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Guest Speaker Shri Rajkumar, Senior Manager, Foundation for MSME Clusters was honoured by Shri S Narasimhan, Vice President, ACC with Shri Chalamaji Gupta, Vizag Advisory Committee at the Programme on “Cybersecurity Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs”, 7 January 2026, Vizag.

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Unit-1
Chamber at a Glance

The secret of getting ahead
is getting started. The
secret of getting started
is breaking your complex,
overwhelming tasks into small
manageable tasks, and then
starting on the first one.



- Mark Twain



From the President's Desk

Dear Members,

**Greetings from Andhra Chamber of
Commerce!**

The Union Budget 2026 reaffirms India's decisive march towards Viksit Bharat 2047, placing manufacturing, infrastructure and self-reliance at the heart of national transformation. The announcements across textiles, containers, sunrise sectors, maritime economy and biopharma signal not incremental change, but structural ambition.

The five-year Mission for Cotton Productivity and the National Fibre Scheme mark a strategic step towards strengthening India's raw material security across natural, man-made and new-age fibres. With textiles being the second-largest employer after agriculture, these initiatives—along with Mega Textile Parks, cluster modernization, Samarth 2.0 skilling, and focused support for handloom, handicrafts and Khadi —will enhance competitiveness while safeguarding livelihoods of over 105 million people. The target of scaling the textile industry to \$350 billion by 2030 reflects bold intent.

Manufacturing's share in GDP must expand significantly if India is to grow from a \$3.7 trillion to a \$13 trillion economy by 2047. The push towards 25% manufacturing contribution, supported by SBI's CHAKRA initiative for sunrise sectors such as renewable energy, semiconductors, green hydrogen and electric mobility, strengthens India's long-term industrial capacity.

Equally noteworthy is the ₹10,000-crore allocation for container manufacturing. Reducing dependence on imports—particularly from China—will enhance supply-chain resilience and boost trade competitiveness. Similarly, the infrastructure thrust, potentially unlocking \$175 billion in investment opportunities, reinforces investor confidence through policy continuity and public capex commitment.

The maritime and Blue Economy focus, alongside the ₹10,000-crore Biopharma SHAKTI programme, positions India as a future-ready hub in global trade and advanced healthcare manufacturing.

This Budget lays a comprehensive foundation for resilience, scale and innovation—empowering industry, generating employment and strengthening India's global standing.

These milestones mark a bold transition toward innovation-driven, sustainable, and future-ready growth. Andhra Chamber of Commerce stands dedicated to empowering members to seize emerging opportunities and actively shape India's resilient economic transformation journey.

Dr. V L Indira Dutt
President

CHAMBER



Webinar on Using Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): The Way Forward for Businesses, 7th January 2026, Consultative Committee of City Chambers of Commerce

The session commenced with Hindustan Chamber of Commerce, Host welcomed the CCCCC Chambers Representatives and Participants. Sri. T Ramesh Dugar President, HCC introduced the Guest Speaker Ms. Sangeeta Godbole Ex IRS, Former Principal Income Tax Commissioner, Foreign Trade Negotiator

The following aspects were highlighted and elaborated by Ms. Sangeeta Godbole,

Free Trade Agreements are no longer just policy documents; they are powerful business tools. For Indian enterprises, especially MSMEs, FTAs offer preferential market access, reduced tariffs, and smoother regulatory pathways across partner countries. However, the real challenge lies not in the existence of FTAs, but in their effective utilization.

Businesses must understand rules of origin, product classification, and compliance requirements to fully benefit from these agreements. Strategic sourcing, supply chain restructuring, and correct documentation can significantly enhance competitiveness in global markets. FTAs also encourage value addition within India, supporting the 'Make in India' and export-led growth agenda.

The way forward is capacity building—creating awareness, simplifying procedures, and fostering collaboration between industry and government. When businesses proactively align their trade strategies with FTAs, they can transform global trade challenges into sustainable growth opportunities for India's economy.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks with a total of 100 participants attended the online programme.

Programme on “Cybersecurity Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs”,

7 January 2026, Visakhapatnam

Sri S Narasimhan, Vice President, ACC chaired the session and extended a warm welcome to the Guest speaker and participants in his opening remarks, he highlighted the importance and awareness for MSMEs in Cybersecurity and Introduced the Guest speaker Mr. Rajkumar, Senior Manager, Foundation for MSME Clusters.

In today’s rapidly digitizing business environment, cybersecurity has become a critical priority for MSMEs. With increasing dependence on digital platforms, MSMEs are more vulnerable to cyber threats such as data breaches, financial fraud, and ransomware attacks. This programme

aimed to build awareness, strengthen cyber resilience, and equip MSMEs with practical knowledge to safeguard businesses.

This programme received an encouraging response, with 30 MSME members actively participating. We are confident that the sessions will enhance cybersecurity preparedness and promote safe digital practices among our members.

We thank all the participants and guests for their presence and valuable contribution, and we look forward to continued cooperation in organizing such impactful capacity-building initiatives.

Programme on Explore the new Tally Prime 7.0,

23 January 2026, Dr V L Dutt Hall, Chennai.

The Andhra Chamber of Commerce with Tally for the benefit of the MSME has hosted the new features Tally Prime 7.0 Version R Vijayalakshmi, Secretary General, ACC welcomed and Introduced the Guest Trainer Sri Velayudham and participants for the presentation.

The following aspects were highlighted and elaborated by Sri Velayudham,

Software System Search Functionality Review

He focused on discussing various features and functionalities related to new software system. He explored topics such as report filters, smart finder options, and

search capabilities within the system and discussed about the features like similarity matching, multiple keyword searches, and the use of voucher numbers and vehicle information. The conversation also touched on cash solutions for sales transactions and the process of entering and searching for customer information.

Banking App Transaction Management

He focused on discussing bank-related project involving smartphone features, transaction processing, and bank statements with options for accessing bank statements, managing transaction limits, and integrating external data. About creating vouchers,



reconciling bank statements, and setting up appointments for various tasks. The conversation touched on technical aspects like CSV file imports and transaction fees, but no clear decisions or next steps were outlined.

Streamlining Payment and Banking Processes

The payment processes and banking options, including tax payments, U.S. bank charges, and e-payment configurations.

Participants reviewed transaction details, payment vouchers, and the status update process, emphasizing the importance of timely payments and efficient tracking. He discussed the advantages of using online payment systems for saving time and managing financial tasks more effectively.

The session concluded with an interactive Q&A, and a vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. N. Ravikumar, Acting Secretary, ACC. The programme saw the participation of 27 members and invitees.

Programme on “Cybersecurity Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs”, 29 January 2026, Siddhartha Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology”, Vijayawada

Sri.M.Rajaiah, Chairman, ACC, Vijayawada chaired the session and extended a warm welcome to the Guest speaker and participants in his opening remarks, he highlighted the importance and awareness for MSMEs in Cybersecurity and Introduced the Guest speaker Mr. Rajkumar, Senior Manager, Foundation for MSME Cluster.

The session featured expert presentation by Mr. MV Rajkumar, Senior Manager, Foundation for MSME cluster, who shared his professional insights and practical guidance on the Cybersecurity for MSMEs Introduced cybersecurity essentials from a business perspective.

- Demonstrated simple ways to verify payments and secure digital communication.
- Shared insights on new fraud techniques targeting social media users.

- Fostered a collaborative learning environment where both trainers and participants contributed.

He took a live session during the workshop, he has given detailed presentation on Challenges faced by MSMEs, software updates, password hacking methods, creating secure passwords, mail passwords, ransomware and phishing mail scams.

There was good interaction between the participants and the speaker, all the questions raised by the participants were answered by the speaker.

The program concluded with a Vote of Thanks proposed by CA. MVN Ramachandra Rao, Hon'ble advisory Committee Member, Indirect Taxes of the Andhra Chamber of Commerce, Vijayawada Office.

