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**COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2021-22)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**INDIA'S SOFT POWER AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY:
PROSPECTS & LIMITATIONS**

SIXTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

AUGUST, 2022/ SRAVANA 1944 (Saka)

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INDIA'S SOFT POWER AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY: PROSPECTS & LIMITATIONS

Presented to Hon'ble Speaker on 5 September, 2022

Presented to Lok Sabha on 12 December, 2022

Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 12 December, 2022



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
*AUGUST, 2022/ SRAVANA 1944 (Saka)***

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CONTENTS

PAGE

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2019-20)	(i)
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21)	(ii)
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2021-22)	(iii)

INTRODUCTION	(iv)
---------------------	-------------

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW

I. Soft Power & Cultural Diplomacy: Conceptual Framework	1-4
II. India's Soft Power and Cultural resources	4-10
III. Implications of Covid 19 Pandemic	10-14
IV. Limitations & Challenges	15-21

CHAPTER 2 INSTRUMENTS OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY

I. Role of Culture	22-32
II. Role of Diaspora	31-35
III. Role of Tourism	35-39
IV. Role of Democracy	39-41
V. Role of Yoga	41-43
VI. Role of Ayurveda	43-51
VII. Role of Sports and Youth Exchange	51-53
VIII. Role of Media and Cinema	54-58
IX. Role of Education/Knowledge Sharing	58-64

CHAPTER 3 INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR)

I. Structure, Mandate and Resources	
II. ICCR Activities	65-71
III. ICCR Cultural Centres	71-80
IV. ICCR Regional Centres	80-85
	85-87

CHAPTER 4 STAKEHOLDERS

I. External and Publicity Division (XPD)	88-93
II. Policy Planning & Research Division	93-94
III. Indian Missions/Posts abroad	94-96
IV. Research and Information System (RIS)	96-102
V. Archaeological Survey of India	103-104

APPENDICES

I	Minutes of the Eighth Sitting of the Committee held on 20.12.2019	105-107
II	Minutes of the Ninth Sitting of the Committee held on 07.01.2020	108-110
III.	Minutes of the Twenty-Third Sitting of the Committee held on 26.08.2020	111-113
IV	Minutes of the Fourth Sitting of the Committee held on 28.10.2020	114-116

V	Minutes of the Eighth Sitting of the Committee held on 18.12.2020	117-119
VI	Minutes of the Twenty Fourth Sitting of the Committee held on 30.06.2021	120-122
VII	Minutes of the Fifth Sitting of the Committee held on 31.01.2022	123-125
VIII	Minutes of the Fourteenth Sitting of the Committee held on 8.08.2022	126-127

ANNEXURES

I	Key Cultural events on multilateral platform by Ministry of Culture	128-130
II	Status Note on MoUs and Youth Exchange Programmes organized	131-133
III	List of Countries with which India has EEP/MOC/JDI/LoI	134-136
IV	SPARC- Country wise Data	137
V	Internationalization of Education under NEP 2020	138-140
VI	Details of country-wise Scholarship under ICCR Scholarship Programme	141-147
VII	State-wise list of cultural troupes sent abroad	148-149

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18. Shri Ravindra Shyamnarayan Shukla *alias* Ravi Kishan
19. Shri Manoj Tiwari
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Rajya Sabha

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25. Shri P. Chidambaram
26. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
27. Shri Chunibhai Kanjibhai Gohel
28. Shri Shamsheer Singh Manhas^{\$}
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30. Shri Kapil Sibal
31. Shri Abdul Wahab

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12. Ms. Chandrani Murmu
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15. Shri N.K. Premachandran
16. Shri Navneet Ravi Rana
17. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
18. Shri Manne Srinivas Reddy
19. Shri Rebati Tripura
20. Vacant^{\$}
21. Vacant^{*}

Rajya Sabha

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24. Smt. Misha Bharti
25. Shri P. Chidambaram
26. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
27. Shri Swapan Dasgupta[#]
28. Shri Kapil Sibal
29. Shri Abdul Wahab^{@@}
30. Shri Brij Lal
31. Vacant[@]

^{\$} Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma passed away on 17 March, 2021.

^{*} Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi ceased to Member of the Committee on her appointment as Minister w.e.f. 07.07.2021.

[#] Shri Swapan Dasgupta resigned on 17.03.2021 and has been re-nominated w.e.f. 11.06.2021.

^{@@} Shri Abdul Wahab retired on 21.03.2021 and has been re-nominated w.e.f. 11.06.2021.

[@] Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia ceased to be Member of the Committee on his appointment as Cabinet Minister w.e.f. 07.07.2021.

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2021-22)

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Lok Sabha

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4. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
5. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
6. Shri Suresh Kumar Kashyap
7. Smt. Preneet Kaur
8. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
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12. Shri Ritesh Pandey
13. Dr. K. C. Patel
14. Shri N.K. Premachandran
15. Smt. Navneet Ravi Rana
16. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
17. Shri Manne Srinivas Reddy
18. Shri Rebati Tripura
19. Dr. Harsh Vardhan
20. *Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer
21. Vacant

Rajya Sabha

22. Shri K. J. Alphons
23. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
24. Smt. Misha Bharti
25. Shri Brijlal
26. Shri P. Chidambaram
27. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
28. Shri Prakash Javadekar
29. Shri Sanjay Raut
30. Shri Kapil Sibal
31. Shri K. Somaprasad

Secretariat

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director
3. Ms. Smita Singh - Assistant Committee Officer

*Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha nominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 07 February, 2022

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on External Affairs having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Sixteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (2021-22) on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations'.

2. The Committee had a briefing on the subject by the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs on 20 December 2019. During the discussion the Committee felt the need to examine various stakeholders relating to the subject. The Committee, therefore heard the views of the representatives of the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Education, AYUSH, Youth Affairs & Sports, Commerce & Industry, Information & Broadcasting, NITI Aayog on 7 January 2020, 26 August 2020, 28 October 2020, 18 December 2020, 30 June 2021, 31 January 2022.

3. The Committee wish to express their gratitude to the officers of the above mentioned Ministries for placing before them the material and information that the Committee desired and also appearing before the Committee for placing their considered views before them in connection with the examination of the subject.

4. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Fourteenth Sitting held on 8 August 2022.

5. The Minutes of the eight Sittings of the Committee held on 20 December 2019, 7 January 2020, 26 August 2020, 28 October 2020, 18 December 2020, 30 June 2021, 31 January 2022 and 8 August 2022 are given in Appendices to the Report.

6. For facility of reference, the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold.

NEW DELHI
8 August, 2022
17 Sravana, 1944 (Saka)

P.P. CHAUDHARY
Chairperson,
Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW

Post-Cold war international order has ushered in a new era in the conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy. Power is a key concept in the conduct of relations between states and the international community and is broadly described as the ability to shape outcomes. In addition to economic and military power (hard power), the idea of ‘Soft Power’ has gained traction during the past three decades. The international impact of India’s soft power was felt long before the term found place in popular parlance in the 21st century. Indian arts, culture, yoga and spiritualism, culinary varieties, festivals, music and dance forms etc, have attracted people from all around the world for centuries.

1.2 The Standing Committee on External Affairs (16th Lok Sabha) undertook a detailed examination of the subject “India’s Soft Power Diplomacy, including role of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Diaspora” and presented its Thirteenth Report on the subject in February 2016. The Report contained 13 recommendations for the Government to act upon. Based on the Action Taken Replies furnished by the MEA, the Committee presented Eighteenth Report on Action Taken by the Government. The Ministry of External Affairs had submitted its final responses in February 2019. In view of the assessment of the implementation status of the recommendations in their previous Reports, in 2019 the Committee on External Affairs selected the subject ‘India’s Soft Power Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations’ for detailed examination.

I. Soft Power & Cultural Diplomacy: Conceptual Framework

1.3 The American political theorist Joseph Nye, who coined the term Soft power, defines it as ‘the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion.’ In contrast to economic and military power, which is dependent on payoffs and coercion, soft power works through attraction and co-optation. The idea of soft power is not merely a theoretical notion but also a practical tool with tangible benefits to the respective states. As a starting point, the Ministry of External Affairs was asked to describe the key concepts of soft power, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and smart power.

1.4 The Ministry defined the term soft power as ability to influence others through appeal and attraction, using non-coercive means. The term originally coined by Prof. Joseph Nye pointed to three primary sources of soft power, culture, political values and foreign policy. India has been exercising a range of soft power resources which have widespread global appeal. These include Indian arts, dances and literature, cuisine, yoga and traditional holistic medicine, Indian cinema and entertainment and sports, historical monuments, India's democracy, its Constitution, its unity in diversity and its composite cultural ethos, traditional values, unique approaches to contemporary issues such as climate change and environmental preservation, scientific and technological accomplishments and socio-economic innovation. In Ministry's view, there is both need and scope to go beyond Nye's original formulation of soft power.

1.5 Smart Power, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, is the most representative of India's current interaction with the world, where the emphasis is on building capacities to be able to choose right forms of power to employ in relations to a particular context. It involves the strategic use of diplomacy persuasion, capacity building, and the projection of power and influence in ways that are cost-effective and have political and social legitimacy. It is a judicious blend of soft power with other dimensions of hard power. MEA's policies of "Neighborhood First", Act East, Link West, SAGAR, cooperation with Pacific Island, Engagement with Overseas Indians, Enhanced engagement with North and South America, European nations, Eurasia and Africa are manifestations of how various facets of Soft Power(Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy and Smart Power) are reflected in formation and conceptualization of India's Foreign Policy making.

1.6 As regards the Ministry's understanding of the term cultural diplomacy, it has been described as a crucial component of public diplomacy because it brings out the best of what our country has to offer to the world. It is a long term strategy, aiming at building a brand or image of India and conveying what India stands for. India has a rich culture and cultural diplomacy is its expression abroad to foreign audiences for long term international influence.

1.7 The diplomatic tool to leverage soft as well as smart power is broadly called Public Diplomacy. When asked about the connotation of the term Public Diplomacy, the Ministry

stated that all the Government sponsored efforts aimed at communicating directly with foreign publics with a view to project soft power abroad are termed as public diplomacy. It includes all official efforts to convince targeted sectors of foreign opinion to support or tolerate a government's strategic objectives. It is an effective tool to build a positive image amongst the public of other countries. These efforts aim at influencing foreign public opinion and attitudes that in turn may influence their government's actions towards another nation. Public diplomacy activities include 'nation-branding; Diaspora outreach, digital engagement, international broadcasting, international exchange programmes etc. Public diplomacy seeks to promote national interest and national security through understanding, informing and influencing foreign publics and broadening dialogue between citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad".

1.8 When asked about the relationship between conventional diplomacy and soft power diplomacy, the Ministry of External Affairs responded that the former broadly consisted of method of influencing the decisions and behavior of foreign governments and people through dialogue, negotiation and other measures short of war or violence. It also includes summit meetings and international conferences, parliamentary exchanges, international activities of supranational and sub-national entities and the work of international civil servants. In conduct of diplomacy comprehensive national power is applied in pursuit of national interest. Soft power is a constituent of comprehensive national power. The conventional manifestations of "Culture" such as dance, arts, crafts, music, films and cuisine have deep relationship with other tools of soft power which encompasses, inter alia: Philosophical thought and scholarship contained in the vast corpus of literature in many languages; ideas and values (democratic, pluralistic and secular) and India's institutional strengths of Constitution and democratic political systems including electoral machinery operating at the grassroots level; higher educational and training institutions, richness of historical tourist sites; sports; science and technology, fast growing and rapidly diversifying economy of India and tremendous interest in some of the flagship national initiatives, Hosting of high-level foreign leaders outside Delhi in places of historic and cultural significance and special cultural events during such VVIP visits, the other significant elements of the Government's soft power.

1.9 Further, Conventional diplomacy and the soft power diplomacy are thus complementary in overall attainment of desired objectives. The essence of soft power is that its source lies outside the traditional format of government-to-government (g-to-g) interactions that have hitherto been the fountainhead of diplomatic relations, bilateral or multilateral. These valuable dimensions of India's soft power capabilities have great relevance and potential in enhancing positive perceptions about India and in pursuit of our national interests.

II India's Soft Power resources

1.10 India's global influence has had a long and complex history, from the dissemination of Hindu and Buddhist ideas to Mathematics, Astronomy and other physical and metaphysical sciences, to the more recent export of human and intellectual capital to Western universities, transnational corporations and multilateral organizations. However, it has only been in the last two decades that India has begun to use, promote and enhance its soft power more effectively.

1.11 Given its size, rich civilizational heritage, and diversity of the population, India represents a truly unique and *sui generis* case in study of soft-power and cultural diplomacy. Besides, the traditional manifestations of "Culture" such as dance, arts, crafts, music, films, cuisine, languages, etc. India's cultural/soft power instruments encompass *inter alia*:

- Its ancient yet timeless philosophical and spiritual ideas, the value systems epitomized by the motto of *Vasudhev Kutumbhakam* and *Ekam Sad Viprah Bahudha Vadanti*;
- Unprecedented socio-economic transformation of the country in a vibrant democratic framework;
- Remarkable achievements in science and technology;
- Innovative, affordable and environmentally sustainable home-grown developmental solutions which are relevant for many other countries.
- Worldwide network of Indian Diaspora also represents an additional instrument for promotion of India's foreign policy interests abroad through soft power and cultural diplomacy.

- Soft power of India's search & rescue and humanitarian & disaster relief operations has also added to India's profile.
- International conferences like the Raisina Dialogue, the Indian Ocean Conference and the Global Technology Conference hosted by MEA also become flagship events of considerable interest abroad.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas events also provide a useful instrument for promotion and projection of Indian culture and soft power.

1.12 Over the issue of adopting new and evolving technology to update and innovate our soft power tools, the Ministry stated that in line with the demands of the continuously evolving and dynamic international situation and foreign policy priorities of the Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, ICCR and other agencies involved in promotion of India's soft power have been trying to update and innovate their programmes and methods, including adoption of new technological tools and new emerging promotional platforms, direct transfer of scholarship to bank accounts of ICCR students, use of UMANG app for DBT purposes, updation of ICCR website, effective use of social media platforms, ongoing efforts to create an India alumni platform are some of instances in this regard.

1.13 In their Thirteenth Report on the Subject 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy', the Committee had recommended that the Ministry should formulate a comprehensive and well-structured policy delineating India's soft power resources and their articulation abroad. In its Action Taken Reply submitted to the Committee in 2016, the Ministry of External Affairs had agreed on the need for formulating a comprehensive and well-structured policy on India's soft power projection and submitted that ICCR is working with the Ministry to draft a policy paper in this regard. In 2019, the Ministry in its further action taken reply had submitted that the consultations preparatory to exercise of drafting a well-structured policy to leverage soft power diplomacy has been initiated and exchange of views with various stake holders are being carried out to collate ideas on policy formulation, making the process most participatory. It has been added by the Government that it will be able to finalize a comprehensive policy on soft power promotion overseas once consultations with stakeholders are over.

1.14 On being asked about the objectives of India's soft power diplomacy and their articulation in any foreign policy paper/document, the Ministry stated that the Government's foreign policy is premised on the following three important objectives:

- (i) To safeguard our sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and promote our overall national development;
- (ii) "Neighbourhood First" – according the highest priority to our relations with immediate neighbours as well as countries in the extended region of the Indo-Pacific in keeping with Government's pursuit of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Vishwas*; and
- (iii) "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" – to seek peaceful, harmonious, friendly and mutually respectful relations with all countries in the world.

1.15 Use of soft power and cultural diplomacy constitutes an integral part of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)'s overall strategy for achieving these key objectives of Government's foreign policy and thus constitute an integral part of MEA's overall strategy. Neighbouring countries, both in immediate and extended neighbourhood, are given highest priority by the Government in conduct of its foreign policy, including use of instruments of soft power and culture. Our developmental assistance including the infrastructure projects, and capacity building programmes such as ICCR scholarships and ITEC courses, have a special focus on the neighbouring countries. Regular high-level political contacts, including parliamentary exchanges and training courses offered by Indian institutions on various aspects of our democratic functioning, including legislative drafting, electoral processes, and local governance, etc. seek to enhance multi-dimensional engagement with our neighbourhood.

1.16 On the Committee's query whether any comparative study has been made to determine the ways in which different countries leverage their soft power, the Ministry stated that though Ministry/ICCR has not undertaken any formal study of the international best practices of different countries. MEA did gather the inputs as to what sorts of Soft power instruments the other countries use, what kind of activities they undertake. MEA/ICCR has studied the activities undertaken by countries and other Soft Power organizations of countries such as China, United Kingdom, Japan, U.S.A, Russia and

France, British Council, and Alliance Française use language as their soft power tool. List of activities being undertaken by these organizations include language promotion, Education (giving scholarship) programme, leadership programme like Chevening or Fulbright scholarships taking leaders from foreign countries to their own countries, doing big shows in dance, music, art and culture. Besides, many of these organizations conduct activities like painting Exhibitions, literary festivals and use cinema as tool of soft power. Cuisine, wine and food promotion are also a big part of the activities other organizations undertake.

