



SAARC CULTURAL CENTRE
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

www.saarcculture.org

CONCEPT PAPER

CALL FOR PAPERS

Cultural Currents: Journal of South Asian Culture, Issue No.2, 2026

Tracing Trends: Mapping Popular Culture in South Asia

1. Background

As approved by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Governing Board of the SAARC Cultural Centre held in Colombo from 19-20 August 2025 and the Sixty-second Session of the Programming Committee Meeting held in Kathmandu from 11-12 February 2026, SAARC Cultural Centre proposes to publish the annual Journal of the SCC as part of SAARC Publications.

SAARC Cultural Centre (SCC), Colombo aims to promote peace and unity in the SAARC Region through its various cultural activities and publications based on original research on selected aspects of cultures of the Region. *Cultural Currents: Journal of South Asian Culture* is an annual research journal of the SCC, which seeks to provide a platform to the academics, practitioners and policy makers of culture in the region to present their research findings and to debate on issues of mutual and common interest. The Journal is widely disseminated as both a printed and online publication to project cultural richness and cultural diversity of the SAARC Region.

The SCC proposes that Issue No. 2 of the *Cultural Currents: Journal of South Asian Culture* be dedicated to the theme ‘**Tracing Trends: Mapping Popular Culture in South Asia**’. The issue invites submissions that examine the production, propagation, consumption, transformation and reinvention of South Asian popular culture.

The SAARC Region is marked by its layered histories and deep cultural interconnections, within which popular culture forms a vibrant, recognisable sphere of regional identity. Cultural interconnectedness of the SAARC Region is not limited to the cultural output of the past, but is a vibrant and recurring process, realised prominently within popular cultural spaces. Cultural trends in one South Asian country frequently travel across borders due to linguistic and cultural similarities, media circulation, and shared sensibilities. Audiences listen to similar music, enjoy comparable cuisines, follow overlapping entertainment industries, and participate in regional sporting cultures. This interconnectedness creates a symbiotic and mutually shaping regional popular culture. The widespread acceptance of popular culture endows it with the capacity to connect diverse communities and promote mutual understanding, thus shaping modes of interaction.

However, despite its significance, popular culture remains understudied in comparison to high cultural forms. This gap limits a broader understanding of South Asian societies and their contemporary transformations. Studying popular culture therefore requires close attention to its spaces, formats, and modes of circulation, as well as its influence on everyday life. Moreover, understanding how global cultural flows interact with distinctly South Asian forms is essential.

Examining popular culture ultimately offers valuable insight into the Region's evolving cultural realities and emerging imaginaries.

Contributions are encouraged to follow a rigorous methodological format producing original research on specific sectors and trends of South Asia's popular culture. The submissions will study South Asia's popular culture in theoretical and empirical frameworks. The Journal, while inviting studies on recent developments of popular culture, also welcomes studies on historical moments of popular cultural expression. Authors are encouraged to include images, drawings, and relevant documentation as supplementary materials supporting the analysis.

2. Sub-Themes

Articles may be submitted under the following subthemes:

1. Ideologies, Themes, and Interpretive Frames in South Asian Popular Culture
2. Cultural Histories of Popular Expression in South Asia
3. Symbols and Icons of the South Asian Culture
4. Cultural Movements in Contemporary South Asia
5. Popular Forms of Everyday Life: Regional Music, Cinema, Art, Fashion, Sport and Cuisine
6. Youth and Generational Expressions in South Asian Popular Culture
7. Popular Culture as Social Bridge: Shared Trends, Interconnected Spaces, Cross-Cultural Exchange, and Pathways to Peace

3. Objectives

- 3.1 To ensure the preservation and accessibility of valuable cultural knowledge for present and future.
- 3.2 To raise awareness and educate people of the SAARC Region on the rich cultural traditions of South Asia.
- 3.3 To provide a platform for researchers and enthusiasts of culture of the SAARC Region to share their work across the borders, promote understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural traditions.
- 3.4 To serve as a means of cultural diplomacy, through the dissemination of cultural literature, and enhance dialogue, strengthen cultural ties and promote harmony among the SAARC Member States.

NB: In accordance with the provisions of the SAARC Charter, contributors are advised to refrain from addressing contentious political matters in all SAARC forums/publications. Submissions/deliberations are expected to adhere strictly to the principles of peace, stability, amity, and good neighbourly relations that underpin SAARC cooperation.

Submission Guidelines:

PART 1 -ARTICLE GUIDELINES

- All the articles in English as per the SAARC Mandate.
- The article's focus subtheme should be mentioned in the submission email.
- An abstract of 250-300 words and the full paper including a minimum of 5 keywords.
- Word count 6000-8000 words (excluding the abstract and the references)
- Font type -Times New Roman, 12 points
- Line spacing - 1.5
- Page margins - Left: 1.5”
Right/ Top/ Bottom- 1”
- Article Title - Font Size 14 points and **Bold**
- Article Subtitles: Font size 12 points and **Bold**
- Organize the Tables, figures, and images in the body of the article.
- Reference Style: MLA (9th Edition)
- Use British English spellings
- Enclose references at the end of the article.
- **Illustrations - Tables, Figures and Plates:**
 - Each table should be cited in the text (Table-1). The title and headings of the table should be included with each table and must be in bold. Figures include line drawings, graphs and maps.
 - Each figure must be cited in text as Fig. 1 and include a caption in which the word “**Fig. 1:**” should be in bold.
 - Plates include colour *or* black and white photographs. Plate numbers must be cited in the text like (Pl.1). Plates (Joint Photographic Group (jpg) image) should be listed in a separate file numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals with captions.
- Diacritical marks on any word of other languages should be avoided. Such words or phrases must be *italicized* which are not included in the English Oxford dictionary. **As far as possible, footnotes and endnotes are to be avoided.** A glossary of words may be provided for all non- English terms used in the text.
- Acknowledgement and Funding statement, if any, is to be placed at the end of the paper just before the references.
- The final decision regarding the publication will be taken by the Guest Editor/Editorial Board.
- All submissions will be screened for plagiarism.

PART II-AUTHOR PROFILE GUIDELINES

- Author/s Profile: A short biographical entry of the author in 100 words that include the name with designation, affiliation along with a colour photograph of the author(s) (300 DPI maximum) should be sent along with the abstract.
- It is the responsibility of the author to obtain clearance from the copyright holder for any previously published material, including figures, tables or photographs in the manuscripts.
- Manuscript would be accepted for publication on the understanding that the submitted work is original, unpublished and new contributions, definitions and interpretations.

PART III-DECLARATION

Manuscript would be accepted for publication on the understanding that these are original unpublished contributions. For this purpose, a declaration (in the format given below) should accompany each contribution.

“I/Wedeclare that the article titled.....has not been previously published or has been submitted/accepted for publication in any other publication”.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Last Date for the Submission of Full Paper: 10 June 2026

Manuscripts and all correspondence should be addressed to:

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