The Number of participants for the programme were 30.

Programme on “Shop Floor to the Board Room – Lessons in Leadership”

29 January 2026, Dr V L Dutt Hall, Chennai.

The Andhra Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with Madras Management Association (MMA), Chennai, has been consistently organizing impactful programmes for over a decade. In this continuing series, a dynamic session was recently held featuring Mr Anbu Nedunchezhan, Leadership Coach

The session commenced with Mr. R R Padmanabhan, Chairman of the Foreign Trade Sub-Committee, ACC, who welcomed the participants and introduced the guest speaker. Mr. N. Ravikumar, Acting Secretary, ACC, formally welcomed the gathering and introduced the Chamber services.

The following aspects were highlighted and elaborated by Mr Anbu Nedunchezhan, Leadership Coach

Professional and Personal Growth: He shared his professional journey, highlighting key roles and achievements, including leading operations and transformations at Caterpillar India and later becoming an independent consultant. He discussed his experience in supply chain management, global deployments, and his current work teaching MBA students and supporting various industries. He emphasized the importance of continuous learning and self-reflection, expressing his passion for social media as a tool for personal growth and staying connected with the world.

Social Media Content and Leadership: He shared his experience with writing and sharing

content on social media, emphasizing the importance of spreading positive vibrations and leveraging professional networks like LinkedIn for recruitment. He shared personal anecdotes about receiving feedback from friends and colleagues on his writing and how it has helped him connect with people globally.

Developing Leadership for Business Success: The importance of developing leadership skills and becoming a useful resource within an organization. He emphasized that leaders must possess technical competence, business acumen, and leadership capabilities to succeed.

Leadership and Career Development Insights: He emphasized on the importance of career rotation to avoid stagnation and emphasized decision-making as a key competency for leadership. They shared personal experiences and dilemmas faced in managing teams and making strategic decisions. He highlighted the balance between being process-oriented and people-oriented, as well as the challenges of managing work-life balance in a global company. They concluded by emphasizing the need for continuous improvement and innovation in their work.

The session concluded with an interactive Q&A, and a vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. B. Gautham, Chairman Skill Development Sub – Committee. The programme saw the participation of 30 members and invitees.

Viksit Ports Viksit Bharat,

8 January, ITC Grand Chola, Chennai

Chennai Port Authority has hosted a prestigious event on 8th January 2026 at ITC Grand Chola, which brought together key leaders and stakeholders from India's maritime and infrastructure sectors. The highlight of the evening will be a keynote address by Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, Hon'ble Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India, on

the theme "Viksit Ports, Viksit Bharat." The Andhra Chamber of Commerce was invited by the Chennai Port Authority and it was represented by Mrs R Vijayalakshmi, Secretary General, ACC and Mr P Barnabas Immanuel, Assistant Secretary, ACC. The event marked a significant milestone in the transformative journey of Chennai Port Authority over the last decade.

Tamilnadu Global Women Summit,

27 & 28 January 2026, Chennai Trade Center, Chennai

The Tamil Nadu Global Women Summit 2026, organised by the Government of Tamil Nadu, marked a defining moment in the State's journey towards inclusive growth and women-led development. The event was represented by Mrs R Vijayalakshmi, Secretary General, ACC and Mr P Barnabas Immanuel Assistant Secretary, from Andhra Chamber of Commerce.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister M. K. Stalin and the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin graced the occasion and unveiled several landmark initiatives aimed at strengthening safety, mobility, health, and economic empowerment for women and girls in Tamil Nadu.

A key highlight of the summit was the launch of TNWESafe, a progressive initiative designed to enhance women's safety and security frameworks across workplaces and public spaces. Complementing this effort was the introduction of Pink Buses, dedicated public transport services exclusively for women, reinforcing the State's commitment to safe and accessible mobility. In a major

public health intervention, the Government also announced the rollout of the HPV vaccination programme for 14-year-old girl children. This initiative reflects Tamil Nadu's proactive stance in preventive healthcare, aiming to safeguard young girls against cervical cancer and promote long-term well-being.

Another significant outcome of the summit was the signing of multiple strategic Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). These partnerships are expected to catalyse investments, create employment opportunities, and build supportive ecosystems for women entrepreneurs and professionals across emerging and traditional sectors.

The Tamil Nadu Global Women Summit 2026 stands as a powerful testament to the State's vision of building a safer, healthier, and economically vibrant society driven by women's leadership. By aligning policy, industry, and community action, Tamil Nadu continues to set benchmarks in advancing gender equity and inclusive development.

Memories to Cherish

Programme on “Cybersecurity Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs”,
7 January 2026, Visakhapatnam



Programme on Explore the new Tally Prime 7.0, 23 January 2026, Dr V L Dutt Hall, Chennai.



Programme on “Cybersecurity Capacity Building Programme for MSMEs”,

29 January 2026, Siddhartha Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology”, Vijayawada



Programme on “Shop Floor to the Board Room – Lessons in Leadership”

29 January 2026, Dr V L Dutt Hall, Chennai.



Viksit Ports Viksit Bharat, 8 January, ITC Grand Chola, Chennai



Tamilnadu Global Women Summit, 27 & 28 January 2026, Chennai Trade Center, Chennai





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Unit-2

Nation First

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Overview

“India’s Growth Momentum Strengthens Amid Rising Investments and Trade Optimism”

India’s economic trajectory in 2025 reflects renewed investor confidence, robust domestic consumption, and improving global trade integration. Private equity (PE) and venture capital investments in the consumer sector have surged to a four-year high, underlining the strength of India’s consumption-led growth model. According to Equirus Capital, cumulative investments in the consumer sector reached ₹35,800 crore in CY2025, significantly higher than ₹23,000 crore in CY2024 and surpassing ₹32,200 crore recorded in CY2022.

This investment upswing is driven by strong demand across segments, particularly in food and health-focused products. Rising disposable incomes, urbanisation, digital penetration, and changing lifestyle preferences are accelerating growth in packaged foods, quick commerce, and wellness-oriented brands. The increasing number of deals also signals long-term confidence in India’s demographic dividend and expanding middle class.

On the macroeconomic front, India’s improving trade relations with the United States and the

European Union have further strengthened its credit outlook. CareEdge Ratings recently upgraded India’s credit outlook to ‘Stable’, citing enhanced export opportunities, fiscal discipline outlined in the Union Budget 2026–27, and controlled government spending. These factors collectively support a gradual reduction in public debt, even amid global economic uncertainties.

Adding to the positive momentum, GST e-way bill generation in January touched 136.83 million — the second-highest monthly figure after December’s 138.39 million. This sharp rise of 43% reflects heightened business activity, improved supply chain efficiency, and strong domestic trade flows.

Together, rising private investments, improved credit outlook, and record-high logistics indicators signal a resilient and forward-moving Indian economy. With consumption, fiscal prudence, and global trade partnerships working in tandem, India appears well-positioned to sustain stable and inclusive economic growth in the coming years.

Source: Internet

India Success Story

India from Resilience to Global Leadership

The year 2026 marks a defining chapter in India's journey toward becoming a confident, innovation-driven global power. What makes India's success remarkable is not just rapid economic expansion, but the depth of transformation across technology, manufacturing, sustainability, entrepreneurship, and global diplomacy.

Economic Strength with Stability

By 2026, India continues to remain one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world. Structural reforms introduced over the past decade—such as the Goods and Services Tax (GST), digital governance systems, and production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes—have strengthened the country's manufacturing and export competitiveness.

Initiatives like Make in India and Startup India have evolved from policy slogans into measurable outcomes. India is no longer just a service-based economy; it has emerged as a global manufacturing hub for electronics, defence equipment, renewable energy components, and semiconductors.

The expansion of infrastructure—modern highways, freight corridors, smart ports, and world-class airports—has improved logistics

efficiency and reduced business costs. This integrated growth model has strengthened India's position in global supply chains.