1.17 While tendering evidence before the Committee on 30 June, 2021, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs further highlighted:-

“We actually did a study of the international best practices of different countries, like what sorts of soft power instruments they use, what kind of activities they do, etc. We came out with a list of activities that all of them do. The ICCR does a large amount of these activities, but many of them it does not do. If you permit me, I will just go through some of them. The main thing most of the soft power organisations do is language promotion. Most of them are single country languages. It is like, Chinese do Chinese language promotion, Japanese do Japanese, British Council does English, Alliance Française does French, etc. So, you have language promotion as the main one. Most of these soft power organisations do scholarships, scholarships of bringing students to do studies in the country. So, education is a very big part of the activities they do. Then, they do leadership programmes. They do leadership programmes like the Chevening scholarships or the Fulbright scholarships, in which they take leaders from across to their own countries to influence them and conduct activities. Then, you have the performance Arts promotions, like doing big shows in dance, music, arts, culture, etc. Then, you have visual arts and museum which is actually a massive part which we are not doing much of, which is basically painting exhibitions and participating in large international exhibitions across the world. Then, you have books and literacy. That is a major part. Today, literary festivals are becoming a big occasion for not just thought leadership but also to promote ideas. Literary festival across the world is one of the things which countries do to promote themselves. Then, you have cinema which is a big thing across the world. In fact, some countries like China actually use access to their own countries as a soft power tool to control Hollywood and other organisations. Everybody does cinema. In addition, theatre is very big. If you look at Broadway, Westend, or the Opera in Germany, Austria and Russia, theatre is very big. Theatre is something we do in India also. But it is always small and not of some scale as the West. Cuisine, wine and food promotion is a big part of what many countries do. These are the different

things they do. Then, you have the diaspora related activities, conferences and seminars. Sports diplomacy is another thing. In the Champions Trophy or the English League, there are countries which actually invite people to come and see them and also do interaction with other countries through sports diplomacies. You have religion, you have traditional medicine, you have youth exchanges, awards, science diplomacy, tourism, etc. We can go on and on. But we did a study of all this and we found that ICCR does a large amount of it. But there is an issue which is coordination. That is an issue because despite all the things which we have done in the past, Coordination is weak. So, what we have as an issue is, there are Ministries and Departments and agencies which do their own activities. ICCR in the last two years, if not for Covid, would have done more to coordinate activities. We have been trying to work with all these agencies to have an annual action plan so that there is less duplication of efforts and that we can all work together to maximise the resources because if everybody starts doing it individually then we are doing smaller events and we are not having a larger event together. So, we have been doing it and we have been successful in this. The other weakness in our system when you compare with others is resources. You cannot compare resources. China spends about Rs. 10,000 crore a year on just soft power promotion. Forget about their United Work Department which has 2.6 billion dollar Budget. But ICCR and other agencies put together get about Rs. 300 or Rs. 400 crore. Most of it goes in establishment and administration. The second issue is recruitment. Today's soft power projection across the world needs a certain kind of people to do it. It cannot be done either by artists or by bureaucrats. It has to be done by cultural managers who are actually trained in this thing. But our recruitment system is such, to take such people into our soft power organisations is very difficult. Third issue is, as I told you, silos and the ability to coordinate our efforts. If we can work on all these three, it would be something wonderful which we can do. A lot of reforms have happened in the last one or two years and we will take it forward as it goes.”

1.18 The Ministry further added that no firm figures are publically available, however, China is estimated to spend about US\$ 10 billion a year just on its Confucius Institutes and soft power promotion whereas ICCR and other agencies put together spend around 300-400 crores. Most of India's expenditure goes in establishment and administration. In 2021-22, the British Council received. £179 million as grant –in-aid adding their income of £ 845.5 million (mostly from English language training and testing), their total income was £ 1034.5 million. Goethe Institute's budget is approx. 370 million Euros.

1.19 The Committee are aware that India's soft power projection predates the usage of the term in popular parlance in 21st century. Soft power is broadly described as the

ability to influence others through appeal and attraction using non-coercive means. In this sense, India possesses a vast repertoire of soft power resources with widespread global appeal. These include, its cultural heritage evident in arts, dances, literature, cuisine, yoga, traditional medicine, cinema and entertainment, sports, historical monuments, India's democratic traditions, Constitution, unity in diversity and contributions in resolving contemporary environmental issues, scientific/technological accomplishments and socio-economic innovations.

The Committee further note that 'Smart Power', which is reflected in judicious use of soft as well as hard power, is most representative of India's engagement with the world. India's extensive and diverse soft power capabilities represent a unique and *sui generis* case in study of soft power and cultural diplomacy. The Committee, however, are dismayed to note that despite the existence of a wide array of soft power resources and continued persuasion by the Committee, there have been deficiencies on part of MEA in projecting it effectively to achieve foreign policy goals particularly due to lack of coordination, absence of national policy, inadequate budget and human resource. The Committee, therefore, recommend that MEA should conduct a thorough assessment of our soft power potential and devise strategies for optimum utilization of the same in achieving India's foreign policy objectives on priority basis and apprise the Committee accordingly. The Committee also recommend that the MEA should capitalize in multilateral diplomacy channels and abundantly incorporate Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy in India's foreign policy strategies.

(Recommendation No. 1)

1.20 The Committee are aware that soft power capabilities have great relevance and potential in augmenting positive perceptions about a country and its national interests. India with its wide ranging instrument of soft power has a definite advantage in comparison to many other countries. However, in absence of formulation of a clear cut policy on our soft power projection this may not have been possible. The Committee is constrained to note that despite making specific recommendation by the Committee in this regard in their 13th Report of 16th Lok Sabha the policy is still at consultation stage. The Committee, therefore, strongly desire that the Ministry should prepare a

policy document on India's soft power projections, delineating India's soft power toolbox and manner in which it is being projected abroad along a vision statement for the future. The Committee also desire to be kept informed about the progress made in this regard within three months.

(Recommendation No. 2)

1.21 The Committee note that the Ministry has only gathered inputs through analyzing the soft power activities of few countries and also not undertaken any formal study as yet on international best practices of the manner in which other countries have leveraged soft power instruments. On the basis of such informal observations of the Ministry, the Committee note that the soft power organization of countries such as China, United Kingdom, Japan, USA, Russia and France focuses on language promotion, leadership programme, cultural activities, and promotion of art forms. Though the Committee are aware that ICCR performs most of these activities, they feel that there is immense scope for improvement and expansion of such activities. The Committee are therefore, of the considered opinion that a formal study of international best practices of soft power projections should be done on priority basis and the learnings from such a study must be factored in while formulating India's soft power projection and strategy.

(Recommendation No. 3)

III. Implications of COVID-19 Pandemic

1.22 Keeping in mind the prevailing COVID pandemic and resultant disruptions, the Committee desired to know its implications on the conduct of our soft power and cultural diplomacy. In a written reply, the Ministry stated that Covid-19 Pandemic has affected every component of soft power projection-be it scholarship, exchange of visits, visits of cultural delegations every activity has been affected. Despite these challenges, ICCR has adapted to the new normal and switched most of its activities on virtual mode. The biggest challenge was to look after 6000 international students, facilitating them to go back to their countries, updating on daily basis admission status of new applicants. Despite all the odds, ICCR staff attended to the needs of international students to the best of their capabilities and even attended office during lock-downs after obtaining necessary permissions. In 2020-21,

2380 students accepted the scholarship, ICCR also had to assist in evacuation of about 500 students by the special flights. Rising to the occasion, necessary reforms in the guidelines are made to help students overcome the COVID-19 induced difficulties.

1.23 The Ministry of External Affairs further stated that the ICCR carried out the following reforms to better manage the scholarship programme:

- i) Direct interface of ICCR's A2A portal with Universities: The A2A Portal is currently linked to foreign applicants Mission/Post and ICCR. Going by the lessons of the past, ICCR has linked Universities on the A2A Portal by integrating information of each University/Institute so that the foreign students can apply directly for admission to the University. A dialogue box for communication between all the stakeholders has also been incorporated. This feature will be user friendly with easy and transparent access so that all communications are through the portal in digital mode instead of manual handling. While option to choose the University and the course remains with the students, the current limit of restricting the number of universities has been increased to five universities from the present three choices.
- ii) Introduction of Health Insurance Policy: ICCR provides medical reimbursement as per the CGHS norms though students are not provided CGHS cards. This requires a great deal of handholding from the stage a student is admitted in a hospital for treatment at CGHS rates till process of medical claims. Even after all these efforts, the amount of money spent by the student is not fully reimbursed. Moreover, ICCR has to do a lot of unnecessary processing resulting in a long delay in handling individual cases. It has, therefore, been decided that from 2020-21 students would have to mandatorily obtain health insurance on their own before their arrival out of their stipends. To facilitate with the best rates of insurance premium, ICCR has finalized a panel of health insurance companies from which students may decided to choose. However, this list will only be a suggestive one. Students will be at liberty to choose any other insurance provider of his / her choice.
- iii) Introduction of PFMS for direct transfer of scholarship dues to students accounts: As part of Direct Benefit Transfer, all the student dues would be transferred from ICCR

to the individual students' bank accounts under PFMS. Since February 2021, all the payable dues of students are released through PFMS.

Likewise for other activities including sending cultural delegations abroad, ICCR has adopted virtual mode. During 2020-21, ICCR sent four groups in physical and managed to arrange 11 online /recordings. For 2021-22 till date 10 groups in physical and 05 recordings have been arranged for performing abroad. Similar modes for other activities are being included to carry forward the day-to-day functioning

1.24 While tendering evidence before the Committee on 26 August, 2020, the representatives of MEA added that:-

“I would like to bring out unexpected fallout of COVID-19 pandemic that has engulfed the entire world after our last meeting. This pandemic has proven to be at least one boon in disguise as far as India's soft power is concerned. Be it is President Trump, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe or German Chancellor Angela Merkel or French President Macron, the traditional Indian form of greeting, Namaste, has been accepted worldwide as the cleanest and safest form of greeting. We would not have achieved this strength of India's soft power in decades what has now been accepted due to this pandemic. Of course, this has nothing to do with MEA, but I wanted to bring this out as the new element of India's soft power. The world has also come to realize once again that India formally believes in her ancient dictums when we evacuated foreign nationals along with our own nationals from Wuhan during the height of pandemic crisis there. Gifts of medicines and other equipment to many countries in the world even though India has herself lacked sufficient numbers was another example presented to the world. COVID-19 has changed the entire world. Post COVID-19, world is going to be different even for India's soft power. The emphasis on technology that has come to the fore during this pandemic times is only going to be strengthened in the coming days. MEA and ICCR have already started working on the relevant technological platform to mould themselves to the new realities.”

1.25 When asked about the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on our cultural engagement with foreign countries, the Ministry of Culture stated that Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent disruptions, especially of international travel, has had significant effect on international cultural engagements and people to people contacts. However, After initial halt of activities, Ministry of Culture has tried to use digital internet technologies to the extent possible to carry on international engagements and negotiations during this time.

- In May 2020, after the initial phase of covid, HCM had virtual interaction with UAE Cultural Minister on cultural aspect during covid. The cultural interaction shifted to online mode all over the world.
- The meetings of cultural stream on BRICS, SCO and G20 platforms were hosted the respective chairs of those organizations and were well participated by Indian side.
- Indian participation was also made in BRICS cultural festival and SCO cultural festival in 2020.
- Ministry of Culture participated in the International Marathon of Cultures organized by Russian side in online format. Video material on India's Culture and Heritage has been included in the compiled movie of marathon which will be broadcasted through designated website in Russia and other participant countries.
- Hon'ble Culture Minister had a meeting through VC with Hon'ble Culture Minister of Mongolia to discuss on promoting bilateral cultural and spiritual ties, and ways to implement Cultural Exchange Programme signed between the two countries.
- Recently Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi, Hon'ble MOS(Culture) had a virtual meeting with her Thailand counterpart to discuss cultural cooperation issues.
- National Museum developed and curated the first-ever online exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage, attended by all member countries of SCO. The online exhibition (nmvirtual.in) was launched by the Hon'ble Vice President of India on 30.11.2020. About 20 Objects of the Indian Museum were also part of the Indian Buddhist Gallery in the SCO Online Exhibition.
- Sahitya Akademi translated and published 10 titles of modern Indian literature from 10 Indian languages into English, Russian and Chinese in follow up to the announcement made by Hon'ble P.M during his speech in SCO Summit 2019. The translations were released during the SCO virtual summit in November 2020.
- Cultural exchange programmes were signed in 2021-22 with Serbia, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation.
- In a nutshell India tried to avail all opportunities to showcase its cultural heritage.

[Replies to LOPs, Ministry of Culture, Point No.3, Pg.3]

1.26 The Committee understand that Covid-19 pandemic has been a disruptive factor in conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy at the global scale. The Committee also observe that every component of India’s soft power diplomacy - scholarships, exchange of visits, cultural delegations, etc, have been impacted adversely due to the pandemic. Despite such challenges, the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) have been able to cater to the needs of international students and initiated reforms for better management of scholarship programme. The Committee are also pleased to note that the traditional Indian form of greeting – Namaste acquired greater recognition as a global form of greeting during the pandemic. The Committee further note with satisfaction that the Ministries of External Affairs and Culture have embraced digital and virtual mode to carry forward India’s soft power and cultural diplomacy. However, realizing that the post-Covid world will be more technology driven, the Committee would exhort the Ministry to adopt innovative ICT technologies to make India’s soft power and cultural diplomacy more effective and relevant.

(Recommendation No. 4)

IV. Impact study of India’s Soft Power

1.27 The working of soft power makes its impacts extremely difficult to measure – not only are soft power resources intangible, their impacts are also intangible in addition to being diffuse and long-term in nature. In its Thirteenth and Sixteenth Reports, the Committee had underscored the imperative of developing a soft power matrix for measuring the effectiveness of India’s soft power. In its final Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs had stated that Esteemed Committee is informed that, ICCR has already initiated the process for developing the “Soft Power Matrix”. Delay in developing the Matrix is owing to the following reasons:

- a) Challenge in measuring the outcomes of soft power related activities as the outcomes are not always tangible.
- b) Shortage of expertise available in India for developing such a Matrix.

1.28 On the Committee’s specific query regarding development of a "soft power matrix" to measure the effectiveness of the country's soft power outreach, the Ministry submitted

that the Expert has submitted the report which is under consideration by the ICCR in consultation with other think tanks such as RIS which have expertise in this area.

1.29 Adding further on the issue of developing a soft power matrix, the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under on 31 January, 2022: -

“With regard to putting in place a soft power matrix to measure the effectiveness of our policies, ICCR has conducted an initial exercise, and the report of which has been submitted last July and it is being consulted with stakeholders.”

1.30 The Committee are cognizant that the intangible elements of soft power are difficult to quantify. The Ministry has submitted that two factors have delayed the process for developing the matrix, namely challenge in measuring outcomes of soft power related activities and shortage of expertise. Currently, the Report by Expert Committee is under consideration by the ICCR and other think tanks.

The Committee, however, feel that a study could establish the linkages between our soft power and tangible outcomes in the field of diplomacy and hence they fail to comprehend the glaring delay in developing India’s Soft Power Matrix. There are various global institutions and organizations that have developed indices for measuring soft power. The Ministry should take cues from such available data and use it as a foundation for developing the matrix. The Committee reiterate their stance and strongly recommend that the Ministry should have objective metrics for evaluating soft power outcomes through a ‘Soft Power Matrix’ at the earliest.

(Recommendation No. 5)

IV. LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

1.31 In their Background Notes and on during testimony before the Committee, the Ministry of External Affairs had highlighted the following four key issues inhibiting effective conduct of soft power and cultural diplomacy :-

- (i) Timely, adequate budget allocation.
- (ii) Need for greater coordination and consultation among multiple institutions, both in the government and private sector, engaged in conduct of cultural and soft power

projection. Currently, there is duplication of efforts and resources due to overlapping mandates of several ministries and agencies.

- (iii) Shortage of skilled, motivated manpower in the Headquarters as well as in Indian Missions/Posts abroad who have the requisite enthusiasm and interest in cultural work.
- (iv) Lack of clarity about the mandate of ICCR and the scope of “culture” and absence of a national policy on projection of cultural soft strengths overseas often results in ad hoc, unsustainable measures.

1.32 MEA/ICCR have been working together closely with various GoI Ministries/agencies for execution of specific programmes/activities. Details of major institutionalized coordination arrangements with Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of AYUSH, Ministry of Science and Technology and Department of Space are given below:

Ministry Culture	ICCR and Ministry of Culture signed an MOU in 2016 to jointly execute the Festivals of India overseas. We have been consulting each other on grants to India-Foreign Friendship Societies in other countries, exhibitions abroad and presence of each others’ representatives on the governing bodies of ICCR and organizations under Ministry of Culture.
Ministry Youth and Sports Affairs	With the changing understanding of the term “Culture,” MEA and ICCR have broadened its horizon of projecting broader spectrum of Indian Culture for soft power. One such area is sports, and cricket in particular. These are coordinated with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports at various levels. Mutual visits by youth are another dimension of soft power that we are focusing upon. India has an MoU to annually exchange 200 youth between India and China and we are exploring a similar arrangement with Japan. In 2019-20 we facilitated inbound youth delegations from Vietnam, Tajikistan and Portugal and organized the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas in Varanasi in January 2019.
Department Space:	India’s offer of the use of the South Asia satellite free of cost to all our neighbours, also puts outer space as an area of soft power that we are beginning to make inroads into. India offers training slots in space technology to many countries, and is committed to working with Bhutan on the development of the first satellite. MEA coordinates these matters closely with the Department of Space/ISRO and other participating countries. In September 2019, Prime Minister invited a group of young Bhutanese to ISRO in Bengaluru to witness the landing of the moon rover, Vikram.
Ministry	ICCR is an implementing agency for three of Ministry of AYUSH’s scholarship

<p>AYUSH</p>	<p>programmes. The scholarships offered by MEA under its ITEC programme are also by the Ministry of AYUSH also play a very important role in our cultural diplomacy. First Yoga College in China – the India-China Yoga College in Kunming province of China, and deployment of Yoga Chairs therein were implemented jointly by ICCR and the Ministry of AYUSH. Ministry of AYUSH has signed following documents and established AYUSH information cells with the assistance of Missions and Posts overseas:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="500 485 1450 835"> <tr> <td>Country to Country MoUs</td> <td>22</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Undertaking collaborative research</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Setting up of AYUSH Chairs</td> <td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Establishment of AYUSH Information Cells</td> <td>32 in 29 countries</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AYUSH center of excellence</td> <td>01</td> </tr> </table> <p>Each year since 2015 the ICCR and MEA in coordination with the Ministry of AYUSH has successfully organized the International Yoga Day in all Member States of the United Nations, as well as in the UN premises. We receive support from AYUSH. This year events were organized in about 150 countries at around 800 locations with the participation of hundred and thousands of people. Locations such as the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Opera House in Sydney, the Shaolin temple in China, the base of Mount Everest in Nepal, the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin and the Cathedral in Brasilia are some of the iconic sites for the annual yoga event.</p>	Country to Country MoUs	22	Undertaking collaborative research	21	Setting up of AYUSH Chairs	13	Establishment of AYUSH Information Cells	32 in 29 countries	AYUSH center of excellence	01
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<p>Ministry of Science and Technology</p>	<p>As was mentioned in the opening statement of Foreign Secretary in sitting dated 20 December 2019, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) is currently beginning an important new multi-year research programme of Science Diplomacy with the Department of Science & Technology, which is expected to add another dimension to our modern soft power projection efforts. We expect RIS to play an important role in showcasing India's emerging scientific and technological capabilities in bio-technology, space, Artificial Intelligence, traditional medicines and genetics. Further, through the development projects MEA is assisting various development countries in various sectors such as meteorology, remote sensing, agriculture etc.</p>										

1.33 On being asked about the challenges faced in coordination and collaboration efforts, Ministry stated that overlapping mandates between MEA and other Government Departments in the projection of India's soft power, while not a constraint per se, requires

greater coordination between MEA and others. MEA/ICCR are working on this with key departments looking after Culture, Education, Sports & Youth Affairs and AYUSH. It is also hoped to enhance cooperation with the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats to project democracy, constitutional values, electoral practices, good governance and other aspects of soft power, in a more sustained manner to foreign Parliamentarians, legislature staff and media. ICCR closely works with the Ministry of Culture (MOC) in implementation of Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) for which (MOC) is the nodal Ministry. This is being done abroad through its Cultural Centres and Ministry's network of Missions. The Standing Committee for planning and coordinating Festivals of India abroad is chaired by Secretary (Culture) where DG, ICCR is also a member. The Governing Body of ICCR includes members from Ministry of Culture as well as all major principle organizations working the area of cultural and soft power projection.

