would transform dispersed knowledge into a global public good, positioning India as a curator of living heritage.

A National Living Traditions Digital Commons would serve this purpose. Featuring high-resolution documentation, downloadable workshop curricula for global educators and blockchain authentication for artisan products, the platform would turn ancient systematization into contemporary global access. A student in Brazil learning Gond painting from a curriculum co-created with a Madhya Pradesh master artist, or a buyer in London verifying a Meghalaya shawl's origin, are moments of cultural connection. They transform living heritage from a closed archive into an open, dynamic resource, generating creative economic value and deepening India's cultural influence worldwide.

Soft Power as Narrative Capital

Ultimately, soft power is about what others say about us. India's ancient courts understood that cultural exchange requires deliberate statecraft. It happens when the Indian diaspora learns its own language and understands its cultural heritage. They are the perfect ambassadors, as those thousands of years before them.

Today, the scale has changed, but the principle has not. India's creative economy, from its classical arts to its digital future. It is a strategic asset for a nation coming into its own. The gap between India's 2 percent share of global cultural markets and its civilizational wealth is not a failure. It is an invitation. That invitation is to bridge ancient wisdom with contemporary practice and to give the world stories that only India can tell.

Fable with Moral

Sukhu and Dukhu (An Adaptation)

Sukhu and Dukhu is a classic Bengali folk tale from Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumder's Thakurmar Jhuli collection that illustrates the law of karma: those who help and respect others will be generously rewarded, while selfishness, arrogance, and cruelty will eventually lead to misfortune and ruin.

Once, a weaver had two wives, each with a daughter- Sukhu and Dukhu. While Sukhu was spoiled and lazy, Dukhu was kind hearted, hardworking, and gentle. After the weaver passed away, Sukhu and her mother drove Dukhu and her mother out of their home. As a result, they were forced to live in penury.

One day, while Dukhu was spinning cotton, a strong wind blew her cotton away. Extremely disheartened, Dukhu chased the wind. On her journey while following the wind, she came across a cow covered in mud, a tangled banyan tree, and a tired horse. Despite her own troubles, compassionate Dukhu stopped at each instance to clean the cow's shed, clear the tree's creepers, and untie the horse.

Eventually, she reached the home of the moon. The moon rewarded her helpfulness by asking her to bathe in a magical pool. When Dukhu dipped in, her rags turned to silk and she was adorned with golden jewelry. She returned home wealthy and happy.

Seeing Dukhu's transformation and sudden fortune, the greedy and arrogant step sister Sukhu demanded to go after the wind with her own cotton. When her cotton blew away, she angrily chased it. Along the way, she encountered the cow, the tree, and the horse, but she selfishly refused to help any of them.

When she finally reached the moon's abode, the moon instructed her to bathe in the same pool. However, because of her cruel and selfish heart, when Sukhu dipped into the pool, she emerged covered in soot, dirt, and toads, with her hair smelling foul.

Moral of the Story: Always have a helping attitude towards all living beings.

Did you know?

Ayyavole 500--India's Medieval Merchant Guild

Did you know that nearly a thousand years ago, a powerful guild of South Indian merchants conducted trade across kingdoms, seas and cultural frontiers?

Known as the Ayyavole 500, or the "Five Hundred Lords of Ayyavole," this merchant organisation was associated with Ayyavole--present-day Aihole in Karnataka. In Tamil inscriptions, it was called the Ainnurruvar. References to the guild appear from approximately the ninth century CE, and its members operated across Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and other parts of southern India.

Their commercial world extended far beyond the Indian peninsula. A Tamil inscription dated 1088 CE, discovered at Barus in Sumatra, records the presence of the *"Five Hundred of a Thousand Directions."* It also refers to dues agreed upon by the merchant community, providing remarkable evidence that organised South Indian merchant groups were active in Southeast Asian ports.

Its history reminds us that medieval Indian commerce was sustained not merely by individual traders, but by sophisticated institutions capable of operating across regions-and even across the Indian Ocean.

UNJUMBLE

1. Unjumble these scrambled words to form the terms often used in Economy, Commerce & Finance of Ancient India

AHOSK

ILAB

NRIESH

TEAVN

2. Arrange the circled letters to answer the following:

A Merchant/Trader: _____

Answer: 1. Kosha, Bali, Shreni, Velan; 2. Vanik

Marvels of India

SPICES OF ANCIENT BHARAT

Pepper as Commodity and Currency

Black pepper, native to Bharat's Malabar coast, was so prized in ancient times that it served as a quasi-currency, earning it the nickname "black gold" in Roman trade circles.

Indo-Roman Trade in Spices

The Malabar port of Muziris anchored this trade. According to the first-century *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (a Greek document on trade), Roman merchants exchanged coined gold for pepper there. At the same time, the Tamil *Sangam* poetry celebrates the arrival of western traders (*Yavanars*) at Muziris with gold and their departure with pepper. The second-century *Muziris Papyrus* (another Greek document on commercial transactions) chronicles an actual loan contract financing this cargo and Rome's customs assessment of it, making it intriguing evidence of ancient Indian commerce and finance.

Rome's Fiscal Anxiety

Pliny the Elder, a Roman citizen of high repute, repeatedly lamented Roman capital draining eastward to Bharat through this trade, citing a staggering figure of 100 million sesterces (ancient Roman currency) annually, of which half went to Bharat alone. This is a historical testimony to Indian spices' outsized weight in the ancient Mediterranean economy.

QUIZ — Economy, Commerce & Finance

	Questions	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
1	Which of them is a significant archaeological site showing direct trade links between South India and the Roman Empire?	Puhar	Arikamedu	Uraiyur	Sriharikota
2	What was Madurai, the political and cultural capital of the Pandya kings, known for in the Sangam age?	Cardamom & Cloves	Jasmine & Pearls	Cotton & Silk	Puttu & Parotta
3	By Harshavardhan's time, India's roaring trade with the Roman Empire had already collapsed. Then, with whom did his kingdom actively trade?	The Americas	Middle East	China & Southeast Asia	Pacific Oceania
4	Which of these places is not famed for the traditional black pottery?	Nizamabad (UP)	Longpi (Manipur)	Sawai Madhopur (RJ)	Malda (WB)
5	Which of these states is GI-tagged for strawberries?	Mizoram	Goa	Maharashtra	Himachal Pradesh

Answers: 1 - B, 2 - B, 3 - C, 4 -D, 5 - C