Digital Revolution 2.0

India's digital public infrastructure has become a global case study. Platforms such as Unified Payments Interface have revolutionized financial transactions, processing billions of payments monthly and empowering small vendors, rural entrepreneurs, and MSMEs.

The combination of Aadhaar authentication, Jan Dhan bank accounts, and mobile connectivity has deepened financial inclusion to unprecedented levels. Digital governance has reduced leakages in welfare schemes and increased transparency.

By 2026, India is also emerging as a global AI and deep-tech powerhouse. Indian

startups are building solutions in health-tech, agritech, fintech, and clean energy. Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are producing technology talent, proving that innovation is no longer limited to metropolitan hubs.

Manufacturing and Self-Reliance

India's push toward self-reliance under the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat has delivered tangible outcomes. The electronics manufacturing ecosystem has expanded significantly, with global companies establishing production facilities in India.

The defence sector has also witnessed a paradigm shift, with indigenous production increasing and exports reaching record highs. This transition from importer to exporter signals a strong technological and industrial foundation.

The textile and renewable energy sectors are witnessing renewed momentum. Investments in green hydrogen, solar parks, and electric mobility are positioning India as a leader in clean energy transformation.

Green Growth and Sustainability

India's climate commitments have translated into action. Massive solar energy installations, wind energy capacity expansion, and green hydrogen missions demonstrate a balance between development and sustainability.

Urban planning initiatives focus on clean mobility, waste management, and water conservation. Rural India is benefiting from solar irrigation systems and sustainable

farming practices, improving both productivity and environmental resilience.

India's approach showcases how a developing nation can grow rapidly while maintaining climate responsibility.

Global Diplomacy and Strategic Influence

On the global stage, India has strengthened its diplomatic footprint. Through forums such as G20 and BRICS, India has amplified the voice of emerging economies.

India's balanced foreign policy—engaging with Western economies while maintaining strategic partnerships in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East—has enhanced its global credibility.

Its leadership in technology cooperation, vaccine diplomacy, and development partnerships has positioned India as a responsible global stakeholder.

Rise of Entrepreneurship and MSMEs

India's startup ecosystem is no longer concentrated in Bengaluru or Hyderabad alone. Cities like Coimbatore, Indore, Jaipur, and Bhubaneswar are nurturing new-age enterprises.

Bootstrapped companies, social enterprises, and manufacturing startups are proving that sustainable business models can thrive outside traditional tech corridors. The combination of digital infrastructure and policy support has reduced entry barriers for entrepreneurs.

Access to credit through fintech platforms and government-backed schemes has empowered MSMEs to scale operations and compete globally.

Youth, Skills, and Demographic Advantage

With one of the world's youngest populations, India's skill development initiatives are crucial to its success story. Industry-aligned training programs, digital learning platforms, and partnerships with global institutions are bridging the skill gap.

By 2026, India's workforce is not just large—it is increasingly skilled, adaptable, and globally competitive. The country's demographic dividend is turning into an economic advantage.

Conclusion: A Confident India

India's success story in 2026 is not defined by a single milestone but by a collective transformation. It reflects resilience during global uncertainties, bold reforms, technological innovation, and inclusive growth.

From digital payments in rural markets to high-tech manufacturing hubs, from green energy projects to global diplomatic leadership, India stands as a symbol of possibility.

The journey ahead will bring new challenges, but the foundation built over the past decade ensures that India's growth is not temporary—it is structural, sustainable, and globally impactful.

In 2026, India is not just participating in the global economy—it is shaping

Image Source: Internet for learning purposes only.

Source: Internet

Madras High Court Judgments in

VAT CST GST



Shri. V.V. Sampathkumar

Treasurer and Chairman, Indirect Taxes Sub - Committee,
Andhra Chamber of Commerce

Not considered of Reply: Appellate Authority rejected the said appeal vide impugned order dated 11.11.2025 on the ground of delay in filing the appeal. Demand confirmed pertains to the tax period 2019-2020, whereas the GST registration of the petitioner's supplier PTMS Cargo was cancelled only on 01.03.2023 w e f 01.01.2019. Insofar as the cancellation of GST registration of PTMS Cargo is concerned, the relevant certificate and certificate in terms of Circular No.183/15/2022-GST dated 27.12.2022 had been furnished by the petitioners, but the same has not been considered by the respondent while passing the impugned order. Considering the above, the impugned orders are quashed and the matter is remitted back to the 1st respondent to redo the exercise and issued directions. **M/s. Cressida International Pvt Ltd, Vs 1. AC (ST) (FAC), Surapattu Assessment Circle, 2. DC(CT), Appellate Authority, Chennai. W.P.No.48994 of 2025 DATED: 18.12.2025**

GST Registration restoration: WP filed with a prayer to direct the Respondent to restore the GST Registration of the Petitioner and permit the Petitioner to file all pending returns and pay tax, interest and penalty. Both the Ld counsel for the Petitioner and the Ld Government Advocate for the Respondent confirmed that the issue is squarely covered by the decision of this Court in Tvl.Suguna Cut Piece Center, Vs. ADC (ST) (GST), Salem and another, (2022) 99 GSTR 386 and the Court issued directions to restore subject to conditions that included of filing the returns and paying the tax interest etc **M/s. Gyan Vaishnav Dhaba Simla Ice Cream Bar, Vs.DCTO, O/o Assistant Commissioner (ST), Vellore (Rural), W.P.No.49394 of 2025 DATED : 19.12.2025**

GST and Auction: Alleging misuse of TIN after closure of business in September 2014, the petitioner challenged recovery proceedings that culminated in a proposed

auction of his residential property on 30.12.2025. The Court stayed the auction, subject to deposit of the disputed tax confirmed vide assessment order dated 18.02.2019 within six months. **V Manjunath S/o.Veeranna Vs 1. JC(CT), Hosur (JCT). 2. AC(ST), Hosur (South). WP No.49786 of 2025 DATED: 19.12.2025**

Requested Time not granted: Records revealed that the petitioner filed a reply to SCN. By a Reminder notice dated 27.11.2025, the petitioner was asked to file an additional reply by 02.12.2025. Personal hearing was fixed on 01.12.2025. On the date fixed for personal hearing, the petitioner however did not appear but sent a representation on 02.12.2025 with a request for extension of time to file a reply. Impugned order has been passed without an additional reply. Considering the same and following the consistent view taken under similar circumstances, the case is remitted back to the Respondent to pass a fresh order on merit. **M/s. Appejay Surrendra Park Hotels Ltd, Vs AC (ST), Pondy Bazaar Assessment Circle, W.P.No.49649 of 2025 DATED: 19.12.2025**

Duplication of GST Demand: Duplication of demand ought to have been examined by the respondent u/s 161 of the respective GST Enactment, particularly when a specific request to that effect had been made by the petitioner on 27.05.2025. Under these circumstances, the impugned order dated 26.08.2025 is set aside, and the matter is

remitted back to the respondent authority to reconsider the issue afresh in accordance with law. **M/s. Nabati Food (India) P Ltd, Vs. AC CT & CE, Audit I, The Commissioner of GST & CE Chennai Audit I Commissionerate 2. AC of GST & CE, Purasawalkam Division, W.P.No.42823 of 2025 DATED: 06.11.2025**

Show Cause Notices: There is no bar for issuance of multiple Show Cause Notices to an assessee for the same tax period, if the Show Cause proceedings are initiated on different and separate issues. That apart, neither the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 nor the General Principles under the Code are applicable to the proceedings initiated under the respective GST Enactments. **M/s. Radiant Cash Management Services Ltd, Vs CTO, Pondy Bazaar Assessment Circle, WP No. 49092 of 2025 Dated 18.12.2025**

Condonation of Delay: Since the statutory appeal under Section 107 was time-barred and the writ petition was filed on 10.12.2025, the Court, to balance the interests of the assessee and the revenue, remitted the matter to the respondent for fresh adjudication on merits with appropriate directions. **M/s. Sri Ragavendra Brick Works, Vs. STO, Cholavaram Assessment Circle, Chennai-3. W.P.No.48780 of 2025 DATED: 19.12.2025**

Cancellation of registration and its Revocation: GST Registration of the Petitioner has been cancelled with effect from 08.08.2020. Petitioner prayed for liberty to file an application for revocation of the cancellation of registration in terms of Rule 23 of the respective GST Rules, though the time prescribed has expired. Considering the fact that the impugned order dated 15.11.2022 is an ex parte order, this WP is disposed of with liberty to the Petitioner to file an application for revocation of the cancellation within 30 days from the date of receipt of a copy of this order. Since the Web Portal may not allow for filing such application, at this stage, the Petitioner is directed to file the aforesaid application manually if the Web Portal does not enable the Petitioner to upload the same.