1.34 The Ministry of External Affairs has cited lack of coordination and overlapping mandate amongst line Ministries as a limiting factor in pursuit of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy. When asked about the efforts that are being made to tide this challenge, the Ministry stated that the stake holders have internally deliberated on the issues and considered various available options including establishing a separate Department. However, finally, it is felt that with MEA as Empowered Execution Agency of the Government in the lead, all other tools of soft power must supplement the efforts of MEA to carry forward the mandate of soft power as per country specific soft power demand prepared in consultation with Indian Mission of that specific country. The systems and institutional mechanisms are in place, in MEA and Indian Embassies, as well as in ICCR, for effective and impactful soft power projection.

1.35 The Committee enquired whether there exists any mechanism for coordination between the multiple agencies engaged in conduct of cultural and soft power projection. In a written reply, the Ministry stated that the Hon'ble Committee members have earlier been emphasizing on the aspects of coordination amongst different Departments of the Government. It is felt that with MEA as Empowered execution agency of the Government in the lead, all other organizations and tools of soft power must supplement the efforts of MEA to carry forward the mandate of soft power as per country specific soft power demand

prepared in consultation with Indian Mission of that specific country. ICCR as part of its activities already include Education and Culture- the foci of soft power. It has a network of 37 Indian Cultural Centres, Chairs to capture the mood of young audience and on culture it has gamut of activities like cultural delegations for promotion of dance and music, visitors exchange programme, conferences & seminars. MEA, Missions and ICCR are already tied institutionally and can and have been working in tandem with one another. For coordination with other organizations and agencies of Soft Power a monitoring Committee under MEA's lead is proposed to be constituted.

1.36 In their Thirteenth Report (16th Lok Sabha) on 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy, including the role of Indian Council of Cultural Relations and Indian Diaspora', the Committee had urged the Ministry to establish an institutionalized coordination mechanism between MEA/ICCR and other line Ministries. However, it is evident that no substantive steps have been taken in this direction and gaps in coordination persist. Justifying the tardy progress on this issue, the Ministry submitted that there has been emphasis by the Hon'ble Committee members on the Coordination amongst the line Ministries and other tools of Soft Power. The stake holders have internally deliberated on the issues and considered various available options including establishing a separate Department. However, finally, it is believed that with MEA as Empowered Execution Agency of the Government in the lead, all other tools of soft power must supplement the efforts of MEA to carry forward the mandate of soft power as per country specific soft power demand prepared in consultation with Indian Mission of that specific country. ICCR as part of its activities already include Education and Culture- the foci of soft power. It has a network of 37 Indian Cultural Centres, Chairs to capture the mood of young audience and on culture it has gamut of activities like cultural delegations for promotion of dance and music, visitors exchange programme, conferences & seminars. MEA, Missions and ICCR are already tied institutionally and can and have been working in tandem with one another. For coordination among other tools of Soft Power a monitoring Committee under MEA's lead is proposed to be constituted.

1.37 Considering the importance of the soft power of the nation in building up the international relations, NITI Aayog organized three brain storming sessions on the centrality

of the cultural relationship for greater vibrancy in diplomatic, economic and strategic relations of India. These sessions were designed precisely to address the issue as to how we synergize soft power and to what extent we can exercise hard power. The three brainstorming sessions were held on 23 May 2018, 29 November 2018 and 9 October, 2019 under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog. In these sessions, it was recognized that there is a need of better coordination among the different departments and ministries which are promoting Indian culture in overseas market. It was agreed upon that there should be a collective, coordinated, targeted & synergistic approach to promote Indian culture in the external sphere. As a result, NITI Aayog constituted a Coordination Committee consisting of representatives from all concerned ministries that will oversee progress in developing our soft power in coordinated and integrated way.

1.38 The Ministry of External Affairs has highlighted four key factors inhibiting effective conduct of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy – inadequate budgetary allocation, lack of coordination among multiple institutions, shortage of skilled manpower and lack of clarity about the mandate of ICCR. The Committee note that informal arrangement have been made by MEA with various GOI Ministries and agencies such as Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, Ministry of AYUSH, Ministry of Science & Technology, etc. The Committee also observe that NITI Aayog had held three brain storming sessions to address the issue of lack of coordination and suggested the constitution of a Coordination Committee consisting of representatives from all the concerned Ministries. In pursuance of the Committee's recommendation on establishing a coordinated mechanism between MEA and other line Ministries involved in soft power projection, the Committee note that the Monitoring Committee under MEA's lead is under proposal. In view of the urgent need for greater synergy and coordination among the various Ministries/ Departments /agencies involved in India's soft power and cultural diplomacy, the Committee recommend that the Coordination Committee may be constituted at the earliest.

(Recommendation No. 6)

1.39 Non-availability of adequate finances is one of the factors derailing the effective facilitation of India's soft power projection. Soft power capabilities require capital,

both human as well as financial to be effective. A cursory glance at the budgetary allocation to India's ICCR and Confucius Institutes of China or UKS's British Council or Germany's Goethe Institute is testimony to the hurdles in our institutional efficacy. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should increase ICCR's budgetary allocation by at least 20 % than what is being provisioned as of now.

(Recommendation No. 7)

1.40 India is uniquely positioned for its rich culture. As compared to other countries India's potential for developing International Relations on the count of culture is simply great. Therefore, in order to give further impetus to our efforts aimed at strengthening aimed at strengthening India's cultural relations with major countries all over the world, it is necessary to strengthen our Cultural Relationship Development or soft power arm- Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), it is necessary to evolve and adopt a well thought out Cultural Relationship Policy of India at the earliest. In the absence of such a policy, our efforts to accomplish our Mission of development of cultural relationship re likely to remain half hearted and less result oriented. The Committee therefore recommend that the Ministry should take urgent steps firstly to evolve and later adopt National Policy on Cultural Relationship Development across the countries or National Soft Power Policy.

(Recommendation No.8)

1.41 While ICCR was established some 71 years ago, global situation has witnessed several drastic changes thereafter. Hence, an institutional device conceived some seven decades back needs a relook in the context of its organizational set functionality and efficacy. The Committee recommend that the Ministry should appoint a Study Group firstly to assess the working of ICCR in comparison to British Council, the American Centre and the Confucius Institute etc and later suggest ways to further strengthen ICCR.

(Recommendation No.9)

CHAPTER 2

INSTRUMENTS OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY

India has a wide array of soft power resources ranging from sports, music, art, film, literature, to democratic institutions, independent press and judiciary, vibrant civil society, multi-ethnic polity, secularism, pluralism, skilled English-speaking professionals, food, handicrafts, yoga. In view of such expansive soft power assets and the oversight mandate of the Committee on External Affairs, the Report will only delve upon the following major instruments of soft power and cultural diplomacy in which the Ministry of External Affairs has a significant role to play :-

- (i) Culture
- (ii) Diaspora
- (iii) Democracy
- (iv) Tourism
- (v) Yoga
- (vi) Ayurveda
- (vii) Sports and Youth Exchange Programmes
- (viii) Media and Cinema
- (ix) Education

Consequently, the Committee undertook a detailed examination of the subject for two year and took oral evidence of the Ministries of External Affairs, Culture, Education, AYUSH, Tourism, Sports & Youth Affairs, Commerce & Industry, Information & Broadcasting and Niti Aayog.

I. Role of Culture

2.2 UNESCO defines culture as ‘the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.’ India has a rich culture and cultural diplomacy is its expression abroad to foreign audiences in order to facilitate/create long term international influence.

2.3 Explaining the distinction in mandate of ICCR and the Ministry of Culture, the Foreign Secretary stated on 20.12.2019 as under:

“Sir, I believe there is a distinction between the two. ICCR is only meant for projection of Indian culture abroad. The Ministry of Culture makes all policy and evolves all projects for the general propagation of culture both within the country and in terms of the focus abroad. But the executing arm is the ICCR and this is done either with the Ministry of Culture, as in the case of festivals of India or by major exhibitions travel from the Indian Museum, Kolkata or from the other museums in India or we do it under own resources.”

2.4 In view of the overlapping mandate between ICCR in certain areas, the Ministry of Culture was asked in particular whether, there is a need for redefinition/ strict demarcation of their mandate in cultural diplomacy. In a written reply, the Ministry submitted that there is complimentary mandate of Ministry of Culture and ICCR in projecting India’s soft power. While it is only the Government, i.e. Ministry of Culture, which can initiate cultural agreements and cultural exchange programmes, it is on the basis of these agreement and exchange programmes that various organisations, including ICCR, organise international programmes.

2.5 The Committee wanted to know about ICCR’s understanding of culture of India and the vehicles it has chosen to project this diversity to the external world. In a written reply, ICCR submitted that it has been projecting the richness and diversity of Indian culture abroad through a number of ongoing programmes. The activities include its robust scholarship programme for foreign students to study in India; active exchange of intellectuals, academicians, experts, authors, scholars and artists throughout the year, organizing seminars and conferences and bringing out publications and promotional material. Going beyond the traditional promotion of Indian performing arts, dance & music and visual & fine arts, ICCR, within its limited means and resources, has made attempts to have new elements such as Ayurveda, Khadi, Yoga embedded in the projection of India’s rich cultural heritage. ICCR implements these programmes directly through 39 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad and 19 Regional Offices in India, as well as through close cooperation with the Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

2.6 The overall and detailed functioning of ICCR along with aspects related to its activities of ICCR will be examined in Chapter 4. Hence, this section will focus more on the role played by the Ministry of Culture in projecting India's soft power abroad. The mandate of Ministry of Culture (MoC) is preservation and conservation of cultural heritage and promotion of tangible and intangible art and culture within India as well as abroad. Ministry is also responsible for implementation of various UNESCO conventions in the field of culture and world heritage sites.

2.7 The Committee wanted to know about the Ministry of Culture's vision about showcasing Indian culture to the world in a manner which reinforces India's rising stature among the comity of nations. In a written reply, the Ministry stated that as a part of its visioning exercise for India@2047, Ministry of Culture aims to use India's rich, ancient and diverse cultural heritage, which has significant historical global outreach & influence, to engage Indian & its people with the world, foster greater & deeper cultural cooperation, exchange & understanding and to foster friendly relations with other countries across the globe which can have significant effects on other spheres of cooperation and diplomacy.

2.8 On being asked whether a study on international best practices of using culture as an instrument of soft power has been carried out, the Ministry of Culture stated that it has not made any assessment of international best practices of using culture as an instrument of soft power. It is very difficult to quantify the tangible foreign policy outcomes emanating out of culture diplomacy of a country.

2.9 Cultural Activities undertaken by the Ministry of Culture to project India's soft power and cultural diplomacy are as follows:

(i) Bilateral Cultural Relations:

2.10 In order to disseminate Indian art and culture in new territories and develop bilateral cultural relations between India and other countries, the Ministry signs bilateral Cultural Agreement (CAs) and Cultural Exchange Programme (CEPs). Till 2021, the Ministry of Culture has signed 109 Cultural Agreements (CAs) and 74 Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs).

2.11 Provisions in the CEP, *inter-alia*, provide cooperation in the fields of music & dance, theatre, archives, archaeology, libraries, museums, literature, anthropology, festivals etc. The implementation of the provisions of the CEPs is undertaken by the attached/subordinate offices and autonomous bodies and other concerned Ministries/Depts. During 2019-2020, CEPs were signed with 16 countries. CEPs with 3 countries are ready for signing (Singapore, Israel, Sri Lanka). CEPs are expected to be signed with 6 countries (Russia, Thailand, Egypt, Suriname, New Zealand & Argentina).

(ii) Multilateral Cultural Relations

2.12 India is a member of various multilateral organizations viz. BRICS, SAARC, SCO, BIMSTEC, ASEM, UNESCO and actively participates in multilateral cultural activities such as exhibitions, events of performing arts, literary events etc. Ministerial level meetings for enhancing cultural cooperation amongst member nations of these organizations are also attended at Minister Level. Some of the events on multilateral platform in the recent past are appended in Annexure I.

(iii) Scheme for Promotion of International Cultural Relations

2.13 The Ministry of Culture implements a scheme titled “Scheme for Promotion of International Cultural Relations” to showcase India’s rich cultural heritage. This scheme has two components :

(i) Festivals of India.

(ii) Grant-in-aid to Indo- Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies.

(a) Festivals of India abroad:

2.14 The Ministry of Culture organizes Festivals of India (FOI) abroad to promote India’s rich cultural heritage and enhance India’s image in the global arena in a concerted manner. The FOIs are organized with the aim of having a lasting impact on the people of the host country. Thus, FOIs are tools of cultural diplomacy that project the soft power of India. This soft approach is expected to benefit India in the fields of tourism, health, education, commerce etc. and provide strategic depth to the growing influence of India. The events generally included in FOIs are Music, Dance, Theatre, Film Festival, Food Festival, Literary

Festival, Folk Arts such as mehendi artistry, exhibitions of various disciplines, Lecture demonstrations and Workshops etc.

2.15 The main focus of FOI is to connect and enhance the perception of India in the minds of locals which should ultimately lead to more tangible results interms of trade and commerce, tourism, medical tourism. Broadly, Festivals of India are conducted abroad with the objectives to:

- Promote Indian culture
- Strengthen bonds of foreign countries with India
- Promote bilateral cultural contracts; and
- Promote inbound tourism

During last five years, Ministry of Culture has organized Festivals of India in 58 countries. Besides FOIs, 70 years of India's Independence was celebrated abroad through Indian Missions by organizing cultural activities in 55 countries across all continents during 2017-2018.

(b) Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies

2.16 Indian culture is also promoted and strengthened in foreign countries by giving grants to societies which carry out cultural activities connected with India abroad. This grant aims to promote Indian culture abroad, fostering closer friendship and cultural contacts between India and the concerned foreign country. The grant supports Indo-Foreign Friendship Societies for holding programmes and activities such as dance (classical, folk and workshops); music (vocal, instrumental, sufi, classical, semi-classical, carnatic, contemporary, workshops etc.); photo exhibitions on culture related topics; exhibitions on books and other culture related topics/material; publication of books/journals on culture; theatre: - drama, skit, mime, mimicry and workshops; activities to promote folk arts viz mehendi, puppetry and rangoli; classes/courses in yoga etc. The grant is released on the recommendations of the Indian Mission abroad.

2.17 The quantum of grant sanctioned to a society is upto Rs.10 lakhs per annum and in special case grant to a society may be given up to Rs.25 lakhs. During 2019-20, 359 societies have been sanctioned grant through 56 Missions abroad. During 2020-21, 26 societies have been sanctioned grant through 6 Missions abroad till date.

(iv) Assistance in rebuilding historical monuments

2.18 Assisting countries in our neighbourhood and in extended neighbourhood to restore refurbish or re-built historical monuments that display an Indian influence is an important facilitation of our cultural diplomacy. The details of ongoing endeavours to restore historical buildings are as follows:-

- (a) Project Mausam is a project of the Ministry of Culture launched by India at the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in Doha, Qatar. 39 countries in the Indian Ocean region have been identified under Project Mausam. The objectives include Achieving Transnational Nomination on 'Indian Ocean Maritime Routes' under World Heritage List of UNESCO.
- (b) The conservation work of Ta Prohm temple in Cambodia, Vat Phou temple in Lao PDR, Ananda Temple, dedicated to Lord Buddha, at Bagan in Myanmar, Cham monuments in Vietnam, Friday Mosque at Male, Maldives etc. are being executed by the Archaeological Survey of India.

2.19 Stressing on this aspect of our cultural diplomacy, the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs during the course of evidence on 20 December, 2019 stated:

“An important and some time under-estimated element of cultural diplomacy is our increasing focus on assisting countries in our neighbourhood and in the extended neighbour is to restore, refurbish or re-built historical monuments that display an Indian influence. Beginning in the early 1980s, the Ministry along with the Archaeological Survey of India has been restoring different temples in Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Since that time, we have undertaken similar works in Afghanistan, the Store Palace and Bagh-e Babur, in Cambodia the Preah Vihar Temple, in Laos the Vat Phou Temple, in Myanmar the Ananda Temple at Bagan, in Vietnam the Charm Monuments at Nissan; in Bhutan the Tashichho Dzong; in Sri Lanka the Trikuteshwara Temple and Jaffna Cultural Centre and in China the Buddhist Temple in Luoyang. This is just to give you a few examples. We have commenced work now on renovating the Friday Mosque in Male in Maldives, the Wangdue Phodrang Dzong in Bhutan and Guru Dev Tagore’s ancestral home in Bangladesh. We will shortly restoration of Buddhist Pagodas in Bagan, Myanmar as well as in the Harihar Bhawan and Valmiki Complexes damaged in the earthquake in Nepal. During the Chinese President’s visit it was decided that both sides will jointly research on historical trading ties between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province of China and revive these ties through establishment of sister-State relations.

Our contribution in building or re-building monuments with Indian influence is widely appreciated through the entire region. In view of the growing importance of this aspect of our cultural diplomacy, the Ministry is in the process of establishing a new and separate division to handle projects abroad with assistance from the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India. The severe shortage of trained man power with the Archaeological Survey of India and the application of General Financial Rules and procedures for one of the kind monuments which require special skills that cannot ordinarily be tendered for in the same manner of ordinary projects, funding is also a limiting factor in the selection of projects. The scholarships offered by the MEA under its hi tech programme quite distinct from ICCR also plays an important role in cultural diplomacy. Hitech now has footprints in 161 countries including some of the smallest Island States of the Pacific and the Caribbean. Those who come to India to study are introduced to the strengths of our democratically vibrant, economically emerging and technologically advancing nation. The number of such scholarships has risen from roughly 9,000 in 2014-15 to 11,500 this year. This covers good governance, parliamentary practices, election management, journalism, culture, sports and IT besides the standard disciplines.”