M/s. Vijayalaxmi Traders (Defunct) Vs. The Supdt (GST), Periyanaickenpalayam, Coimbatore.W.P.No.19242 of 2024 DATED: 18.12.2025

GST on Seigniorage fee / Royalty paid: impugned Notice is for levying and demanding GST on the Seigniorage fee/ Royalty paid for quarrying and transporting mineral along with interest and penalty for the Assessment Year 2021-2022 quash the same, pass such further or other orders as this Hon'ble Court may deem fit, just and proper in the circumstances of the case and thus render justice. Considering the fact that the issue is pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this Court disposed of this WP at the admission stage, by directing the Respondent to keep all the proceedings in abeyance. **M/s.Sai Jothi quarry Vs AC ST, T.Nagar Assessment circle, WP No. 41779 of 2025 DATED: 06-11-2025.**

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author.

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Trust your wings, not the branch.



Mr M.L. Narendra Kumar

Director, Instivate Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd

You've probably heard the saying: **"The bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking, because her trust is not in the branch but in her own wings."**

This isn't just a poetic image—it's a powerful metaphor for self-trust and self-reliance. Think about a time when your confidence was shaken by something outside your control. Maybe you prepared thoroughly for a presentation, only to be thrown off by a few tough questions. At that moment, it's easy to think, "I'm just bad at handling questions," and let one setback define your entire ability.

But here's the insight:

We often spend our energy building competency—honing skills, mastering tasks, perfecting presentations—while neglecting to build ourselves.

Competency is like the branch; it's useful, stable, until it isn't. Self-trust is your wings. It's what lets you fly when the branch beneath you crack.

Self-trust isn't about never failing. It's about building the inner resilience to see failure as an event, not an identity. Had that inner foundation been strong, those unanswerable questions wouldn't have shattered your

confidence—they'd have been mere turbulence in your flight. You'd regroup, learn, and return stronger.

Today, this mindset isn't just personal wisdom—it's a professional necessity. We're entering an era of AI-driven disruption, where jobs, roles, and entire industries are transforming overnight. The "branch" of the job market is more unpredictable than ever.

So, what do we do?

We become the bird.

We stop fearing the break and start trusting our wings.

That means cultivating the ability to unlearn, learn, and relearn—to adapt, pivot, and persevere no matter how the landscape shifts. It means investing not only in what we do, but in who we are: resilient, self-reliant, and rooted in trust in our own capacity to rise.

Build your skills, yes. But don't forget to build yourself.

When the branch trembles, it won't be your resume that saves you—it'll be your wings.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author.



Unit-3

Kaizen Corner

**A leader is a
dealer in hope.**

- Napoleon Bonaparte

Shout -Sales and MARKETING MATTERS



Mr.M.K. Anand

Chairman, MSME Sub-Committee
Andhra Chamber of Commerce

Sales Pipeline to Qualified Prospects: A Best Practices Guide Across FMCG, Retail, Manufacturing, and Service Verticals

Sales Pipeline to Qualified Prospects: A Best Practices Guide Across FMCG, Retail, Manufacturing, and Service Verticals

February 2026

Transform your sales strategy with best practices for consistently identifying and qualifying high-value prospects in FMCG, Retail, Manufacturing, and Service sectors.



Understanding Lead Qualification

- Why Lead Qualification Matters

Enhanced BANT Framework

- ✓ Budget, Authority, Need, Timeline
- ✓ Budget, Authority, Need, Timeline

Industry-Specific Criteria

- ✓ Universal BANT Framework
- ✓ Industry-Specific Criteria

Performance Metrics Optimization

- ✓ Track conversion rates, sales pipeline
- ✓ Revenue per qualified lead

Benefits of Effective Lead Qualification

- Improved Resource Allocation
- Enhanced Forecast Accuracy
- Increased Team Productivity
- Accelerated Revenue Growth

Executive Summary

In today's competitive marketplace, the ability to efficiently identify and qualify prospects across different industry verticals has become the cornerstone of successful sales operations. Research indicates that **67% of lost sales result from improper lead qualification at the initial stages [1]**, making this a critical competency for sales executives and managers alike.

This guide provides actionable frameworks and industry-specific strategies to transform your sales pipeline from a quantity-driven approach to a precision-focused, quality-driven operation that delivers predictable revenue growth across FMCG, Retail, Manufacturing, and Service sectors.

Table of Contents

1. The Foundation: Understanding Lead Qualification
2. Universal Qualification Framework: Enhanced BANT
3. Industry-Specific Qualification Criteria

4. Implementation Strategy for Sales Teams
5. Performance Metrics and Optimization

The Foundation: Understanding Lead Qualification

Why Lead Qualification Matters

Lead qualification serves as the critical filter that separates high-potential opportunities from resource-draining prospects. **Modern sales teams that implement structured qualification processes achieve 30% higher productivity** through automated segmentation and focused effort allocation [2].

Key Insight: Time is your most valuable resource. Each hour spent on unqualified leads is an hour not invested in high-value opportunities that drive revenue growth.

The Cost of Poor Qualification

Organizations with inadequate qualification systems experience:

- **Wasted Resources:** Misallocated time, budget, and operational costs
- **Reduced Team Morale:** Frustration from pursuing “zombie leads”
- **Inaccurate Forecasting:** Pipeline bloated with non-converting prospects
- **Slower Growth:** Hidden costs that compound over time

Universal Qualification Framework: Enhanced BANT

The BANT Foundation

The BANT framework (Budget, Authority, Need, Timeline) remains the gold standard for B2B qualification, developed by IBM

in the 1950s and refined for modern sales environments [3]. **Viable leads should meet at least three of the four BANT criteria to warrant sales investment.**

Enhanced BANT Components

| Component | Key Questions | Qualification Criteria |
|-----------|--|---|
| Budget | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their allocated budget range? • Have they invested in similar solutions before? • What ROI do they expect? | Confirmed budget allocation or historical spending patterns |
| Authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who makes the final purchasing decision? • What is the approval process? • Are we speaking to the economic buyer? | Direct access to decision-maker or clear path to influence |
| Need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific pain points exist? • How urgent is the problem? • What happens if they don't solve this? | Quantifiable business impact and urgency |
| Timeline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When do they need a solution implemented? • What drives their timeline? • Are there external deadlines? | Realistic and business-driven timeline |



Industry-Specific Qualification Criteria

FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods)

Unique Characteristics: High-volume, low-margin products with rapid inventory turnover and seasonal demand fluctuations.

Key Qualification Factors:

- **Volume Commitment:** Minimum order quantities and projected annual volumes
- **Distribution Network:** Existing retail partnerships and market reach
- **Seasonal Planning:** Alignment with promotional calendars and peak seasons
- **Compliance Requirements:** Food safety, labeling, and regulatory adherence
- **Payment Terms:** Cash flow considerations and credit worthiness

Red Flags: Unrealistic volume projections, lack of established distribution, seasonal misalignment

Retail Sector

Unique Characteristics: Customer-facing operations with emphasis on location, foot traffic, and consumer experience.