(v) National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)

2.20 National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM) is a scheme administered by the Ministry of Culture conceptualized for the purpose of developing a comprehensive data base of artists, art forms and other resources gathered from cultural organizations in the Ministry of Culture, other Ministries and also States. Relevant data in respect of 14.53 lakh artists / artisans has been collected from various sources viz. Ministry of Textiles, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, National School of Drama, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, Zonal Cultural Centres, Kalakshetra Foundation etc. Ministry of Culture is doing a cultural mapping survey involving Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) and CSC eGovernance Service India Limited (CSC SPV) for all the villages.

2.21 The culture mapping exercise is being carried out using a mobile application and the data collection of villages will be used to create a database for Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar as part of cultural mapping. All the villages of the country as per Local Government Directory will be covered for data collection under Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar and cultural mapping. Presently, data of 10712 villages have been collected.

2.22 The Committee note that the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of External Affairs are directly engaged in the task of promotion of India's cultural diplomacy. While on one hand the Ministry of Culture formulates policy and evolves all projects for propagation of culture on the other hand, ICCR is the executing arm in the external domain which includes preservation and conservation of cultural heritage and promotion of tangible and intangible art and culture within and outside India. Within through its 39 Indian Cultural Centres abroad and 19 Regional Offices in India undertakes activities such as academic and cultural exchanges, scholarship programmes, organization of seminars, bringing out publications, etc. While noting the complementary role of ICCR and Ministry of Culture in cultural diplomacy, the Committee desire that a Working Group of both the Ministries may be formed to have coordinated and focussed approach in chalking out our cultural diplomatic activities. The Committee also feel that there is a need to have a consolidated database of information about cultural assets and resources *i.e.* cultural inventory at one place for essential planning and effective utilization of our resources for the benefit of our country.

(Recommendation No.10)

2.23 With the objective of dissemination of Indian art and culture, the Ministry of Culture has signed 109 bilateral cultural agreements and 74 Cultural Exchange Programmes. As a member of various multilateral organizations such as Brazil Russia India China and South Africa (BRICS), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Bay of Bengal Initiative of Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), India actively participates in multilateral cultural activities. While acknowledging the plethora of activities undertaken by ICCR to utilize India's rich, ancient and diverse culture in fostering bilateral and multilateral cultural relations, the Committee desire that the Ministry of External Affairs and Culture should proactively communicate these initiatives to the domestic as well as global audience through all media platforms.

(Recommendation No.11)

2.24 Assisting countries in our neighbourhood and in extended neighbourhood to restore, refurbish or re-built historical monuments that display an Indian influence is an important form of our cultural diplomacy. The Ministry of External Affairs along with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have restored historical monuments in Angkor Wat Temple (Cambodia), Bagh E Babur (Afghanistan), Preah Vihar Temple), Vat Phou Temple (Laos), Ananda Temple (Myanmar), Charm Monuments (Vietnam), Tashichho Dzong (Bhutan), Trikuteshwara Temple and Jaffna Cultural Centre (Sri Lanka) and so on. Currently, conservation work of Friday Mosque (Maldives), Wangdue Phodrang Dzong (Bhutan) and Guru Dev Tagore's ancestral home in Bangladesh are being executed by ASI.

MEA has informed that a new and separate division to handle projects abroad with assistance from the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India is being established. The Committee are pleased to learn that our contribution in building or re-building monuments with Indian influence is widely appreciated through the entire region. The Committee desire to be apprised about the progress made with regard to creation of the new Division along with details of budgetary allocation and proposed human capital in terms of organizational structure and outcomes of this initiative.

(Recommendation No.12)

2.25 Under the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCN), Ministry of Culture is developing a comprehensive data base of artists, art forms and other resources gathered from the Ministry of Textiles, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, National School of Drama, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, Zonal Cultural Centres, Kalakshetra Foundation, etc. The Committee observe that the cultural Mapping exercise is being carried out through a robust IT-enabled platform and the data will be used to create a database for 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar'. As per the Ministry of Culture data of 10712 villages have been collected so far. In this context, the Committee desire that the Ministry of External Affairs should ensure that this database is used strategically to showcase our multifaceted and diverse

approach. The database may also be shared on the website of the Ministry and be made a part of our soft power diplomatic tool.

(Recommendation No.13)

II. Role of Diaspora

2.26 India has a large Diaspora in the world with over 31 million including over 13 million NRIs and 18 million PIOs spread across the globe. Depending on their economic and political influence within the centers of global power, Diasporas can be a vital strategic instrument and channel of communication to further India's foreign policy goals and gains. The Fifteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'Welfare of Indian Diaspora: Policies and Schemes' contain detail analysis of the subject. Therefore, this Report will focus merely on the role of Diaspora as a soft power asset.

2.27 Indian Diaspora has in fact played a very active role in the development of India. The remittances received by India from its Diaspora and the developmental and philanthropic works undertaken by the Diaspora have been quite noteworthy for India's growth. Indian economy has been enriched by the investment of the entrepreneurs from Indian Diaspora. Politically, Indian Diaspora has emerged as a soft power influencing and enriching India's relationship with their host countries. Diaspora group works as a soft power in building, influencing and strengthening the relationship between the home and host country.

2.28 Enumerating the steps taken to engage the extensive network of Indian Diaspora in furthering India's foreign policy and long term interests, the Ministry stated that it runs various programmes and has taken several steps from time to time to engage with Indian Diaspora. Among the major Programmes / Schemes handled by the Division are Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences, Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Know India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children, Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz, Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora, grievances pertaining to diaspora. Brief description of these programmes is as follows:-

Know India Programme (KIP) : Know India Programme was launched in 2003 for the

Indian Diaspora between the age group of 18-30 years. The purpose of the KIP is to familiarize the PIO youths (People of Indian Origin) with their roots and contemporary India, through a three week orientation programme and provide them an exposure to the country of their origin. It also aims to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science & technology, communication and information technology and culture.

Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY): Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana was started in 2018-19 in association with Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) for the PIOs in the age group of 45-60 years to connect them to the spiritual and religious aspects of India. This programme is aimed towards middle-aged PIOs and helps them to visit India on an organized pilgrimage, paid for by the Government of India, and have an all round exposure to various faiths in India.

Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC): The Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC) was launched in 2006-2007 for the children of overseas Indians (PIOs/NRIs) with the objective to make higher education in Indian Universities/Institutions accessible to diaspora children and promote India as a centre for higher studies. Scholarship is offered for pursuing Under Graduate courses in Central Universities of India, Institutions accredited "A" Grade by NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) and recognized by University Grant Commission (UGC) and other Institutions covered under DASA (Direct Admission of Students Abroad) Scheme, National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Schools of Planning and Architecture (SPAs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) etc.

Ministry offers 150 scholarships every year to the children of NRIs and PIOs/OCI living in 69 select countries and provides financial assistance up to US\$ 4000 per annum towards tuition fee, admission fee and post admission services for specified undergraduate courses in Professional and Non-Professional courses.

Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz (BKJ): In pursuance of an announcement made by Prime Minister at the 13th PBD Convention on 08 January, 2015 in Gandhinagar, as part of efforts to strengthen engagement with young overseas Indians and encourage them to know more

about their country of origin, an online "Bharat ko Janiye" Quiz was organized for young overseas Indians (two categories i.e. PIOs and NRIs) of 18-35 years of age in 2015-16. 15 winners (5 in each category) are invited to India tour.

Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD): Ministry of External Affairs supports the diaspora to organise cultural events under the Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD) scheme with an aim to showcase Indian culture and new initiatives & developments of modern India. The scheme aims to nourish and strengthen the cultural bonds between India and its diaspora. The projected outcome of the scheme is to reinforce the cultural identity of the persons of Indian origin. Under this scheme, the Ministry releases a grant to the Indian Mission abroad which then works together with Diaspora Associations in organising India-specific events aimed at strengthening the bonds of the Diaspora with India.

State Outreach Programme – Videsh Sampark: The Videsh Sampark Program was initiated in the year 2017 which is an in depth dialogue between Ministry of External Affairs and the State Governments with the objective of welfare and protection of the Overseas Indian Community and strengthening our engagement with the Indian Diaspora.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD): Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is the flagship event of the government and is celebrated on 9th January every two years to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. January 9 was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

Theme-based PBD Conferences are also held during the intervening period with participation from overseas diaspora experts, policy makers and stakeholders. These conventions provide a platform to the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and people of the land of their ancestors for mutually beneficial activities. These conventions are also very useful in networking among the overseas Indian community residing in various parts of the world and enable them to share their experiences in various fields.

Ministry has also been organizing **Regional Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (RPBD)** to reach out to a vast majority of our diaspora, whom for various reasons, are unable to attend the main biennial event in India and benefit from its deliberations. This is in response to a strong and persistent demand for holding such events regionally. This has elicited enthusiastic support from the India Diaspora and the local Governments and have been highly successful.

Global Pravasi Rista Portal: Global Pravasi Rishta portal is an online digital portal for connecting Diaspora (NRI, PIO and OCI) with Government of India through Embassies and Consulates. It is a two way communication channel between the Government of India and Indian Diaspora abroad, dissemination of information, government programme to Indian Diaspora abroad. RISHTA Portal has been developed by EG&IT Division. The Portal & Mobile App have been launched by the Hon'ble MoS (VM) on 30th December, 2020.

Media Campaign: Ministry of External Affairs runs a media awareness campaign with the objective of creating wider awareness among the general public about the processes of legal migration, cautioning people against the illegal processes followed by fraudulent recruitment agencies and to provide information to emigrants/ potential emigrants to ensure legal, safe and orderly migration.

2.29 Underlying the important role of Diaspora in our Soft Power and Cultural diplomacy, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs made the following submission on 20 December 2019:-

“Indian Diaspora has been and will remain an important resource for India’s soft power projections and has played an important role in facilitating Indian culture and values abroad. In this context, the merging of the Ministry of Overseas Indians Affairs with the Ministry of External Affairs has allowed us to synergise such efforts through flagship events like the biennial Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas which has a strong cultural element. The Overseas Indians Affairs Division is responsible for organising the Know India Programme which introduces new India to young persons of Indian origin who have never seen their ancestral homeland. 51 such editions have been organised with the participation of about 2000 diaspora. We help PIOs in tracing their roots and knowing more about the culture they came from and we support commemorative monuments of plaques in countries which have sizeable population of PIOs, such as Mauritius, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Ministry has also built Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi in 2016 to provide a permanent venue for events that allow us to showcase our culture through the medium of the NRI and the PIO worldwide.

The Diaspora assists in submission of posts in multiple ways including through their support for our cultural troops by organising events or festivals in conjunction with our Missions in foreign countries and acting as goodwill Ambassadors to build better understanding of Indian civilization worldwide. We attach great importance to the services that our diaspora renders as partner of MEA in promoting cultural diplomacy.”

2.30 The presence of an extensive and vibrant Indian Diaspora abroad with their growing political and economic profile has emerged as a unique soft power asset of the country. The Indian Diaspora has emerged as a major partner in promotion of cultural diplomacy in their respective countries. While noting the recognition gained by our diasporic communities in recent years, the Committee feel that there is a strong need for their strategic engagement in advancing a positive narrative about India and her global image. Keeping this in view, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should put in place a mechanism for proactive interaction with Indian Diaspora in the Indian Missions/Posts abroad and through designated events solicit their feedback and suggestions for better engagement with the host country on regular basis.

(Recommendation No. 14)

III. Role of Tourism

2.31 Appreciating the role that tourism plays in developing people to people connect, the Ministry of Tourism engages in global print, electronic (including Incredible India website) and social media and online media campaigns in important and potential markets overseas, under the “Incredible India” brand, to promote various tourism destinations and products of the country.

2.32 The promotional activities include outdoor advertising, participation in travel fairs and exhibitions; organizing road shows, Know India seminars & workshops; organizing and supporting Indian food and cultural festivals; publication of brochures; offering joint advertising and brochure support and inviting media personalities, tour operators and opinion makers to visit the country under the Hospitality Programme of the Ministry. The theme around these keeps changing to showcase the different products of India.

2.33 Furthermore, India Tourism offices in the overseas markets regularly participate in a number of travel & tourism fairs / exhibitions / expos wherein amongst other tourist attractions, India's Buddhist sites are promoted to the visitors. The Ministry during the year 2018-2019 also organised Incredible India Road shows in various countries to promote tourism to India's Buddhist Circuits viz Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, South Korea, China, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

2.34 The Ministry of tourism also enters into Agreements/ Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with various countries as an ongoing process in the field of tourism cooperation. The main objective of such Agreements / MoUs signed by the Ministry of Tourism is primarily to promote tourism between both sides. The important components of the Agreements / MoUs include exchange of information and data related to tourism, cooperation between tourism stakeholders including hotels& Tour operators, exchange of visits of Tour Operators/Media/Opinion Makers for promotion of two way tourism, exchange programmes for cooperation in Human Resource Development, exchange of experience in the areas of promotion, marketing, destination development and management, participation in travel fairs/exhibitions in each other's country etc.

2.35 The Ministry of Tourism has identified Wellness and Medical Tourism as a niche tourism product. Medical tourism is becoming a popular option for tourists across the globe. Medical tourism is an attempt to attract medical tourists by deliberately promoting its medical and healthcare facilities. India is emerging as a preferred country for medical treatments due to advanced quality healthcare, affordable costs, lesser waiting time & easy medical visa process. India's medical& wellness tourism potential is also showcased during the Road Shows. Accordingly, Yoga & Ayurveda is actively promoted by the overseas India.

2.36 The Ministry of Tourism, with the view to create awareness about India's Buddhist Circuit /Pilgrimage and to enhance foreign tourist traffic to Buddhist sites in India, regularly undertakes promotional activities in potential overseas markets. The Ministry regularly organises the International Buddhist Conclave (IBC). The 6th International Buddhist Conclave (IBC) was held from September 23-26, 2018 in Delhi and Ajanta with site visit to Bodhgaya, Rajgir and Nalada in Bihar and Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh. Over 200

Buddhist Scholars, opinion makers, Buddhist Tour Operators, etc. from overseas participated in the event. Japan was the Partner country at the 6th IBC. The 7th International Buddhist Conclave is scheduled to be organized in the last quarter of 2020. Dates and venue for the same is being finalized. As per the announcement made by Hon'ble PM of India at 4th BIMSTEC Summit in August 2018, countries in the BIMSTEC grouping will be the focus countries in the 7th IBC.

2.37 Short film on Lord Buddha are screened during the travel shows and the same is screened during Road shows, Know India Seminars and other India promotional events organized by India Tourism offices in association with the Indian Missions. Know India Seminars were organized by India Tourism Offices in Singapore and Japan in various cities for promotion Buddhist sites in India in South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, China, Malaysia & Vietnam. Buddhist sites creatives are being used as part of Incredible India2.0 campaign in the Buddhist source markets such as China, Japan, Korea etc.

2.38 Under the Champion Sector Scheme, Marketing & Promotion for Buddhist circuits in overseas markets shall be taken up through dedicated media campaigns to promote the Buddhist Heritage of India in the leading source markets for the Buddhist sector which are China, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, S.Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Laos, Taiwan.

2.39 Highlighting the instrumental role of tourism in projecting India's soft power abroad, the representatives of the Ministry of Tourism on 7 January, 2020 stated:

“Sir, there has been focused attention to the tourism sector by the Government with focus on creating excellent infrastructure in tourist places and promoting it across the world. Incredible India logo which had been started in 2002 was relaunched as Incredible India II in 2017. We took various steps of deepening our website, coming on the social media and online platforms to promote the tourism opportunities of the country.

The major area of focus of tourism is on tourist related spaces of cultural heritage, natural diversity, historical knowledge and practices in the field of yoga, Ayurveda as also the luxury experiential opportunities. The details will come in the presentation. So, I will not repeat it. But I would like to mention that we have eight

offices in foreign countries which work in close cooperation with Indian Missions abroad.”

2.40 The Committee are aware that tourism is a key indicator of a country’s soft power capital. They are given to understand that the Ministry of Tourism with eight offices worldwide has been collaborating with MEA and other Line Ministries for showcasing tourist destination and products of the country. To promote tourism, various efforts have also been made *viz*, launching of the ‘Incredible India’ campaign, participation in tourism fairs/exhibitions/expos/road shows, signing of Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with countries, identifying wellness and medical tourism areas, spreading awareness about Buddhist Circuit/Pilgrimage, and so on. India’s age old Indian philosophy of ‘Atithidevo Bhava’ clubbed with immense potential in tourism sector, the Committee are confident that India’s global outreach is bound to escalate. The Committee are also elated to note that the Incredible India campaign has been effective in promoting Brand India and there have been regular informative posts and updates on the official social media platforms. The Committee feel that there is still a need to increase the number of tourism offices abroad and adopt country-specific approach for promotional activities. The Committee therefore urge the Government to come up with proposals incorporating feedback from all types of travelers starting from backpackers to high end tourists in evolving country specific approach.

(Recommendation No. 15)

2.41 The Committee find that in our country the differential pricing exists for entry tickets to historical monuments in the country. While understanding that the earnings from foreign tourists is a major source of revenue for the Government, they are of the view that such differential pricing leads to a loss of large segment of foreign travelers. Moreover, in a globalized world the differential pricing for citizens and foreigners is unnecessary and hence the Committee desire that the pricing system may be re-visited. The Committee also desire that adequate infrastructure and public transportation be created around tourist hubs and heritage sites and creation of a common tourist passes for entry to multiple heritage sites, as prevalent in most European countries, may be explored to streamline the process and avoid long queues at sites.

(Recommendation No. 16)

2.42 The Committee observe that religious tourism and medical tourism have emerged as areas with immense tourism potential. As an ancient civilization and a land of many religions, India has been cashing on this potential. The Committee have been informed that to create awareness about India's Buddhist Circuit/ Pilgrimage and attract foreign tourist to Buddhist sites in India, the International Buddhist Conclave (IBC) is being organized regularly by the Government. The Committee also note that under the Champion Sector Scheme, marketing & promotion for Buddhist circuits in overseas markets is also taken up through dedicated media campaign. The Committee are also pleased to observe that India is emerging as a preferred country for medical treatments due to its advanced quality healthcare, affordable costs, lesser waiting time & easy medical visa process. The Committee feel that there should be a consistent and comprehensive focus on these emerging and promising arenas of tourism in India. They, therefore, recommend that Government should adopt a multi-pronged approach to capitalize on India's potential as a hub for religious and medical tourism by building requisite infrastructure and skilled expertise. The Ministry of Tourism may be directed to issue written and online material/brochures on medical tourism and religious tourism in all the Missions/Posts abroad for enhanced promotional activities in these areas.