Key Qualification Factors:

- **Location Strategy:** Store placement and target demographic alignment
- **Customer Traffic:** Footfall patterns and conversion rates

- **Inventory Management:** Stock turnover and supply chain efficiency
- **Technology Integration:** POS systems, e-commerce capabilities, omnichannel readiness
- **Brand Positioning:** Market segment and competitive differentiation

Red Flags: Poor location strategy, declining foot traffic, outdated technology infrastructure

Manufacturing Sector

Unique Characteristics: Complex B2B relationships, long sales cycles, and significant capital investments.

Key Qualification Factors:

- **Production Capacity:** Current utilization and expansion plans
- **Technical Specifications:** Compatibility with existing systems and processes
- **Compliance Standards:** Industry regulations and quality certifications
- **ROI Justification:** Clear financial benefits and payback periods
- **Implementation Timeline:** Realistic deployment schedules considering operational constraints

Red Flags: Unrealistic technical requirements, insufficient capital allocation, regulatory non-compliance

Service Verticals

Unique Characteristics: Intangible offerings with emphasis on expertise, relationships, and measurable outcomes.

Key Qualification Factors:

- **Service Scope:** Clear definition of deliverables and success metrics
- **Relationship Dynamics:** Stakeholder buy-in and change management readiness
- **Performance Metrics:** Measurable KPIs and success criteria
- **Contract Terms:** Service level agreements and performance guarantees
- **Cultural Fit:** Alignment with organizational values and working styles

Red Flags: Unclear success metrics, resistance to change, unrealistic expectations

Implementation Strategy for Sales Teams

Phase 1: Framework Adoption

Week 1-2: Train sales teams on enhanced BANT methodology and industry-specific criteria

Week 3-4: Implement qualification scorecards and assessment templates

Action Items:

- Create qualification checklists for each vertical
- Develop role-play scenarios for practice
- Establish minimum qualification scores for pipeline entry

Phase 2: Process Integration

Month 2: Integrate qualification criteria into

CRM systems and sales workflows

Key Activities:

- Automated lead scoring based on qualification criteria
- Pipeline stage gates requiring qualification validation
- Regular qualification reviews and updates

Phase 3: Performance Optimization

Month 3+: Monitor performance metrics and refine qualification criteria based on conversion data

Optimization Focus:

- Conversion rate analysis by qualification score
- Sales cycle length correlation with qualification quality
- Revenue per qualified lead tracking

Performance Metrics and Optimization

Key Performance Indicators

| Metric | Industry Benchmark | Target Range |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Pipeline Conversion Rate | 23% (opportunity to close) [4] | 25-30% |
| Lead-to-Opportunity Rate | 15-20% | 20-25% |
| Sales Cycle Length | Varies by vertical | 10-15% reduction |
| Revenue per Qualified Lead | Industry-dependent | 20% improvement |

Continuous Improvement Process

1. **Monthly Reviews:** Analyze qualification accuracy vs. actual outcomes
2. **Quarterly Adjustments:** Refine criteria based on performance data
3. **Annual Overhaul:** Comprehensive review of framework effectiveness

Best Practice: Use qualification data to strengthen forecasting accuracy. AI-powered lead scoring can increase qualified leads by up to 50% when properly implemented with industry-specific criteria [5].

Conclusion

Effective lead qualification transforms sales operations from reactive to predictive, enabling teams to focus resources on prospects with the highest probability of conversion. By implementing industry-specific qualification criteria within the enhanced BANT framework, sales executives and managers can achieve:

- Improved Resource Allocation: Focus on high-value opportunities
- Enhanced Forecast Accuracy: Predictable pipeline progression
- Increased Team Productivity: Reduced time waste on unqualified leads
- Accelerated Revenue Growth: Higher conversion rates and shorter sales cycles

The key to success lies in consistent application, continuous refinement, and alignment between marketing and sales teams on qualification standards. Start with the universal BANT framework, customize for your specific vertical, and iterate based on performance data.

Remember: Quality always trumps quantity in modern sales. A smaller pipeline of highly qualified prospects will consistently outperform a large pipeline of unqualified leads.

References

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author

STANDARDS, CERTIFICATIONS & REGULATIONS UPDATES



Rama Venugopal

Chairman – S.C.R. Sub - Committee,
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Government of India Revises Startup Recognition Framework to Strengthen Startup India Action Plan



In February 2026, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) issued a landmark gazette notification that significantly revises the **Startup Recognition Framework**. This

update (superseding the 2019 notification) aims to transition India into a manufacturing-led economy and a hub for emerging technologies as the Startup India initiative enters its second decade.

Below is an elaborate note on the key amendments and the framework for Deep Tech recognition.

1. Key Structural Amendments

The revised framework doubles existing limits and expands the definition of eligible entities to support startups throughout their growth lifecycle.

- **Turnover Limit Doubled:** The threshold for recognition as a startup has been increased from ₹100 crores to ₹200 crores. This allows maturing companies to retain “startup” status and benefits even as they scale.
- **Expansion to Cooperatives:** For the first time, Multi-State Cooperative Societies and State/UT Cooperative Societies are eligible for recognition. This move is specifically designed to drive innovation in agriculture, rural industries, and community-based enterprises.
- **General Age Limit:** Standard startups (non-deep tech) remain recognized for up to 10 years from the date of incorporation or registration.

2. Dedicated “Deep Tech Startup” Framework

The notification introduces a specialized sub-category for Deep Tech entities to address their unique challenges, such as long gestation periods and high capital intensity.

A. Specialized Eligibility Criteria

- **Extended Age Limit:** Deep Tech startups are recognized for up to 20 years from incorporation.
- **Higher Turnover Cap:** The turnover limit for this category is set at ₹300 crore.
- **Core Attributes:** Recognition is based on whether the entity develops solutions rooted in advanced scientific or engineering knowledge, demonstrates high R&D spending, and owns (or is developing) significant novel intellectual property.

B. Application & Compliance

- **Application Process:** Entities must apply via the DPIIT portal with their Certificate of Incorporation and a detailed write-up on their innovation.
- **Additional Documentation:** Deep Tech applicants must provide extra evidence of their R&D focus and IP creation.
- **Funding Restrictions:** The notification clarifies that recognized startups must not deploy funds in residential real estate, speculative assets, or non-core financial activities.

3. Beneficiaries and Strategic Objectives

The revised framework targets specific segments of the economy to ensure inclusive growth:

- **Research-Driven Ventures:** Founders in fields like AI,

Biotechnology, Clean Energy, and Advanced Manufacturing benefit from a longer 20-year “runway” to commercialize their R&D.

- **Grassroots Innovators:** Rural cooperatives can now access the same tax holidays, funding (Seed Fund/Fund of Funds), and public procurement benefits as urban tech companies.
- **High-Growth Mid-Market Firms:** Companies scaling between ₹100 crore and ₹200 crore now retain their “Angel Tax” exemptions and self-certification privileges for a longer period.
- **Investors:** The framework is expected to attract “patient capital” (long-term investment) by providing a more predictable policy environment for high-risk, high-tech sectors.

4. Summary of Major Changes (2026 vs. 2019)

| Feature | 2019 Framework | 2026 Revised Framework |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Standard Turnover Limit | ₹100 Crore | ₹200 Crore |
| Standard Age Limit | 10 Years | 10 Years |
| Deep Tech Turnover Limit | N/A | ₹300 Crore |
| Deep Tech Age Limit | N/A | 20 Years |
| Eligible Entities | Pvt Ltd, LLP, Partnership | Pvt Ltd, LLP, Partnership, Cooperatives |

Sources :

PIB Notification

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2224069®=3&lang=2>

DPIIT Gazette Notification

<https://www.dpiit.gov.in/static/uploads/2026/02/119e52e2a36f652215a32c3ccc5f9c66.pdf>

Image Source: Internet for learning purposes only.