(Recommendation No. 17)

IV. Role of Parliamentary Democracy

2.43 India's vibrant parliamentary democracy, multi-party-political system and orderly change of Government through regular peaceful elections have significantly enhanced India's standing and profile globally. India is held in great esteem worldwide as the world's largest democracy.

2.44 On being asked about the manner in which our Parliamentary Democracy has helped in enhancing India's standing and image on global platform, the Ministry stated that our vibrant parliamentary democracy, multi-party political system and orderly change of government through regular peaceful elections have significantly enhanced India's standing

and profile globally. India is held in great esteem worldwide as the world's largest democracy. ITEC scholarships cover good governance, parliamentary practices and election management. In this direction, MEA is working closely with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats and the Election Commission in terms of promoting democracy as India's strength. The training programmes hosted by the Parliamentary Research and Training Institutes for Democracies (formerly known as Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training) of Lok Sabha Secretariat are extremely useful instruments. The Ministry also actively supports and facilitates regular goodwill exchange of visits by parliamentarians. ICCR's Distinguished and Academic Visitors Programmes are also designed to expose high profile foreign dignitaries to, *inter alia*, the vibrant functioning of India's democracy at the grassroots level.

2.45 On being asked about the democracy as a soft power tool, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs on 26 August 2021 submitted:

“On vibrant democracy, the democratic credentials of ours is one of our strongest characteristics. In fact, one of the few reasons why people look up to us is the fact that we are a thriving democracy despite the challenging conditions that we have gone through. We have been able to build on it. We did last year and we are continuing to do series of lectures in different places on democracy issues. We have been talking to Parliament to do more friendship society actions. We are talking to Members of Parliament and others. I know the Members of Parliament who have gone to deliver democracy lectures in different places. We need to build it up much more. There is a UN Democracy Fund. There are democracy institutions across the world. We need to interact with them. We are putting in place our policy to actually do much more on this front. Currently, what is happening in our borders makes it imperative that we use this democracy aspect of our soft power in a much more comprehensive way.

2.46 With regard to initiative of Democracy Network programme, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs testified on 31 January 2022 and stated:

“ICCR has taken new initiatives. The next generation Democracy Network Programme has brought and continues to bring young leaders to expose them to the Indian democratic system, its rich heritage, and new policies of India on Education and International Relations including visits to Parliament and State Assemblies are being facilitated. ICCR has hosted first inaugural batch of young leaders consisting

delegates from eight countries, namely, Bhutan, Jamaica, Poland, Malaysia, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Uzbekistan who visited India in the month of November and interacted with our Parliamentarians as well as visited the tourist places such as Delhi, Agra and Gujarat.”

2.47 India’s branding as the ‘world’s largest democracy’ has immense global appeal. As a vibrant parliamentary democracy with multi-party-political system ensuring smooth transfer of power through regular peaceful elections, India has been held in great esteem across the globe. The Committee note that MEA is working closely with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats and the Election Commission in the task of promoting democracy as India’s strength. The Ministry also actively supports and facilitates regular goodwill exchange visits by Parliamentarians. ICCR’s Next Generation Democracy Network Programme is another avenue that helps young leaders to witness India’s democratic system and its rich heritage. The Committee, however, feel that there is tremendous scope to further leverage our democratic credential as a soft power tool and hence, the Ministry should work closely with the Parliament Secretariat and Election Commission towards this end and make them an inclusive part of goodwill, exchange visits and interactions.

(Recommendation No. 18)

V. Role of Yoga

2.48 Yoga has gained admiration and captured peoples’ imagination across the world, and thus has become a source of India’s soft power. When asked about the initiatives taken to promote yoga as an instrument of India’s soft power and cultural diplomacy, the Ministry stated that in order to institutionalize the teaching of Yoga overseas, ICCR established the Indo-Turkmenistan Centre for Yoga and Traditional Medicine in Ashgabat in July 2015 and the India-China Yoga College at Yunnan Minzu University, Kunming, China in November 2015. It has deployed Yoga teachers in most of the Indian Missions and Posts. In year 2018, ICCR initiated promotion of intellectual and academic aspects of Yoga practices through its flagship annual International Conference on Yoga. The first Yoga Conference was organized in New York and the second in London in June 2018 and 2019 respectively. Ministry of AYUSH have signed 25 Country to Country MOUs, 14 MoUs have been signed

for collaborative research with Universities and 37 AYUSH Information Cells in different countries have been established.

2.49 At the behest of PM Narendra Modi, the United Nations General Assembly declared June 21st as the International Day of Yoga in 2014. The Ministry of AYUSH is the nodal Ministry for celebration of International Day of Yoga and has been celebrating IDY since last five years at national as well as at international level for promotion of Yoga. IDY is celebrated with special separate theme in each year, like Yoga for Peace, Yoga for Heart. Indian embassies at various countries are encouraged to celebrate the IDY in respective countries and necessary technical support in the form of Yoga expert, yoga material is provided by Ministry. Ministry of AYUSH arranges a Yoga conference in collaboration with College of Medicine (UK) every year.

2.50 During the course of oral evidence on 26 August 2020, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs clarified on the issue of certification of yoga institutes and teachers as under:

“Right now, we are working with the Ministry of AYUSH to have a yoga certification essentially to look at the world and to make sure that organisations which are teaching yoga and people who are teaching yoga are certified that they are teaching authentic Indian yoga. This yoga certification is the best way to get your soft power across because like others do – Italian cuisine you have a soft power, certificate saying that this is authentic Italian cuisine – or if there are branding done, the branding needs to be done to ensure that the yoga that is spread across the world, people know that it is authentic Indian yoga. So, a certification process is being put in place. I am hopeful that in the next one or two months we will launch it; it has been done in a soft way in Japan and in one or two countries. But we will have certification agencies across the world certified through the Yoga Certification Board that the person who is teaching yoga is a trained yoga teacher and the institute which is teaching yoga can actually teach authentic Indian yoga. For that, we are putting this certification process in place.”

2.51 Yoga is the ancient Indian practice of physical and mental well being. The Committee are pleased to note that The United Nations General Assembly declared 21st June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY). This global recognition underscores the immense popularity of Yoga and manifests its effectiveness as a soft power tool.

The Ministry of AYUSH is the nodal Ministry for International Day of Yoga celebrations and has been celebrating IDY since last five years at national as well as at international level. The Committee note that in order to institutionalize the teaching of Yoga overseas, ICCR has established the Indo-Turkmenistan Centre for Yoga and Traditional Medicine in Ashgabat and the India-China Yoga College at Yunnan Minzu University, China. In view of the surge in yoga teaching and centres across the globe, the Committee would recommend that the Ministry of AYUSH in collaboration with MEA constitute a Yoga Certification Board for certifying Indian yogic practices and therapies. Collaboration with the Indian Diaspora should also be encouraged to disseminate yoga training abroad, in regions where it is not yet popular.

(Recommendation No. 19)

VI. Role of Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine

2.52 The Ministry of AYUSH undertakes various activities and measures at international level with the mandate to promote/ popularize AYUSH systems (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homeopathy) of medicine across the globe. These include:

(i) International Collaborations

Country to Country MoUs	22
Undertaking collaborative research	21
Setting up of AYUSH Chairs	13
Establishment of AYUSH Information Cel	32 in 29 countries
AYUSH center of excellence	01

a) Country to Country MoUs — As of now, Ministry of AYUSH has signed 22 Country to Country MoUs for Cooperation in field of Traditional Medicine and Homoeopathy with Nepal, Bangladesh, Hungary, Trinidad & Tobago, Malaysia, WHO, Mauritius, Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Myanmar, Germany (Joint declaration), Iran, Sao Tome & Principe, Equatorial Guinea, Cuba, Colombia, Japan (*MoC*), Bolivia, Gambia, Republic of Guinea, China and St. Vincent and Grenadines

b) Collaboration with WHO (World Health Organization):

- A Project Collaboration Agreement (PCA) was signed between WHO and Ministry of AYUSH on 13 May, 2016 for cooperation on promoting the quality, safety and effectiveness of service provision in traditional and complementary medicine between WHO and Ministry of AYUSH. Under the above mentioned umbrella MoU of WHO was signed between WHO and Ministry of AYUSH on 27.12.2017 on Cooperation on integration of traditional and complementary medicine into health care system for development of WHO terminology in Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and WHO publication on standard terminology in Ayurveda, Unani, and Siddha.
- Ministry of AYUSH has signed a Donor Agreement with WHO on 05.07.2019 to develop android based application on m-Yoga to demonstrate Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) and for global use for correct practices of yoga under Be Healthy, BeMobile initiative of the WHO and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).
- A Donor Agreement between the World Health Organization (WHO) and The Ministry Of AYUSH to a financial contribution to WHO towards Project 'Development a Second Module in the Traditional Medicine (TM) Chapter of the International Classification of Diseases -11 Revision (ICD-II)' is finalized and is proposed to be signed in January 2020 at Geneva, Switzerland.

c) Undertaking collaborative research :As of now, 21 MoUs for undertaking collaborative research in AYUSH systems of medicine have been signed with various foreign universities/ institutes in countries such as Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, WHO, Geneva, United States, Argentina, Israel, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Austria and Tajikistan.

d) Setting up of AYUSH Chairs: Thirteen (13) MoUs have been signed for setting up of AYUSH Chairs with reputed foreign institutions/ universities in Hungary, Trinidad & Tobago, South Africa, Thailand, Russia Indonesia Slovenia, Armenia, Latvia, Argentina., Malaysia, Bangladesh and Mauritius.

e) **Establishment of AYUSH Information Cells:** Ministry of AYUSH has established 32 AYUSH Information Cells in 29 countries in foreign countries under the aegis of Indian Embassies/ Missions and Cultural Centers set up by ICCR or at a venue suggested by the Indian Mission to take up awareness building and disseminating authentic information about AYUSH systems of medicine.

(ii) Central Sector Scheme for promotion of International Cooperation

2.53 The Ministry developed a Central Sector Scheme for promotion of International Cooperation with the mandate to promote and strengthen awareness about AYUSH Systems of Medicine; to facilitate international promotion, development and recognition of AYUSH Systems in foreign countries; to establish AYUSH centres in foreign countries; to support international exchange of experts and information; to give boost to AYUSH products in International market and to establish AYUSH Academic Chairs in foreign countries etc.

2.54 Under this scheme Ministry of AYUSH, undertakes various measures to promote/popularize AYUSH systems of medicine across the globe. Some of the components of the scheme are as below:

- Ministry of AYUSH deputed experts and officers to foreign countries for participation in regional or international meetings, conferences, training programmes, seminars and also to meet specific requirement for deputing experts on special assignment of the Government of India for promotion & propagation of AYUSH Systems.
- Financial support is provided to AYUSH experts for presentation of AYUSH related scientific research papers in international conferences, workshops. Seminar etc.
- Incentive is provided to AYUSH drug manufacturers, entrepreneurs, AYUSH institutions etc. for participation in international exhibitions, trade fairs, road shows etc.
- Incentives are provided to AYUSH drug manufacturers for Market Authorization/ registration of AYUSH products with USFDA/ EMEA/ UKCA/ MHRA/ NHPD (Canada)/ IGA and other international regulatory agencies. etc. abroad. So far 33

products (Unani and Ayurveda) have been registered in 05 countries namely Kenya, USA, Russia, Latvia and Canada.

- Incentives are provided for participation/ organization of International exhibitions/ conferences/ Workshops/ Seminars/ road shows/ trade fairs. etc. in India and abroad by the Ministry of AYUSFI through Indian Mission/ CII/ FICCI/ ITPO/ ASSOCHAM/ Pharmexcil, etc.
- There is a provision of providing financial support for organization of International conferences/ workshops/ seminars, etc. in India on AYUSH Systems by State Governments/ Universities/ eminent institutions or organizations etc.
- There is a provision of financial support for strengthening of Health Centre(s)/ Institution(s) in the foreign host country.
- Ministry of AYUSH under its Fellowship Scheme extends financial support to the eligible foreign nationals for undertaking Undergraduate (UG), Post graduate (PG) and Ph.D. courses in premier Institutes in India. 104 scholarships are offered every year to the eligible foreign nationals from 98 countries. Students from countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Russia, Iran, Croatia, Malaysia, USA, Japan, etc. get admission in various institutes offering courses in AYUSH systems in India.

2.55 Other International Activities undertaken by Ministry of AYUSH are as follows:

- Deputation of AYUSH experts in Malaysia under ITEC scheme-
- Establishment of A Panchakarma Centre in Cuba
- Organization of Symposium/Conference on "Healthy Ageing through Ayurveda & Yoga" in Japan in 2019.
- Organization of a "Workshop on Traditional and Complementary Medicine" for the participants from Mekong-Ganga countries at All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi and National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA), Jaipur, Rajasthan from 22 October 2019 to 25 October, 2019
- Ministry of AYUSH has been providing technical support to Indian Missions abroad for celebration of 21 June as International day of Yoga across the globe.
- Ministry of AYUSH-I has proposed to establish a BIMSTEC Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine University (BATMU) in the near future to act as a model

institution in the region and help the Member States to develop their own Ayurveda and Traditional Medicine Colleges with affiliation to the above University for a sustainable capacity development in Traditional Medicine among the Member States.

- Setting up of center of excellence for Ayurveda& Yoga in UK:
- Ministry of AYUSH is interacting and collaborating with various International fora like BRICS. SAARC, SCO. BIMSTEC. WIPO, IBSA etc to promote AYUSH education, practices of AYUSH systems and trade of AYUSH products.

2.56 India exports AYUSH and herbal products worldwide to about 100 countries and majority of our exports are in the form of value-added extracts of medicinal plants (herbal products) and in the form of dietary supplements and nutraceuticals. However, Ayurvedic products are still not recognized in foreign countries. On being asked about the steps we are taking to tackle this issue, the Ministry of AYUSH stated that under Central Sector Scheme for promotion of International cooperation, incentives are provided to AYUSH drug manufacturers for Market Authorization/ registration of AYUSH products with USFDA/ EMEA/ UK-MHRA/ NHPD (Canada)/ TGA and other international regulatory agencies, etc. abroad. As per the updated information, so far more than 50 products (Unani and Ayurveda) have been registered in 08 countries namely Kenya, USA, Russia, Latvia, Canada, Oman, Tajikistan and Sri Lanka under the scheme of the Ministry.

2.57 To enhance the trade of AYUSH product, efforts are being made for mutual recognition of pharmacopoeias and formularies with other countries. Recognition of Pharmacopeia will facilitate trade of AYUSH products as medicines which are currently being exported as dietary supplements and nutraceuticals etc.

2.58 The system wise exports data of AYUSH products (Pharmexcil basket) during the last three years (as provided by Pharmexcil) is as below:

India's Export of AYUSH Products during last three years (sorted by values)							
		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
M Code	PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	USD Mn	INR Cr	USD Mn	INR Cr	USD Mn	INR Cr

3004901	Medicaments of Ayurvedic system	105.60	708,20	126.52	815.62	128.84	901.54
3003901	Medicaments of Ayurvedic system	15.68	105.11	14.24	91.79	14.26	99.55
3507907	Papain, pure (pharmaceutical grade)	0.64	4.29	1.07	6,87	1.50	10.47
3004901	Homeopathic Medicine	1,01	6.79	1.38	8.93	1.32	9.16
3004901	Medicaments of Unani system	0.29	1.94	0,35	2.26	0.55	3.88
3004901	Medicants of Siddha system	0.13	0.85	0.33	2.11	0.37	2.56
3003901	Homeopathic Medicine	0.28	1.89	0.38	2.47	0.30	2.04
3003901	Medicaments of Unani system	0.01	0.07	0.09	0.61	0.06	0.40
3003901	Medicants of Siddha system	0.02	0.16	0.02	0.12	0.02	0.13
	Grand Total	123.67	829.30	144.38	930.77	147.22	1029.73

AYUSH products are exported to 100 plus countries and these products are exported as AYUSH medicines to countries where it is recognised as system of medicine in the importing country to name a few, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia etc. Wherever it is not recognised, these AYUSH products are suitably modified and exported as per the requirements and classification of the importing country. While some countries have classified these products as Dietary supplements and some as Nutraceuticals and herbal products. Currently, these products are being exported based on the importing country classification and sometimes under the chapter 30, and 21 alternatively, and Dietary supplements, Nutraceuticals, health supplements are not defined or given separate HS codes/sub classification for providing the comparative data.

2.59 The total expenditure incurred for AYUSH promotional activities at international level during last three years and current year is as under:

(Amount in lakhs)

Financial Year	Allocation	Expenditure
2016-17	1400	1394

2017-18	1634	1617
2018-19	1581	1568
2019-20	1600	1447

2.60 On the Committee’s query, the Ministry of AYUSH furnished the List of countries where Ayurveda is recognized as a system. Ayurveda is recognized in Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, UAE, Colombia, Malaysia, Switzerland, South Africa, Cuba, Tanzania. Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Serbia and Slovenia are 5 countries of EU, where Ayurvedic treatment is regulated, however, profession is not regulated.

2.61 During the course of evidence on 20 December 2019, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs underscored the issue of pharmacopeia, the stated :

“I completely agree with your second suggestion, Madam. In fact, that is something which we have lost out on. At the moment, we are working very closely with AYUSH to push the AYUSH centres abroad. The main issue is pharmacopeia. Unfortunately, Indian traditional medicine, unlike Chinese medicine, does not have a recognized pharmacopeia which allows western medical regulatory authorities to judge them as medicines. Without that happening, they would not let import of ayurvedic formulations or drugs or whatever you wish to call it into their country. I think, AYUSH Ministry and Department of Biotechnology and others are working hard to get that pharmacopoeia. Once that pharmacopoeia is available, I am quite convinced that we would follow the same path as the Chinese in terms of acceptability because there is acceptability in the West for alternative medicines. The problem lies in the fact these formulations cannot be imported because they are going on the allopathic path and judge all formulations on that basis; and we do not have a scientific basis for this. This is something that is very much uppermost in our minds. We are working with the Ministry of AYUSH in this regard.”

2.62 On the Committee’s specific query about any plan or legislations pending with foreign countries for having a recognized pharmacopeia for traditional Indian medicines which allows western medical regulatory authorities to judge these as medicines, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that setting up of AYUSH centres overseas is within the mandate of the Ministry of AYUSH. MEA facilitates establishing these centres or negotiations on various legislations with regard to promotion of Indian traditional medicines overseas through its Missions and Posts. Ministry of AYUSH has informed that presently 32

AYUSH Information Cells are functional in 29 countries and the following are the new initiatives:

- MoU was signed between All Indian Institute of Ayurveda, M/o AYUSH and College of Medicine (UK) in April 2018 for establishing of a Center of Excellence in London for providing Ayurveda treatment and diet management through Ayurveda & Yoga etc.
- Ministry of AYUSH targets to open two more Centres of Excellence in Mauritius and Morocco in near future.
- Ministry of AYUSH is in negotiations with different countries for recognition of Ayurveda as a system of medicine and adopting Ayurvedic pharmacopeia of India.

2.63 The Committee note that the Ministry of AYUSH undertakes various activities and measures at international level with the mandate to promote/ popularize AYUSH systems (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homeopathy) of medicine across the globe. These include signing of country to country MoUs, collaboration with World Health Organization, undertaking collaborative research, setting up of AYUSH chairs, establishment of AYUSH information Cells, Central Sector Scheme for promotion of international cooperation and so on. The Committee are of the firm view that Ayurveda, considering the popularity it has already gained has the power to become a prominent tool of soft power across the world. Taking cues from Yoga, the Committee desire that the Government should give diplomatic push to Ayurveda in getting global recognition. The Ministry should facilitate to open more and more AYUSH centres overseas in a strategic and planned manner.

(Recommendation No. 20)

2.64 The Committee note that India exports AYUSH and herbal products worldwide to about 100 countries and majority of our exports are in the form of value-added extracts of medicinal plants (herbal products) and in the form of dietary supplements and nutraceuticals. However, Ayurvedic products are still not recognized in foreign countries. The Ministry has informed that Ayurveda is recognized in eleven countries, namely, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, UAE, Colombia, Malaysia, Switzerland, South Africa, Cuba, Tanzania. In five European Union countries-

Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Serbia and Slovenia Ayurvedic treatment is regulated. The Committee have been apprised by the Ministry of External Affairs that Ayurveda does not have a recognized pharmacopeia and therefore it is being exported as dietary supplements and nutraceuticals, etc. The Committee strongly recommend that the Government should make concerted efforts to get recognition of Ayurveda as a system of medicine and adopting pharmacopeia of India so that it can be exported as medicine. The Committee would like to be kept informed about the progress made in this regard.

(Recommendation No. 21)

VII. Role of Sports and Youth Exchange Programmes

2.65 With the changing understanding of the term “Culture” MEA and ICCR have broadened the horizon of projecting broader spectrum of Indian Culture for soft power. One such area is sports, and cricket in particular. These are coordinated with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports at various levels. Mutual visits by youth are another dimension of soft power that Government is focusing upon. India has an MoU to annually exchange 200 youth between India and China In 2019-20 MEA/ICCR facilitated inbound youth delegations from Vietnam, Tajikistan and Portugal and organized the Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas in Varanasi in January 2019.

2.66 An objective of the National Youth Policy, 2014 is to create an International perspective in the youth and to involve them in promoting peace and understanding. To achieve this objective, a program for the International Exchange of Youth Delegations has been conceived by the Department of Youth Affairs. Under this programme, exchange of Youth Delegations with friendly countries is taken up on reciprocal basis for promoting exchange of ideas, values and culture amongst the youth of different countries and also to provide exposure and promote international perspective. The Department has signed 19 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with different countries on Youth Exchange. Of these, regular exchange programmes are being organized with 13 countries namely China, Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Palestine, Portugal, Russia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tunisia and Vietnam. The list of MoUs signed and the status of their

implementation is at Annexure-II.

2.67 Apart from the above the following Youth Exchange programmes are also been organized by Department of Youth Affairs:-

(a) Exchange of 100-member Youth Delegations with China has been continuing since 2006 on the strength of Joint Statement during the visit of Chinese President in 2006 (with exception that during 2011, 500-member delegations were exchanged). In the Joint Statement issued on 19.09.2014 on the occasion of visit of Chinese President, it has been decided to exchange 200- member youth delegations from 2015 to 2019. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of bilateral Diplomatic relations with China, it has been decided in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs that during the year 2020, a 500-Youth delegation will be exchanged from each side.

(b) A 100-member youth delegation from Bangladesh has been visiting India since 2012. No youth delegation from Indian side is sent to Bangladesh. This is a joint programme of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of External Affairs;

(c) Youth Exchange Programme with Maldives are also continuing with Maldives since 2016 on the basis of MoU signed by Department of Sports;

(d) On the recommendation of MEA and in pursuance of the meeting held by a delegation with Hon'ble MoS(IC), YAS in 2017, a 22-member Youth delegation from Uzbekistan visited India from 12-20 December 2017. Reciprocal visit of the Indian Youth delegation is expected in 2019.

(e) Delegations are also sent to participate in "the Ship for World Youth Leaders Programme" organized by the Government of Japan as and when invitations are received.

2.68 Highlighting the importance of Sports, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under on 20 December 2019:

"One of the new areas of soft power projection is sports, cricket in particular. Here too, the MEA is playing its role abroad. During the Prime Minister's visit to Maldives, we agreed to the request to train their cricketers through the BCCI and to build a new cricket stadium in Male. We have also trained cricketers from

Afghanistan and built stadiums in Logar, Kandahar, and Balkh provinces which have earned immense goodwill for India among the local populations and we have completed two major sports complexes in different parts of Bhutan.”

2.69 The representative of the Ministry further added:

“Basically, world-over sports are done through the National Sports Federations and the International Sports Organizations. The Government only provides financial support and diplomatic support in terms of linkages with our diplomatic Missions outside India. Now, the focus is on organizing more and more events in India. The Ministry of External Affairs received some requests from Maldives, Bhutan and some other countries for arranging training of athletes in India. The Ministry of External Affairs is working on it, and whatever request comes, we are accommodating them in our training facilities. The expenditure on receiving them presently is very small. So, the Sports Authority of India, from its available budget, has been able to arrange for it. But if the activity is to increase, then we need to look for more resources.”

2.70 The Committee note that Sports and Youth Exchange is another dimension of soft power that requires focused attention. As informed, National Sports Federations and the International Sports Organizations organize sport events and the Government only provides financial support and diplomatic support in terms of linkages with our diplomatic Missions outside India. Further, the Ministry of External Affairs through Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has trained athletes from Afghanistan, Maldives and Bhutan. As regards, projection of soft power through the Youth Exchanges, the Committee have been informed that in accordance with the National Youth Policy, 2014 the Department of Youth Affairs exchange of Youth Delegations with friendly countries is taken up on reciprocal basis for promoting exchange of ideas, values and culture amongst the youth of different countries.

The Committee are happy to note that India is expanding its utilization of soft power assets by according focus on sports and youth affairs. As a country with enormous youth population, these two arenas look promising. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Government should appoint Youth Ambassadors to communicate and market Brand India across the globe. The Ministry of External Affairs is also exhorted to explore various options to train athletes and sportspersons from our neighbouring countries as a component of our Neighbourhood First Policy.

VIII. Role of Media and Cinema

2.71 Indian films, with a diversity of landscape and locations have a special appeal to the audience across the globe. It projects India as an appealing destination for production of both international and domestic films. With a diverse range of production and post production facilities, the country offers multiple well-equipped film production hubs. India also has a talent pool of actors, producers, directors, writers and experienced crew including competent line producers across the many regional film industries. Low production and post-production cost and favourable Dollar-Rupee exchange rate add to the attraction.

2.72 The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has taken the following to promote India's soft power and cultural Diplomacy:

1. Prasar Bharati has re-oriented its "DD India" channel as the English News Channel for the global outreach. Prasar Bharati is also proposing tie-ups with the international news agencies for gathering the international news for DD India. The efforts are on to enhance the footprint of this channel across the globe so that this channel is available to the intended viewers. This channel has been made available in South Korea on OTT platform, and in Bangladesh on DTH as per the bi-lateral arrangements. Prasar Bharati has made this channel available on "YouTube", and on "NewsOnAir" mobile application on "Android" and "iOS" mobile platform at present. Prasar Bharati special correspondents in various countries cover project India's soft power through their stories and ground coverage. Prasar Bharati is in the process of developing a global roadmap to increase the footprint of its International Services.

Prasar Bharati has signed Memorandum of Understanding with Foreign Broadcasters that aim at enhancing the cooperation/collaboration in the broadcasting and related fields between the two entities. These are primarily targeted at the exchange of content/ programmes of mutual interest depicting culture, history, architecture, tourism, education, science & technology, etc. of both countries. At present, there are as many as 31 MoUs of co-operation and collaboration between Prasar Bharati and Foreign Broadcasters of other countries/agencies.

2. External Services Division of All India Radio ranks high among the external radio networks of the world both in reach and range covering about 100 countries in 27 languages. External Services Division follows a composite pattern that generally comprise of News Bulletins, Commentaries, Currents Events and Review of the Indian Press. Besides Newsreel, Magazine Programmes on sports and literature, talks and discussions on social economic, political historical, scientific and cultural subjects, features on developmental activities, important events and institutions, classical, folk and modern music of India's diverse regions, form a major part of total programme output.

3. The Film Facilitation Office (FFO) acts as a single-window facilitation (<https://ffo.gov.in/en>) point for the foreign film producers as well as domestic film producers in assisting them to get requisite permissions to shoot in India; disseminates information on shooting locations and facilities available for production and post-production. In 2019-20, 30 foreign film shooting permissions have been facilitated. An ecosystem of Nodal Officers has been created across various State Governments in India and within key stakeholder central government ministries / departments to enable faster processing of permissions.

4. The Inter-Governmental audio-visual Co-production Agreements are usually umbrella agreements, under which private, quasi-government or governmental agencies of the two countries enter into contracts to produce films together. Such films are treated as national films in both countries. Co-production provides an opportunity to create and showcase soft power, generate employment, and, add to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of both the countries. The Government of India has entered into Audio Visuals Co-production Treaties with 16 countries. During 2019-20, four Audio Video projects have been granted official co-production status.

5. A Global Media & Entertainment Summit is contemplated in 2021 so that the international and Indian leaders from the Film Industry, who shape the agendas critical to the growth and development of the Film Industry, can participate and collaborate, which will further consolidate India's soft power This summit will

feature a line-up of internationally focused discussions centred around the soft power of India cinema, contemporary issues that face the industry in terms of piracy, technological advancements and the continuing changes in audience profiles and consumption of cinema, backed by high-profile speakers drawn from both the business and creative side of the industry.

6. India participates in prominent international film festivals, inter-alia Cannes, Toronto and Berlin to promote Indian films across linguistic cultural and regional diversity so as to forge international partnerships in the realms of distribution, production, filming in India, script development and technology, in order to accelerate the growth of film sector in India. An India Pavilion is also set-up at the Festivals to act as a platform to popularize Indian Cinema in overseas market and facilitate new business opportunities. To take advantage of availability of technicians and skilled professionals, international film makers are invited in India for post-production activities and encouraged to promote collaborations for films with Indian production houses.

2.73 The Publication and Print Media has taken the following initiatives:-

(a) Mahatma Gandhi is globally recognised as an icon. Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary is being celebrated across the world through commemorative stamps, medallions, digital translation of his works and a musical tribute. Various events held across the globe were covered in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) through DD News. Publications Division's pavilions in recent international book fairs have been themed on Gandhi@150:

- **Frankfurt International Book Fair 2019:** Publications Division exhibited books on Gandhi Ji along with other important titles. A/V display was also arranged. On the side-lines of India Pavilion, the young students performed DandiYatra to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Gandhi Ji.
- **London Book Fair 2019:** Pavilion was focused on Gandhi@150 and Virtual Exhibition was arranged on LCD. Seminar on Making if the Collective Works of Mahatma Gandhi print & electronic version, was organised.

- **Book Expo and New York Rights Fair 2019**, held from 29-31 May 2019 at New York.

(b) Facilitation of foreign journalists is an important component of influencing the international reportage about India. The Press Information Bureau under the Ministry coordinates with Ministry of External affairs and other Ministries under the Government of India and the State Governments to enable coverage of various cultural and other events by foreign journalists.

2.74 The Committee note that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting through Prasar Bharati, External Services Division of All India Radio, Film Facilitation Office, etc have been playing a prominent role in the projection of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy. Positive narrative and agenda setting is one of the key goals of soft power diplomacy. Media can play a critical role in countering negative perceptions about India. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should spell out a Public Relations strategy to tell the Indian story in an effective and powerful manner.

(Recommendation No. 23)

2.75 The Committee note that Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster, in the process of developing a global outreach to increase the footprint of its International Services has re-oriented 'DD India' channel as the English news channel and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with foreign broadcasters of other countries. The Committee feel that there is an urgent need of reorienting DD India further so as to make it globally relevant and influential. The Government is urged to come up with a plan for revamping the focus, structure and functioning of DD India to further enhance its global outreach and inform the Committee about the follow up action.

(Recommendation No. 24)

2.76 While Indian television news may not yet have made any impact globally, the Hindi film industry, popularly known as Bollywood, has emerged as one of the most notable examples of global entertainment emanating from outside the Western world. The Committee are of the strong view that added emphasis needs to be given to the global imprint of our Cinema as an instrument of soft power while taking effective steps to celebrate and popularize our movies abroad, including regional cinema. The Film Facilitation Office may also promote our historical sites, scenic locations for purpose of shooting and also set up a portal about such locations national as well as international films. They may also give wide publicity to the single window facilitation for the foreign producers through our Missions/Posts abroad.

(Recommendation No. 25)

IX. Education and Knowledge Sharing

2.77 In the context of increased globalization, Knowledge sharing and education has emerged as a major instrument of soft power projection. The Ministry of Education is actively engaged in strengthening relations with other countries through educational cooperation and collaboration in the following ways:

- 1. Bilateral Agreements:** India has signed Educational Exchange Prog/ Memorandum Of Cooperation / Joint Declaration of Intent /Letter of Interest with countries for cooperation in the field of education. Currently there are agreements with 55 countries (Annexure II).
- 2. Joint Programmes Signed Under Bilateral Agreements:** These are specific programmes signed under the various bilateral agreements. Some examples include:
 - **India –Japan** -The FRIENDSHIP (Future Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad to Enhance Network Development with Scholarship) promotes mobility of students and faculty between IITH and well reputed Japanese Universities. “The Project was initiated from January 2011 for a period of 8 years till 31st March 2020. Under this program, IITH has signed MoU with more than 20 Japanese universities and identified several thrust areas for mutual collaboration. IITH has three very large projects with the leading Japanese universities and industry

in ICT for disaster management, multimodal transportation and data science for agriculture.

- **India-US** – This includes Indo-US 21st Century Knowledge Initiative that started in 2009, for joint research in Energy, Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Environment, Education and Community Development; an annual India-US Higher Education Dialogue, the Raman Fellowships for Post-Doctoral Research in USA awarded by the University Grants Commission
- **India-Norway(INCP)**- Indo-Norwegian Cooperation Programme in Higher Education and Research (INCP)
- **India-Germany (IGP)**- The “Indo-German Partnerships in Higher Education” (IGP), a joint programme by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation in the field of higher education between India and Germany.
- **India-Israel Joint Research Programme**- ISF-UGC Joint Scientific Research Program aims to encourage research cooperation between Israeli and Indian scientists.
- **India-UK(UKIERI)**- UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) started in April 2006 with the aim of enhancing educational linkages between India and the UK.

2.78 The Schemes / Programmes run by the Education Ministry are as follows:

- **Study in India** – Merit based admission of students from 42 African and Asian countries to top select Indian higher education institutions. Running since 2018. Nearly 4000 students have got admission to Indian institutions so far.
- **Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)** – Programme for joint research between students from higher education institutions in India and 28 countries with strong research culture (Annexure III).
- **Duo-India Fellowship Programme** – Balanced Mobility between India and 14 European countries to pursue joint research.
- **Global Initiative for Academic Network (GIAN)** – Foreign faculty from top institutions come to teach at Indian universities.

- **ASEAN PhD Fellowships in IITs**: Under this programme, 1000 fellowships are awarded for ASEAN citizens to pursue the PhD programme at an IIT of their choice. The programme is exclusively for aspirants from ASEAN countries and in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the warm and friendly ties between India and ASEAN.

2.79 The higher education institutions in India sign agreements with higher education institutions of other countries for academic and research collaborations in various fields.

Sl No	Name of Institution	Total
1	IITs	1373
2	CUs	462
3	NITs	119
4	IISC Bangalore	96
5	IISERs	90
7	IEST	9
	Grand Total	2149

2.80 Other Joint Initiatives include the following:

- **India-Hungary Scholarship Programme** run by UGC under which scholarship is given to Hungarian students to study in India
- **Newton-Bhabha Programme** between India and UK, for Joint research activity. Sciences part of the programme is run by DST, Humanities is to be taken up by Ministry of Education.
- **C V Raman Fellowship** – India-US Post Doctoral Fellowship was being run by UGC but is over now
- **Establishment of Guru Nanak Dev Ji Chairs** in UK and Canada
- **Mahamana Madan Mohan Malaviya's Commonwealth Cross Border Teachers Chair** at Banaras Hindu University
- **Support to e-Vidyabharti project** (earlier known as Pan African e-network Project) which provides access for African students to over 500 courses in various disciplines including engineering and technology, education, mathematics and sciences, education, humanities and arts and teacher training.

- **The India-Africa Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (IAIEPA)** is a pan-African institute being established within the framework of the Plan of Action formulated to implement the outcomes of the First India-Africa Forum Summit. The Institute is being set up in Bujumbura, the capital city of the Republic of Burundi by National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA).

2.81 Cooperation Through Multilateral Platforms include:

- **BRICS – BRICS Network University** –A network of 60 universities, 12 from each BRICS member state for academic collaboration
- **G-20 – Participation in the Education Stream engagements**
- **ASEAN**
- **Russia India Network Universities**
- **Agreement on Cooperation in Education** between the Governments of the Member States of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization**.