Understanding Ecosystem of Accreditation



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International Conformity Assessment Expert, New Delhi

The word 'accreditation' is used in many contexts.

The journalists are 'accredited'. Means they are officially recognized by the government.

The ambassadors are 'accredited' meaning they are accepted by host country as official representatives of their home country.

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries, accreditation is the official approval or certification granted by an organization to individuals or institutions, confirming they have met specific, required standards.

Accreditation is used in education where educational institutions are recognized by an independent body as meeting specified standards. In India, we have accreditation of universities and colleges by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

Yet another sector where accreditation is used is healthcare whereby hospitals and other healthcare establishments are

assessed by an independent body as meeting specified standards. In India, healthcare accreditation was pioneered by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH).

The subject of this column is none of the above but yet another sector where accreditation is used – to attest competence of conformity assessment bodies like testing or calibration or medical labs or inspection agencies or certification bodies or validation and verification bodies in GHG space.

This space is governed largely by the standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the term accreditation is defined in ISO 17000 - Conformity assessment — Vocabulary and general principles as:

“third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body, conveying formal

demonstration of its competence, impartiality and consistent operation in performing specific conformity assessment activities”

Who accredits?

Contrary to what many mistakenly believe, ISO does not accredit or authorize anyone to certify against ISO standards. It is just a standards setting body and no more. Its standards are freely available for use by anyone.

Typically, in each country there is an accreditation body (AB) which undertakes accreditation of conformity assessment bodies (CABs).

Europe has legislated and there is a single national accreditation body in each member of EU.

In many, especially developing, countries, the government has set up accreditation bodies and not by law but by market demand there is only one accreditation body – say in Sri Lanka or Bangladesh or Pakistan in our neighbourhood and most of Africa and Gulf.

In some developed economies, there are multiple accreditation bodies, that too in private sector – be it USA or Japan or Canada or South Korea.

India has also become a multi-AB country with private accreditation bodies coming into being in addition to the national accreditation boards established by the government.

There are some multi-country ABs as well – e.g. in Gulf there is GCC Accreditation Center

(GAC) or in Africa, there is Southern African Development Community Accreditation Services (SADCAS) which serves as many as 13 countries.

Is there a global system to supervise accreditation?

Indeed there is one.

There were two global associations of accreditation bodies – International Accreditation Forum (IAF), which covered accreditation of certification and validation/verification bodies, and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), which covered accreditation of laboratories and inspection agencies. There are regional bodies broadly in each continent e.g. European Accreditation Cooperation in Europe or Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation in Asia and Pacific.

In a historic development, IAF and ILAC have merged into a single international body Global Accreditation Cooperation Inc (GACI) wef 1 Jan 2026.

IAF and ILAC have operated a system of mutual recognition whereby individual accreditation bodies are evaluated by respective regional bodies who in turn are evaluated by IAF/ILAC every 4 years, which will continue under the new global body, and provides international equivalence to accreditation and conformity assessment. This leads to, for example, acceptance of an ISO 9001 certificate issued in India globally

or a test report from an accredited lab being accepted globally thus facilitating freer trade notwithstanding that the global order is 'trumped' right now!!!.

Is accreditation obligatory?

Generally speaking, no. Accreditation globally is voluntary with few exceptions and it is not obligatory for a CAB to get accredited. Nor is it obligatory for an AB to become member of GACI.

The entire mutual recognition system of accreditation under what is now GACI is voluntary.

However, many governments have accepted the above system in their regulations and many regulators specify accreditation as a prerequisite for recognition of labs or inspection or audit bodies for their purposes.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India for example notifies food testing labs and food safety audit agencies based on accreditation to respective international standards.

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency has recently notified NABCB accreditation under the Carbon Credit Trading Scheme.

In the free trade agreements, many countries accept test reports or audit reports or certifications from other countries based on the GACI system. India has trade agreement with Singapore signed as far back as 2005 in which accreditation was a prerequisite for

telecom and electrical sectors for acceptance of testing and certification.

However, in some regulations, accreditation is not prescribed. Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, there is a provision to recognize Ayush labs but accreditation is not required.

It is to be understood that a regulator or a user may prescribe accreditation as prerequisite for accepting labs or audit agencies etc.

It has to be noted that normally regulators prescribe domestic accreditation as BEE has done and then negotiate with trading partners for mutual acceptance of accreditation based on GACI MRA.

Are there other accreditation systems outside GACI?

Indeed, there are!

Regulators may choose to accredit themselves directly rather than rely on ABs. In India, APEDA accredited CBs for organic certification for years till in the latest revision of NPOP, it has prescribed accreditation to ISO 17065. US Department of Agriculture (USDA) directly accredits CBs for organic certification even in India.

Then there is UNFCCC which has a well-established system of accreditation for validation and verification bodies approved under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and now under Article 6.4 mechanism which does not rely on ABs or GACI system.

Even its accreditation standard goes beyond what the relevant ISO standards prescribe. Indian validation and verification bodies are an important player in the UNFCCC system one of them being the first to be accredited under Article 6.4 globally.

There is another actor in the voluntary sector – what are globally called the scheme owners. They own largely certification or GHG schemes though there can be inspection schemes as well. Many of them rely on GACI system for approving independent CABs based on accreditation – Verra in GHG or GlobalGAP in agriculture or FSSC 22000 in food safety are some of the examples. Participation in these voluntary schemes is important for Indian industry as they promote exports and/or earn foreign exchange.

However, some scheme owners have their own accreditation systems – for example the popular SA 8000 certification system relies on its own accreditation. Another well-known scheme owner Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) set up its own accreditation body, Assurance Services International (ASI) and has now set up ASI NA in USA which caters to not only FSC but some other scheme owners like Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) and Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) outside of GACI system. Yet another scheme owner, the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), also operates its own accreditation.

Of course, since accreditation is an unregulated space, anyone can set up an accreditation body – profit or not for profit. It has led to the malady of some accreditation bodies, who show addresses in USA or UK or Europe and claim to provide accreditation, but are not part of GACI system and there is no way to ascertain their authenticity. There are any number of CBs who flaunt such accreditations and essentially dupe not only the industry but more importantly, the users and purchasers of goods and services, who have no knowledge of the accreditation ecosystem. It is a serious malady and actually calls for regulation of conformity assessment which was recommended by the Planning Commission as far back as in the Plan document of 2006.

Conclusion

While the global system now operating under GACI with accreditation bodies in various countries is the largest and most visible accreditation system, one has to be aware of other equally credible systems of accreditation which also provide gateway to global markets and more importantly of what can be called ‘unauthentic’ accreditation bodies to be able to distinguish ‘good’ from ‘bad’.

(adapted from author’s regular column in ‘Front Foot Forward’ in mediamap.co.in)

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author



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India's Free Trade Agreement with the European Union

India's proposed Free Trade Agreement with the European Union represents one of the most comprehensive and strategically significant trade pacts under negotiation. Covering goods, services, investment, professional mobility and sustainability disciplines, this agreement goes far beyond tariff reduction. It seeks to create a predictable, rules-based and high-standards trade corridor between two of the world's largest markets.

For exporters, MSMEs and service providers including members of the Andhra Chamber — this FTA can reshape both opportunity and compliance expectations.

Scope: More Than a Traditional FTA

Unlike earlier tariff-focused trade deals, the India EU FTA is designed as a **comprehensive economic pact**. It covers:

- Trade in goods
- Trade in services
- Investment framework
- Mobility of professionals
- Digital and regulatory cooperation
- Labour and environmental standards
- Customs and trade facilitation
- Intellectual property disciplines

This means the agreement will influence not just border duties, but also **how business is conducted, certified, delivered and regulated**.