2.82 The Scholarships offered by other countries / multilateral organizations for studying abroad are:

- **Commonwealth Scholarships** by United Kingdom and New Zealand and some other commonwealth countries .
- Scholarships offered by China, South Korea, Israel, Japan, Italy, Mexico, and Sri Lanka –MOE selects.
- **USIEF – Fullbright-Nehru Fellowship** – Indian students go to study in US and US students come to India under this cofounded, match funding programme run by MEA, where MOE is involved in selection process.

2.83 Externally Aided Projects/International Collaboration includes:-

- Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP)
- Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok
- Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute (SICI)-This is a binational organization that promotes understanding between India and Canada through academic activities and exchanges

- United States – India Educational Foundation (USIEF)- The United States – India Educational Foundation (USIEF) promotes mutual understanding between the nationals of India and the U.S. through the educational exchange of outstanding scholars, professionals and students.
- Commonwealth of Learning (CoL)

Furthermore, there has been internationalization of education under National Education Plan and the details are provided in Annexure IV.

2.84 With regard to education, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs made the following testimony on 26 August 2020:

“I will just mention three points about education as it has already been covered. One is common admission portal. We are working out with ICCR that all admission to foreign students in India could be through a portal. Either ICCR portal can be expanded or that of the Ministry of Education. Both can also be merged and there will be one common portal.

Secondly, the very important thing we are lacking in education and we have planned to have in this year (2020-21), that in top 20 universities attracting foreign students will have a foreign students office. Otherwise, people complain to us that they have to go to police station for registering; then they have to look for accommodation, they have to go for visa renewal etc. So, one foreign student office will take care of all these things for foreign students.

Thirdly the most important things which we are now doing with ICCR is to have alumni connect because many of the ambassadors, Prime Ministers of the neighbouring countries have studied in BHU. If we connect with them well, it could be an important input for our strategic relations with those countries. For example, In Bhutan, everybody has studied in India. On the military side, they do have a connect through NDA and IMA. They have a connect with the military leadership in countries who come for training.”

2.85 Providing update about the common admission portal, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that it worked closely with Ministry of Education to establish a common admission portal for foreign students called the EducationINdia Portal. Update on EducationINdia Portal is as follows:-

Genesis and objective: There was a need for a common portal through which information of all foreign students can be accessed at one place. The EducationINdia

portal will showcase the strength of Indian education system to attract foreign students. By this portal, all Indian institutions that are admitting foreign students will get a great common platform to showcase their strengths. It will also provide, in one place, a reliable number of foreign students along with their nationalities.

Collaborations: Various meeting have been done in both online and offline mode with various bodies/ ministries of GoI *i.e.* AICTE, AISHE, ICCR, SII, UGC, NAAC, NBA etc. All agreed to support and share the required information with this EducationINdia portal.

Process: Process for educationindia.gov.in portal is as follows:

- Data of Indian institutions admitting foreign students is already available on various platforms and submitted by the institutes. This portal will collect such data, through API or any other way, from various Bodies/ Ministries *i.e.* AICTE, AISHE, ICCR, SII, UGC, NAAC, NBA etc. and register all these institutions on this portal. Data from AICTE, AISHE, ICCR, SII is already being collected and registration is being done in the portal from backend.
- After registration of Indian institutions their login credentials will be shared with them to update their data or provide more information.
- It will be mandatory for Indian institutions to fill details of all foreign students admitted by them on this portal in their login and verify/ update these details as and when required.
- It will be mandatory for foreign student to register on this portal for issuance of visa.
- After registering on this portal foreign student will be allotted a Unique EducationINdia portal ID (EI-ID).
- This EI-ID will be asked by MEA/ FRRO/ Visa authorities while applying for Visa or and immigration related functions. This EI-ID will be verified through separate login before issuance of Visa.
- Login credentials to verify/ get details of EI-ID will be given to various Bodies/ Ministries for authentication purpose.

- Various schemes like ICCR, SII etc. will be integrated with this portal and necessary data will be exchanged through API.
- This portal will not interfere in admission process of foreign students the admission will be carried out by concerned institution/ organisation as per their prevailing norms.

2.86 The perception of India across the world as a country of knowledge and wisdom has ancient roots. The Committee discern that the Ministry of Education is actively engaged in strengthening relations with other countries through educational cooperation and collaboration through bilateral agreements, joint programmes, scholarship programmes and so on. The Committee are pleased to learn that MEA is working closely with the Ministry of Education to establish a common admission portal for foreign students called the Education India. While Indian Diaspora and students have been recognized in fields of arts, sciences, engineering, technology and humanities, Indian educational institutions do not fare well in world rankings. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government to make concerted efforts to improve the standard of our Universities, Institutes and learning centres at par with international norms so that India can emerge as a sought after destination for education.

(Recommendation No. 26)

CHAPTER 3

INDIAN COUNCIL OF CULTURAL RELATIONS

Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) is the pre-eminent organization of the Government to project India's soft power abroad. Recognizing the importance of culture as an instrument of promotion of India's national interests, the Government of India established soon after Independence, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in 1950, with the first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as the Founder President. It is now an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs, with a mandate to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations, to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries and to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and peoples.

I. Structure, Mandate and Resources

3.2 On being asked about objectives behind bringing ICCR under the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry stated that as ICCR's primary role is in the field of India's "external cultural relations" and "fostering and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding with other countries", the transfer of administrative control of the Council to MEA has facilitated effective integration of ICCR's work in the overall foreign policy priorities.

3.3 When asked about the manner in which ICCR has aligned our soft power strategy with Indian foreign policy, the Ministry of External Affairs responded that in line with the demands of the continuously evolving and dynamic international situation and foreign policy priorities of the Government of India, ICCR and other agencies involved in the promotion of India's soft power have been trying to update and innovate their programmes and methods, including adoption of new technological tools and new and emerging promotional platforms. While ICCR is an important instrument of the Government of India to project India's soft power and cultural diplomacy abroad, several GoI Ministries/agencies

are engaged in areas, which are important elements in propagation of soft power and culture abroad.

3.4 During the briefing meeting on 21.12.2019, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs outlined the broad mandate and activities of ICCR as under:-

“The ICCR, as Mr. Chairman, you mentioned, is mandated to foster, strengthen and promote cultural relations between India and other countries and to this end, it is an implementing agency for cultural agreements or cultural exchange programmes that we have signed with 120 countries. It supplements efforts by the Ministry of Culture to promote festivals of India abroad. It offers capacity building in terms of roughly 3,500 scholarships annually in the arts, culture, philosophy, holistic medicine and other areas for foreign students who desire to study in India. It promotes cultural and intellectual exchanges between India and other countries in different ways, including the promotion of performing arts, visual arts, crafts, knowledge, education, literature, language and yoga, etc., in their classical folk and contemporary forms. The ICCR implements these programmes through its regional centres abroad and 19 regional offices within India as well as in closest cooperation with Indian Missions and Posts.”

3.5 While tendering evidence before the Committee on 20.12.2019, the Foreign Secretary had submitted that re-structuring of ICCR (including re-drafting of the Constitution and Mission Statement) is under process. Updating the Committee about the same, the Ministry stated that a Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Prof. Sunaina Singh, Vice President, ICCR for revision of ICCR’s current constitution. First meeting of the committee was held on 5 July 2018. Suggested points for addition in the existing constitution based on the discussions with the Chair of Committee on Revision of Constitution were sent to Prof. Sunaina Singh in July 2019. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, it could not be processed further for some time. This process has again been started and General Assembly of ICCR has authorized formation of a committee to take this process forward.

3.6 The details of budgetary allocations sought and actual allocations made to ICCR during last three financial years are as follows:

(Figure in crores)

S.No.	Financial Year	BE	RE Projected by ICCR	RE Allotted
1.	2018-19	255.00	286.18	235.00
2.	2019-20	250.00	310.82	250.00
3.	2020-21	290.00	278.27	255.00
4.	2021-22	300.00	239.74	239.74

3.7 On the Committee's specific query whether the allocated amount is sufficient to meet the expanding activities of ICCR, the Ministry replied that for the financial year 2021-22, BE of 300 crores has been allocated to ICCR by MEA. Given the prevailing global situation in light of COVID-19 pandemic and occurrence of its second wave during April/May 2021, the allocation is justified. Otherwise it is insufficient to run the activities of ICCR.

3.8 Regarding the problem of the budgetary constraints, the Ministry stated that budgetary constraints are a key limiting factor. The gap between requirement and budget finally received is huge. ICCR would require budget to the tune of Rs. 500 Crores to accommodate even the current level of demands of our Embassies and Cultural Centres abroad. The Revised Estimate for 2019-20 is just Rs. 250 crore against the requested budget of Rs. 310 crore (which would also have barely covered the activities already committed by the Council). While the cultural outreach of ICCR has increased, the budgetary allocations have not grown proportionately due to serious shortfall in Ministry's own overall budget.

3.9 During the course of oral evidence on 20.12.2019, the Foreign Secretary underscored the budgetary constraints being faced by ICCR when he made the following submission:

“Budget constraints are obviously one limiting factor. While the cultural outreach of ICCR has increased manifold, the budgetary allocation remains more or less stagnant because, as I explained even during the Budget discussions before the hon. Committee Members, that Budget increase over the past five years of External Affairs Ministry has not been commensurate with the activities that MEA has been called upon to do, whether it is in the field of culture, in the field of development or in the field of security. The fact remains that it is compared with current outlay of about Rs.250 crore, ICCR requires about Rs.310 crore annually, if it is to finance all external and internal cultural centres properly and expand the scope of its activities.”

3.10 Reiterating this constraining factor again on 26 August 2020, the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs further stated:

“The main limiting factor in our soft power efforts remains the issues of budgetary constraints and manpower deficiency. While the cultural outreach of ICCR has increased manifold, the budgetary allocations remain more or less stagnant because the Ministry’s own overall budget has not increased over the last five years.

ICCR or MEA has one of the smallest soft power budgets in the world not commensurate with the large number of activities that is expected from it. MEA has been exploring other innovative financing models including PPP models but, in the end, adequate budgetary allocations for soft power projection can only come from the Government.”

3.11 When asked about availability of extra budgetary resources are available with ICCR, the Ministry stated that ICCR is fully funded by MEA through Grants-in Aid. Except receipt from ICCs abroad on account of fee from local students, which is insignificant amount, ICCR has no further source of funding to run its activities.

3.12 The Committee further enquired about the efforts that are being made by ICCR to generate additional resources. In a written reply, the Ministry submitted that ICCR has smaller soft power budget and is not commensurate with the large number of activities expected from it. ICCR has been exploring other innovative financing models including PPP models, but ultimately the adequate budgetary allocations for soft power projection will have to come from the Government.

3.13 While tendering oral evidence before the Committee on 7 January 2020, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs also alluded to extra budgetary way of tackling the budget constraint by stating:

“ICCR, however, has adopted some innovative modalities for projection of Indian culture overseas such as establishment of a cultural centre in Valladolid in Spain where it works with the local university, the City Centre as well as the local organisation such as Casa De La India to use as a platform for cultural activities. Similarly, in Busan it has entered into a public private partnership which has resulted in cost sharing arrangement.

Similarly, with some State Governments, ICCR has cost sharing arrangements to host incoming foreign cultural troops. Our Missions abroad also have been working and availing of partnerships with local organisations for

organising Indian cultural programmes, seminars and conferences. So, these efforts have been made to see how we can have more partners as we work in projecting India's soft power.”

3.14 Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), an autonomous body under the Ministry of External Affairs, is the nodal organization entrusted with the task of projection of India's soft power abroad. The Committee are aware that the primary mandate of ICCR is maintenance of external cultural relations and fostering as well as strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding with other countries. The Committee have been informed by the Ministry of External Affairs that under the Chairmanship of Vice President of ICCR, a Committee was formed to restructure the constitution as well as mandate of ICCR. However, the Covid-19 pandemic had halted the process. In the considered opinion of the Committee, there is an urgent need for a complete overhaul of the structure, mandate and functioning of the ICCR so that it is able to project Indian culture in a comprehensive, cohesive, transparent and inclusive manner. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should ensure that the process of restructuring of ICCR is finalized and the blueprint of the same may be submitted to them within three months.

(Recommendation No 27)

3.15 Over the years, the Committee have been flagging the issue of inadequate budgetary and manpower resources within ICCR as key factors impeding the effective realization of India's soft power diplomacy. The Committee observe that MEA has one of the smallest soft power budgets in the world, which is incommensurate with the expanding mandate and activities of ICCR. MEA on several occasions have admitted to the Committee about the adverse impact of budgetary allocation on its overall functioning. While analyzing the budgetary allocation made to ICCR during the past five years, the Committee discerned that while on one hand the ICCR has been pointing out to the shortage of funds, the projected budgetary allocation by MEA is itself small. The Committee therefore recommend that ICCR should make an objective assessment of its financial requirements and accordingly seek higher budget in the next financial year. The Committee also desire that ICCR compile data of financial

resources and outreach activities of soft power organizations of other countries to make a compelling case for increased budgetary allocation. The Committee would strongly recommend that the Government should provision enhanced budgetary allocation of Rs. 500 crore to ICCR for conducting India's soft power and cultural diplomacy in a robust and extensive manner.

(Recommendation No. 28)

3.16 In order to overcome the limited budgetary resources available with the ICCR for carrying out its expanding activities, the Committee have been suggesting the Ministry to explore avenues for extra-budgetary resources. It is satisfying to know that MEA has adopted innovative modalities for projection of Indian culture abroad through cost sharing arrangements with host organizations abroad and with State Governments for hosting incoming cultural troops. The Committee exhort the ICCR to continue exploring other innovative financing models, particularly, Public Private Partnership to supplement the grants in aid received from MEA.

(Recommendation No. 29)

3.17 The Committee recommend that in view of factors like changing global scenario, need for competing with countries that are opening Centres for country studies and limitations on front of resources, ICCR should undertake some zoning of its cultural Centres and evolve a mechanism to share human resources to the fullest. They also recommend that ICCR should try and provide more capable and experienced persons to provide leadership to the ICCs over the world.

(Recommendation No. 30)

3.18 In view of the fact that ICCR has a considerably high number of employees employed on either ad hoc or temporary basis, the Committee recommend that ICCR should evolve a fresh Human Resource Policy to have better result orientation. ICCR should also think of sizing its Regional Offices at various places in the country and utilize the saved resources on a more productive cause.

(Recommendation No. 31)

3.19 Considering the need to have right kind of institutional leadership for ICCR, the Committee recommend that the Ministry should appoint persons with keen interest in soft power projection. Persons passionate about the cause of cultural relationship promotion only can provide right kind of relationship.

(Recommendation No. 32)

3.20 ICCR was established when the term Soft power was yet to evolve. In view of the emerging issues in the domain of international cultural relationship and the fact that culture is the most effective distinguishing feature of India as a nation, ICCR should adopt a suitable Motto and also have a well defined vision and mission statement.

(Recommendation No. 33)

II. ICCR Activities

3.21 Currently, ICCR employs a variety of instruments of Cultural Diplomacy or Soft-Power Diplomacy at the global level under the overall guidance of the Ministry of External Affairs. The programmes/ activities of ICCR can broadly be divided into two main categories - Academic and Cultural. Brief introduction to important programmes is given in succeeding paragraphs.

1. Scholarship Programme

3.22 The scholarship programme of the Council is an important component of ICCR's activities. The Council offers scholarship to nationals of different countries mainly from neighbouring, African and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. ICCR administers a total of 26 scholarship schemes for foreign students to study in India. Of these 26 scholarship schemes, it is executing 16 schemes for various Divisions of MEA and 03 schemes for Ministry of AYUSH. Under these schemes, ICCR offers approximately 3500 scholarship slots annually to foreign students to study in India at UG, PG or Ph.D. level in almost all mainstream disciplines, except medicine. At present, there are around 7000 current students from 180 countries studying on ICCR scholarships in different Central/State Universities across India.

3.23 To ensure effective implementation of the scholarship scheme and welfare of foreign students, ICCR uses various tools like Annual Vice Chancellors and stake holders' conference and winter and summer camps for students responsibility. Scholarship programme has been one of the important programmes and has paid positive results in case of some countries, such as Afghanistan.

3.24 The details of scholarship country wise are provided at Annexure -VI.

3.25 Providing an overview of the scholarship programme, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs testified before the Committee on 20 December, 2019 as under:

“The ICCR’s scholarships are a key element of our soft power diplomacy and we offer scholarships at all levels, under-graduate, post-graduate and Ph.D., in all mainstream disciplines, except, obviously, medicine, and about 30,000 foreigners have availed this opportunity in the past 15 years. They are exposed to different regions and culture. In 2018-19, the ICCR has launched the admission to alumnae scholarship digital portal. This digitizes the admission process online for the roughly 3,900 scholarship slots in this academic year. It has also intended to keep track of the ICCR’s alumnae once they return to their homelands.

At present, we have around 7,000 students from 180 countries studying under ICCR scholarship schemes. Sir, it is a matter of pride that several ICCR alumni are highly placed in various vocations in their respective countries. To recognize such people, the ICCR instituted the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2015 and since then has awarded 18 distinguished ICCR alumni for their achievements and contributions in their own countries.”

3.26 In the past, there have been several complaints about corrupt practices in the award of scholarships to foreign students. On being asked about the nature of complaints received by ICCR regarding scholarships, the Ministry submitted that the complaints in general include non-award of scholarship, scholarship given for subject different than applied for, non-disbursement of scholarships on time, difficulties in obtaining reimbursement of medical expenditure on time, etc.