Goods Trade: Near-Full Preferential Access but with Conditions

Under the proposed structure:

EU side (for Indian exporters):

- Tariffs expected to be removed on over 90% of tariff lines

- Near duty-free access for the vast majority of Indian exports by value
- Strong gains expected for:
 - Textiles & garments
 - Leather & footwear
 - Engineering goods
 - Pharmaceuticals
 - Chemicals
 - Processed foods
- Defined “insufficient operations” (simple packing, labeling, minor assembly not enough)
- Digital/self-certification of origin statements
- Electronic customs verification

India side (for EU exporters):

- Phased and calibrated tariff reduction
- Sensitive sectors protected through staging, quotas or exclusions
- Opening likely in:
 - Machinery
 - Auto components
 - Specialty chemicals
 - High-technology equipment

Key message: Tariff benefit will be meaningful but only where **standards and origin rules are satisfied**.

Rules of Origin & Compliance: Critical for MSMEs

The agreement will rely on strict **Rules of Origin** to prevent third-country routing.

Likely features include:

- Product-specific origin criteria
- Value addition thresholds

For MSMEs, this shifts the focus to:

- Bill of materials discipline
- Supplier origin tracking
- Documentation systems
- Audit readiness

Services, Investment and Professional Mobility

Services form a central pillar of the FTA.

Expected coverage includes:

- IT & ITES
- Professional services
- Financial services
- Education & training
- Tourism & hospitality
- Consulting & design services

Likely benefits:

- Wider market access commitments
- National treatment in many sectors
- Easier establishment norms
- Frameworks for professional mobility

- Recognition pathways for qualifications (sector-specific)

For Indian firms, this enables services exports plus on-ground presence in EU markets.

Sustainability & Standards: The New Trade Filters

EU trade policy is strongly aligned with sustainability.

The FTA is expected to embed commitments on:

- Labour standards
- Environmental protection
- Climate cooperation
- Circular economy practices
- Responsible supply chains

Exporters should prepare for:

- ESG disclosures
- Traceability expectations
- Green compliance norms
- Carbon-linked measures in future

This is not a barrier but a **competitiveness filter**.

Strategic Significance for Indian Industry

Beyond trade flows, the agreement supports:

- India–EU value chain integration
- Technology partnerships
- Clean energy cooperation
- Advanced manufacturing collaboration
- Digital and emerging tech ecosystems

It aligns well with Make in India, supply-chain diversification and knowledge-driven exports.

Conclusion for Chamber Members

The India–EU FTA will reward prepared enterprises — not merely exporting enterprises.

Success will depend on:

- Standards compliance
- Origin discipline
- ESG readiness
- Services capability
- Documentation strength

In the coming years, trade advantage will not come only from lower tariffs — but from higher credibility.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UPDATES



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THREAT INTELLIGENCE

Definition:

Threat Intelligence is the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information regarding suspected, emerging, and active cyber threats. This intelligence includes detailed data on vulnerabilities, threat actors' tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP's) and indicators of compromise (IOC's) used to protect organizations' users, data, and infrastructure.

Purpose:

To transform raw data into actionable insights, empowering organizations to anticipate, detect, and counteract cyber threats with precision and efficiency and it can be categorized into strategic (high-level trends for executives), tactical (technical details for analysts), operational (attack planning), and technical levels.

Key Components

Major components include data collection from internal logs, external feeds, and open-source intelligence (OSINT); processing for context, analysis via profiling, correlation and dissemination through reports or alerts. This cycle turns raw data into prioritized, actionable recommendations for security teams.

Categories of Cyber Threats

To manage threats effectively, they are classified based on their level of detail and intended audience:

- a) **Tactical Intelligence:** Focuses on immediate technical indicators such as malicious IP addresses, file hashes, and known bad URL's.

- b) Operational Intelligence:** To Analyze “how” of an attack, focusing on the specific methods, techniques, and procedures used by threat actors.
- c) Strategic Intelligence:** Examines broad trends and the “why” behind attacks, including actor motivations, geopolitical influences, and long-term industry shifts.

Threat Intelligence and it’s necessity

Threat intelligence is essential for several compelling reasons. Threat intelligence functions as the vanguard of cybersecurity extending beyond perimeter surveillance to discern adversarial attacks.

It empowers organizations to stay ahead of cyber threats, make informed decisions, and respond effectively to incidents, thereby enhancing overall security and resilience.

d) Proactive Defense

Shifts the focus from reacting to incidents to anticipating and neutralizing threats before they strike.

e) Enhanced Detection

Leverages knowledge of attacker TTPs to fine-tune security tools for faster, more accurate identification.

f) Informed Decision-Making

Enables leadership to prioritize vulnerabilities and allocate security budgets where they will have the most impact.

g) Efficient Incident Response

Provides the “who, what, and why” during a breach, allowing response teams to contain threats with surgical precision.

h) Continuous Improvement

Ensures defenses evolve alongside the threat landscape through constant monitoring and adaptation.

i) Collaboration and Sharing

Strengthens the entire industry by pooling knowledge, making it harder for attackers to reuse the same tactics against different targets.

j) Regulatory Compliance

Meets legal and industry standards that mandate a threat-aware approach to data protection.

k) Stakeholder Confidence

Builds trust with partners and investors by demonstrating a sophisticated, forward-leaning security posture.

Core Importance

It enables proactive defense by anticipating attacks, reducing response times, and minimizing breach impacts. Organizations optimize resources by prioritizing high-risk threats, improve decision-making across teams, and ensure regulatory compliance through better reporting.

Building a threat intelligence program involves a structured lifecycle to collect, analyze and act on threat data effectively.

This is especially vital for MSMEs and SMBs facing resource constraints where focused implementation enhances cybersecurity without heavy investment.

Integration with Emerging Technologies

AI and machine learning (ML) automate threat detection, predict attacks via pattern analysis, and handle massive data volumes in real-time, cutting alert fatigue and enabling automated responses.

Block chain enhances secure, decentralized sharing of threat intelligence, ensuring immutability, privacy via zero-knowledge proofs, and collaborative defense without trust issues.

Benefits and its advantages

- Identifying threats before they can cause harm.
- Speeding up the response to incidents and minimizing damage.
- Better understanding and management of cybersecurity risks.
- Avoiding the high costs associated with data breaches, including fines, legal fees, and reputational damage.
- Ensuring that security budgets are spent on addressing the most significant threats.
- Minimizing downtime caused by cyber incidents, which can be particularly costly for businesses.

- Organizations that effectively utilize threat intelligence gain a competitive advantage by:
- Building Stakeholders reputation and trust to demonstrate a commitment to security builds trust with customers and partners.

Conclusion:

Threat intelligence is a vital component of cybersecurity, especially when integrated with AI and it provides a powerful approach to cybersecurity, enabling organizations to stay ahead of evolving threats.

Ensuring responsible use of AI and continuous improvement are crucial for effective threat management. Organizations that adopt AI-driven threat intelligence are better equipped to defend against sophisticated cyber threats and can maintain a robust and adaptive security posture in an ever-evolving threat landscape

References:

- ▶ NIST Framework - NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-150
- ▶ CrowdStrike
- ▶ Google, Microsoft and AWS Threat Intelligence

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author.

Unit-4

Self Development Corner

The mind is just like a muscle - the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets and the more it can expand.

- Idowu Koyenikan

Business Stories - Inspiration Matters

ShellKode: From Coimbatore to Global Recognition with Amazon Web Services

In an ecosystem where startup success is often equated with venture capital rounds and metro pin codes, ShellKode's journey rewrites the narrative. Founded in 2021 by Arun Kumar and Bhuvanesh R., the company chose Coimbatore deliberately—not as a cost-saving compromise, but as a statement. A belief that world-class technology companies can be built from anywhere in India.

In just three years, ShellKode scaled from zero to ₹35 crore in revenue—completely bootstrapped. With an impressive 188% CAGR, 200+ clients, and a 110-member team set to double in 2026, this is not startup theatre. It is disciplined execution, customer focus, and sustainable growth.

Their client portfolio includes fast-growing and established brands such as Zepto, DTDC Express Limited, and KreditBee. These are organizations that demand reliability, scalability, and performance. Winning their trust without venture funding signals

something powerful—real businesses are built on solving real problems, not just raising capital.

Yet, beyond numbers, ShellKode's story is deeply human.



Co-founder Bhuvanesh R. did not finish high school. He once worked in a textile mill. Without formal credentials or elite networks, he taught himself coding online. Today, he serves as CTO of a company that signed a multi-year Strategic Collaboration Agreement with Amazon Web Services in September 2025 to accelerate Agentic AI adoption across India. That is not a motivational slogan. That is a lived example of what access to opportunity can unlock.

In December 2025, ShellKode became an AWS Pattern Partner—an invite-only distinction that enables them to co-design repeatable AI blueprints for global enterprises. They are publishing 80+ ready-to-deploy AI agents on AWS Marketplace and have won the AWS AI Conclave's Market Disruptor Award for three consecutive years (2024–2026). These achievements position them not merely as service providers, but as ecosystem contributors shaping enterprise AI adoption.

Equally noteworthy is their initiative, “Empower Her,” aimed at training one lakh women developers in Generative AI. Importantly, this is not positioned as corporate social responsibility. It is a talent strategy. ShellKode understands a fundamental truth many organizations overlook: talent in India is widely distributed, but opportunity is not. By investing in skill development beyond

metros, they are expanding the technology workforce while strengthening their own growth pipeline.

The startup ecosystem often glorifies valuation milestones. ShellKode focuses instead on profitability, repeatability, and long-term partnerships. They demonstrate that you do not need Bengaluru, Pune, or Hyderabad to build a ₹35 crore technology company. You do not need venture capital to achieve 188% CAGR. You do not need a computer science degree to become a CTO. What you need are customers who trust you, problems worth solving, and the discipline to execute consistently.

ShellKode's rise from Coimbatore to AWS Strategic Partner in three years is more than a business success story. It is a playbook for India's next generation of founders—especially those outside traditional startup corridors.

Source and Image credits to: <https://www.shellkode.com/>

TRAVEL -
RELAXATION
MATTERS

Naida Caves, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu Overview



The A maze of wonder

Mysterious, shadowy and shrouded in history and legend, the Naida Caves offer a unique experience that transcends the ordinary. The origins of Naida Caves are as interesting as the caves themselves. Some contend that they are man-made, while others attribute their existence to natural forces.

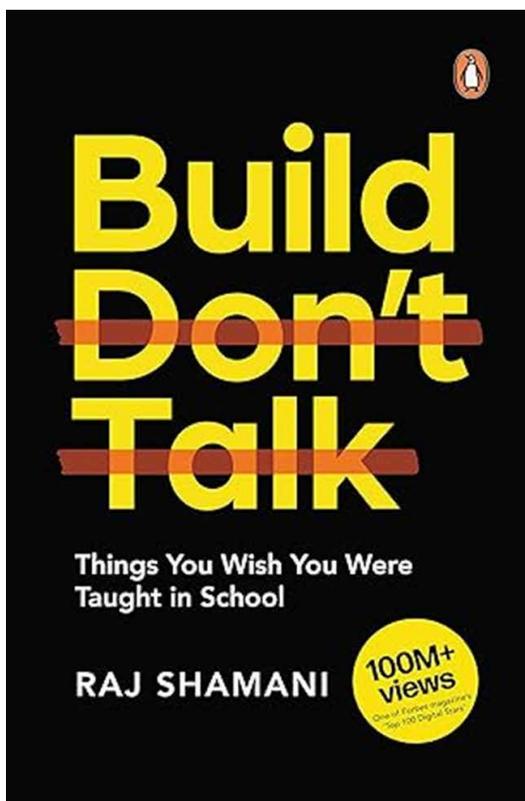
During the Portuguese colonial era, Diu Fort served as their stronghold. Legend has it that the Portuguese extracted building

materials from these very caves to construct the fort. Over time, the caves underwent natural wear and tear, sculpting their present form that include a big maze of tunnels with square hewn steps. Whether shaped by human hands or nature's whims, Naida Caves stand as silent witnesses to centuries gone by.

Source and Image: <https://www.incredibleindia.gov.in/en/dadra-and-nagar-haveli-and-daman-and-diu/diu/naida-caves>

BOOK REVIEW

Changing Build, Don't Talk: Things You Wish You Were Taught in School | A Real-World Manual for Personal Transformation | Learn Practical Skills – Finance, Networking, Decision Making & More



The School taught us specific subjects, like maths and history.

But we weren't taught:

- How to sell
- Or how to build relationships
- Or how to negotiate
- Or how to take care of our mental health
- Or how to network
- Or how to deal with personal finance

These most important situations we face as adults were never discussed with us when we were students. We weren't taught these skills in school, and this makes all the success stories we hear about seem out of reach; it makes us feel dumb. We aren't dumb, we just don't know how to work the system.

Your school taught you how to run in the race; it didn't teach you how to win. And that's what this book is for. To help you win the race. Packed with useful advice gleaned from his own journey as an entrepreneur and content creator, this book by Raj Shamani is a must-read.

Source & Image: <https://www.amazon.in/Build-Dont-Talk-Things-Taught/dp/0143459686>



Unit-5
Bulletin Corner

**It occurs to me that
our survival may depend
upon our talking to one
another.**



- Dan Simmons

Life Membership Details

| Categories | Life Membership Fees (20 Years) | GST@18% | Total Rs. |
|----------------|---------------------------------|---------|-----------|
| Public Ltd Co | 45,000 | 8100 | 53,100 |
| Private Ltd Co | 45,000 | 8100 | 53,100 |
| Firms | 20,000 | 3600 | 23,600 |
| Associations | 20,000 | 3600 | 23,600 |
| Individuals | 20,000 | 3600 | 23,600 |



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES DETAILS

| Categories | One time Admission Fee for the first year only | Annual Subscription | GST @18% | Total |
|----------------|--|---------------------|----------|--------|
| Public Ltd Co | 5000 | 5000 | 1800 | 11,800 |
| Private Ltd Co | 5000 | 5000 | 1800 | 11,800 |
| Firms | 2500 | 2500 | 900 | 5,900 |
| Associations | 2500 | 2500 | 900 | 5,900 |
| Individuals | 2500 | 2500 | 900 | 5,900 |

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| | Members | Non-Members |
|--|----------|-------------|
| Conference Hall | Rs. | Rs. |
| First 4 hours | 1,650.00 | 2,000.00 |
| Every additional hour | 200.00 | 300.00 |
| Meeting Hall - First Floor | | |
| First 4 hours | 700.00 | 900.00 |
| Every additional hour | 100.00 | 150.00 |
| Hire Charges for LCD Projector & Laptop | | |
| LCD Projector (Per Day) | 700.00 | 700.00 |
| Laptop (Per Day) | 700.00 | 700.00 |

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DR V.L. DUTT AC HALL, CHENNAI RENTAL TARIFF

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|--|---------|-------------|
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| Every additional hour | 750.00 | 1000.00 |
| Hire Charges for LCD Projector & Laptop | | |
| LCD Projector (Per Day) | 800.00 | 800.00 |
| Laptop (Per Day) | 600.00 | 600.00 |
| *Electricity charges applicable Rs. 100/- for every additional hour after 4 hrs & GST 18% EXTRA | | |

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ANDHRA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OFFICE ADDRESSES

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Issue of Certificate of Origin and Attestation / Certification of documents for export shipment.



Organize Business Delegations to foreign countries for development of two-way trade between Indian and respective countries



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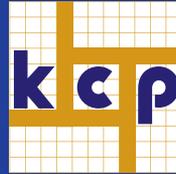
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