3.27 The following measures have adopted to minimize the complaints or grievances of students:

- i) **Direct interface of ICCR's A2A portal with Universities:** The Admission to Alumni (A2A) Portal is currently linked to foreign applicants, Mission/Post and ICCR. Going by the lessons of the past, ICCR has linked Universities on the A2A Portal by integrating information of each University/Institute so that the foreign students can apply directly for admission to the University. A dialogue box for communication between all the stakeholders has also been incorporated. This feature will be user friendly, easy and transparent access so that all communications are through the portal in digital mode instead of manual handling. While option to choose the University and the course remains with the students, the current limit of restricting the number of universities has been increased to five universities from the present three choices.
- ii) **Introduction of Health Insurance Policy:** ICCR provides medical reimbursement as per the CGHS norms though students are not provided CGHS cards. This requires a great deal of handholding from the stage a student is admitted in a hospital for treatment at CGHS rates till process of medical claims. Even after all these efforts, the amount of money spent by the student is not fully reimbursed. Moreover, ICCR has to do a lot of unnecessary processing resulting in a long delay in handling individual cases. It has, therefore, been decided that from 2020-21 students would have to mandatorily obtain health insurance on their own before their arrival out of their stipends. To facilitate with the best rates of insurance premium, ICCR has finalized a panel of health insurance companies from which students may decide to choose. However, this list will only be suggestive ones. Students will be at liberty to choose any other insurance provider of his / her choice.
- iii) **Introduction of PFMS for direct transfer of scholarship dues to students accounts:** As part of Direct Benefit Transfer, all the student dues would be transferred from ICCR to the individual students' bank accounts under PFMS. Since February 2021, all the payable dues of students are released through PFMS.
- iv) **Field visits by Teams from ICCR Headquarters to Regional Offices:** As part of welfare measures, ICCR has deputed internal teams from ICCR headquarters to all the Regional Offices to know about the well being of international students after the COVID-19. The teams were also mandated to carry out physical verification of

students; check bank accounts and ensure that funds are transferred to genuine students. The suggestions given by the Teams have been have been incorporated in the new guidelines.

2. Conferences and Seminars

3.28 ICCR regularly organises or supports various conferences and seminars as an important platform for exchange of ideas and views between the scholars and thinkers of India and other countries. ICCR has its flagship annual conferences on Indology, Yoga and Delivering Democracy. ICCR also provides travel grants to academicians to attend other relevant conferences and seminars abroad.

3. Visitors' Programme

3.29 ICCR implements two important programmes for Distinguished Visitors'' Programme (DVP) and Academic Visitors Programme (AVP). Under DVP we invite senior government functionaries from other countries such as former PMs, former Presidents, Members of Parliament, etc. while under AVP we invite mostly Vice Chancellors of foreign universities. These visitors are invited to experience India on a full hospitality, including airfare, boarding & lodging, local transport, etc. Drawing from the vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, ICCR invited 186 delegates from 184 countries for darshan of Kumbh Mela 2019 to mark global participation.

3.30 ICCR has also started a new Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme under which young rising stars of the country's political parties (Ruling Party, Principal Opposition Party and from other parties, regional leaders, Mayors etc.) including rising figures / influencers in business / start-ups, media, etc are invited to India.

5. Chairs programme

3.31 Under the Chairs programme, ICCR established chairs in universities of various countries. Chairs were also established under CEP and EEP and administered by ICCR. Numbers and subjects varied from time to time depending on the priority and focus of the

time. At present there are 66 Chairs in various foreign countries, mostly for teaching Hindi language and Indian studies.

6. ICCR Awards

3.32 ICCR has constituted three new awards in 2015

- (i) Distinguished Indologist Award,
- (ii) World Sanskrit Award and
- (iii) ICCR's Distinguished Alumni Award.

7. Outgoing Cultural Delegations (OCD)

3.33 ICCR sends around 150 performing artists and groups regularly overseas to participate in various cultural events. The artists are selected from our panel of 4000 artists. We also work closely with the Ministry of Culture to jointly execute large-scale cultural festivals overseas.

3.34 When asked about the existing policy for empanelment of artistes that has been adopted by the ICCR, the Ministry stated that as part of its mandate ICCR sponsors cultural troupes abroad in various disciplines. For this purpose, the Council forms a panel of artistes in various art forms such as

- (1) Theatre & Puppetry
- (2) Carnatic (Vocal & Instrumental)
- (3) Hindustani (Vocal & Instrumental)
- (4) Dance-I (Chhau, Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri and Sattriya);
- (5) Dance-II (Bharatnatyam, Kathakali, Kuchipudi&Mohiniattam);
- (6) Folk and other traditional of dance, & music;
- (7) Modern Experimental work of Dance & Music including Light and Popular Music.

Any artiste who wishes to be empanelled need to fill an application form available at Council's offices in India and at ICCR's website: <http://iccr.gov.in/> and submit with VCD/DVD of the artiste's latest performance, recent press reviews of performances action photographs, recommendation letter from Guru's / head of Institutions, experience of stage performance, proof of residence, individual bio-data along with passport size photograph, AIR grading and Awards, if any.

3.35 The empanelment is an ongoing process and there is no fixed date for submission of applications forms. These applications are considered by the genre wise Expert Sub-Committee constituted by ICCR. Members of the Expert Sub-Committee have to be experts in their respective field. The recommendations of the Sub-Committee are considered by the Empanelment Advisory Committee (EAC) which after due deliberations recommends the final list of empanelled Artistes to President, ICCR for his approval. The artistes are placed in different categories on the basis of recommendations of Expert-Sub Committees for each genre. The recommendations of the experts in the Sub-Committee are based on the assessment by viewing the DVD/Youtube links, bio-data, Guru's certificates, press clippings, performance photographs, attached certificates and AIR/TV grading, awards of the artistes and other material with the form received from the artistes. AIR /TV grading.

3.36 Further, Padma Awardees and S.N.A. Awardees are automatically slotted in Outstanding Category, when he/she applies for empanelment for Music categories only. In other cases, the Committees recommend artist/group for empanelment in different categories such as Proficient/Established and Outstanding keeping in view the artists expertise in the field, The upgradations of Established Category of artist/group is recommended on the basis of the artist's/group's level of experience.

3.37 Year wise and state wise number of Cultural Groups sponsored by ICCR for the years 2020-21 is appended at Annexure-VII.

3.38 Over the issue of empanelment of artists, the representative of MEA during the Sitting of the Committee on 31 January 2022 submitted as under:

“There was a question about empanelment of artists. Of course, ICCR has its own panel. There is a very elaborate procedure for any artist to get empanelled starting with small Expert Sub Committees where we have experts in different genres and different art forms. They interview those persons. Thereafter, they recommend those artists for our Empanelment Committee and then they get empanelled. What we found out is that even though initially we had about 4000 plus artists on our panel, but last year we started to go down that list and also to find out how many of them are active.

We came to know that about 1,300 people are actually active at the moment. The current active list has been placed on the ICCR website. There is also a separate list being used by the Ministry of Culture primarily for festivals of India. With

regard to festivals of India, we have a mechanism to coordinate with the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Culture is in the lead. Whenever the Coordination Committee meets, DG ICCR normally attends that meeting. In meetings involving other activities, like assistance/grant given to Indo-foreign Friendship societies, a representative from ICCR participates. There is also a petition on our statutory bodies of the Ministry of Culture and *vice-versa*.”

8. Incoming Cultural Delegations

3.39 ICCR also organizes inbound cultural festivals from time to time. It began with a festival of Asiatic Performing Arts organized in 1980-81 when 16 Asian countries participating in the Asian games participated in this festival. Several such festivals have since been organized to showcase culture of other countries in India. Now International Ramayana Festival, Africa Dance & Music Festival, International Folk Festival, International Jazz Festival are some important cultural events being annually organised by ICCR in India.

9. Horizon Series Programmes

3.40 ICCR has started the Horizon Series mainly to provide exposure to foreign students to Indian culture as well as to provide a platform for the young and upcoming regional artists in different corners of the country. Our Regional Offices have been organizing these programmes on regular basis (mostly monthly). This programme is an important tool to engage with upcoming artists and encourage them to nurture India's rich and diverse culture for further projection at global stage.

10 Exhibitions

3.41 ICCR promotes visual art by sending exhibitions for display abroad. It also hosts such exhibition in India by foreign artists. Exchange of visual art exhibitions is done on the recommendations of the Indian Missions/Posts abroad. ICCR also support Indian artists by way of providing travel grants for participation in art fairs, residencies and workshop usually form part of larger cultural festivals.

11. Busts and Statues

3.42 ICCR's bust and statues programme has been primarily a goodwill programme of offering statues and busts of eminent Indian icons for installation at prominent locations

abroad. As a special project, ICCR gifted Buddha statue to the Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbataar, Mongolia. We have also commissioned around 60 busts/statues of Mahatma Gandhi to mark Gandhi@150.

12. Promotion of Yoga and International Day of Yoga

3.43 In 2015, with the announcement of International Day of Yoga (IDY) to be celebrated on 21 June every year, ICCR facilitated organizing of mega-scale IDY celebrations all over the world. ICCR has been deploying yoga teachers from India to its cultural centres since the time they were established. However with the success of IDY, ICCR started sending teachers to Missions and Posts as well. Currently, there are 89 teachers posted in ICCs, Missions and Posts for imparting teachings and training on Yoga, Veda and Sanskrit.

3.44 In pursuance of its objectives, ICCR carries out a range of academic and cultural activities. These include scholarship programmes, Visitors Programme, organizing Conferences/Seminars, Chairs Programme, Horizon Series Programme, promotion of yoga, conducting exhibitions, sending and receiving culture troupes of dance, etc. The Committee feel that there is a dire need for dissemination of information about the various activities that are being undertaken by ICCR for deepening India's soft power and cultural outreach. The Ministry should also incorporate accomplishments of successful soft power organizations of UK, Germany, China and include language promotion of various Indian languages and art forms within the ambit of ICCR activities.

(Recommendation No. 34)

3.45 The Committee note that scholarship programme is an important component of ICCR's activities. The Council offers scholarship at all levels (under-graduate, post-graduate and Ph.D) in all mainstream disciplines, except medicine to the nationals of different countries mainly from neighbouring, African and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries. The Ministry has informed that around 7,000 students from 180 countries are studying under ICCR scholarship schemes and several ICCR alumni are highly placed in various vocations in their respective countries. In the past, there have been several complaints about ICCR scholarships which, *inter alia*, included non-award of scholarship, scholarship given for subject different than

applied for, non-disbursement of scholarships on time, difficulties in obtaining reimbursement of medical expenditure on time, etc. The Ministry has informed that steps such as direct interface of ICCR Admission to Alumni (A2A) portal with universities, health insurance policy, introduction of PFMS for direct transfer of scholarship dues to students account, field visits by team from OCCR headquarters to Regional offices have been taken to minimize the complaints/grievances of students. As a major part of ICCR activities, scholarship is tied to our global image and prestige. The Committee therefore, urge that the Ministry should ensure that there is regular interface between the foreign students getting scholarships and ICCR. Further, all the Indian Missions/Posts abroad should be reached out for wider dissemination about the scholarships offered through ICCR.

(Recommendation No. 35)

3.46 Sending Indian Cultural troupes outside the country is an important part of the activities of the ICCR. These troupes perform in countries across the world and such performances play a significant role in projecting our soft power. The Ministry has informed that there exists a panel of artistes in various art forms such as theatre & puppetry, Carnatic, Hindustani, dance including folk and modern experimental. Empanelment of artist takes place on the basis of recommendation of the Expert Sub Committee constituted by ICCR. While the lists of empanelled artists are available on ICCR website, the Committee did not find the names of members of the Expert Committees. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to ensure greater transparency in the process for empanelment of artists by displaying the details about the empanelment process including lists of Experts/ Sub-Committees on the official website of ICCR. ICCR is also directed to ensure that adequate regional representation is provided to artists while sending them abroad.

(Recommendation No.36)

3.47 ICCR is mandated to create a sound understanding of Indian culture abroad and towards this end, it routinely sends cultural troupes, including dance and musical performers. However, on various occasions cultural troupes from some border states or states with a huge population of tribal communities are provided inadequate

opportunities to go abroad and present their art. This happens as Ambassador and High Commissioners of India abroad prefer certain group of artists and ICCR in a way remains constrained to send cultural troupes for which there is an expressed demand. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ICCR reformulates certain rules and regulations to ensure that artistes from all regions and States get an opportunity to showcase their talent abroad in an equitable manner.

(Recommendation No.37)

III. ICCR Cultural Centres (ICCs)

3.48 In order to promote awareness of India's rich cultural heritage abroad, ICCR implements its programmes through 37 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) and 19 Regional Offices in India. Currently there are following 37 operational ICCR Centres:

1. SVCC Tehran, Iran
2. IGCIC Port Louis, Mauritius
3. LBSCIC Tashkent, Uzbekistan
4. SVCC Dushanbe, Tajikistan
5. SVCC Male, Maldives
6. SVCC Colombo, Sri Lanka
7. SVCC Kathmandu, Nepal
8. SVCC Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan
9. IGCC Dhaka, Bangladesh
10. NWCC Thimphu, Bhutan
11. SVCC Yangon, Myanmar
12. SVCC Kabul, Afghanistan
13. JNICC Jakarta, Indonesia
14. SVCC Bangkok, Thailand
15. SVCC Hanoi, Vietnam
16. SVCC Sub-Centre, Bali, Indonesia
17. SVCC Beijing, China
18. NSCBICC Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
19. SVCC Seoul, South Korea

20. VCC Tokyo, Japan
21. SVCC Sydney, Australia
22. SVCC Suva, Fiji
23. TNC London, U.K.
24. SVCC Budapest, Hungary
25. SVCC Prague, Czech Republic
26. TGC The Hague, Netherlands
27. TTC Berlin, Germany
28. ICC Tel Aviv, Israel
29. MACIC Cairo, Egypt
30. SVCC Durban, South Africa
31. JNCC Moscow, Russia
32. SVCC Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
33. SVCC Paramaribo, Suriname
34. SVCC Sao Paulo, Brazil
35. SVCC Georgetown, Guyana
36. MGICC Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
37. GTICC Mexico City, Mexico

3.49 Elaborating on the significance of ICCR Cultural Centres, the Ministry stated that Indian Cultural Centres are ICCR and MEA's extension offices overseas. The 39 Indian Cultural Centres abroad, including two run in PPP model are instrumental in fulfilling mandate of ICCR and MEA by promoting and propagating the country's cultural strengths worldwide. Constraints being faced by the Government in opening of new Indian Cultural Centres abroad are chiefly:

- (i) Lack of finances,
- (ii) Challenges in identifying affordable yet prominently located suitable space in the host country and
- (iii) Policies adopted by some countries with regard to opening of cultural centres.

3.50 On being asked the Ministry enumerated the progress made in regard to increasing the number of ICCs abroad in respect with, status of their construction, capacity

augmentation and the blueprint for enriching their Academic and Cultural programmes/activities. Since the opening of the first ICC in Georgetown, Guyana in 1972, the number of cultural centres abroad has increased to 39 (including two in PPP mode). Three additional Centres are proposed to be set up in Paris, Washington and Tel Aviv. Decision on opening of new cultural centres abroad is guided by the overall context of the existing state and emerging trajectory of overall bilateral relations. Budget constraints are also a major factor in this.

3.51 When asked to furnish details about the new ICCs being targeted to be opened, the Ministry stated that three new ICCs in (i) Tel Aviv, (ii) Washington and (iii) Paris are likely to be made operational in 2020-21. Additional financial allocation of Rs. 18 crores has been sought for operationalising these Centres from the Ministry.

3.52 As regards the status of establishing ICCs in Paris and Washington, the Ministry stated the following:

Paris: For establishment of ICC Paris, Govt. of India has already purchased a property from the Govt. of France in a heritage Area of Paris. The building is presently under process of renovation and expected to be completed during the current financial year. The Council has sent a comprehensive proposal to MEA indicating various functional requirements & number of personnel / India based teachers and local staff required at ICC, Paris.

Washington: In response to the Mission's proposal for the hiring of a multi- purpose hall for undertaking cultural activities till the regular cultural centre becomes operational, the Global Estate Management Division of MEA directed that the Mission should make serious and earliest efforts to remodel the V-Street property, which was purchased several years ago for this purpose and make it functional as soon as possible.

It may be mentioned that all Embassies and Consulates abroad attach high priority to soft power and cultural diplomacy. Even in countries where there is no ICC, Missions/Posts have dedicated officers overseeing cultural work under supervision of the Head of Mission/Post.

3.53 On further probing regarding availability of adequate staff and funds in ICCs, the Ministry stated that funding constraint of ICCR and MEA itself remains one of the major issues for the ICCs abroad. Budgetary constraints also affect deployment of manpower

resources in ICCs abroad. ICCR has adopted some innovative modalities for cultural projection abroad, such as establishment of cultural centres in public-private-partnership model and cost sharing arrangements with various State Governments to host incoming foreign cultural troupes. Our Missions/Posts abroad have also been availing of partnership with local organizations for organizing Indian cultural programmes, seminars, conferences, etc.

3.54 Over the issue of income generation measures that are being undertaken by the various ICCs already operational to make these centres self-dependent, the Ministry stated that so far, promotion of soft power and cultural diplomacy was based on no-profit policy, hence ICCR largely depended on the Government (MEA) funding. Further, in some countries local rules & regulations do not allow Culture Centres to engage in revenue generation/commercial activities. In a new initiative, ICCR has established two centres in Public-Private-Partnership mode in Valladolid and Busan. Considering the soft power and cultural diplomatic activities by other countries, it appears that substantial Government funding will continue to be required for a pro-active and effective conduct of our own soft power and cultural promotion.

3.55 A Committee under Ambassador Veena Sikri, was constituted by ICCR to review the functioning of its cultural centres abroad. The Committee enquired about the major recommendations made by the Committee along with follow up action taken by ICCR. In a written reply, the Ministry stated that in 2016 ICCR set up a Committee under Ambassador Veena Sikri, to conduct performance audit of Indian Cultural Centres. The report is being considered for implementation to the extent possible. The recommendations of the Committee are:

- i. Enhanced Coordination between ICC and Embassy: The task of soft power projection assigned to the ICCs need to be supplemented with more coordination between the Mission and ICCR. The entire sector of education, where ICCR plays the leading role, should be covered by the ICCs. This will be more efficient and effective and the foreign visitor to the ICC will get the information at one point instead of visiting ICC and Mission.

- ii. Selection of suitable Directors of the ICCs: Directors of ICCs are the ones who can successfully fulfill their task promoting India's soft power. Therefore selection of Directors capable, efficient and culturally rich should be a matter of high priority for the stakeholders.
- iii. Re-devising of the soft power projection process: The soft power projection planned by ICCR through the ICCs should be flexible enough to take on board any specific interests expressed by the country where the ICC is based. ICCR and the ICCs should show sensitivity in responding to and accommodating the special interests in Indian education and culture expressed by credible institutions across the world.
- iv. Reorganizing of ICCs: Coordination among three stakeholders (MEA, Embassies and ICCs) need to be strengthened. Education and Culture the focii of soft power are with ICCR. Therefore, the Education work which is being carried by many of the Missions should be assigned to the ICCs. ICCs should be one source of information for all the queries of the locals.
- v. Incorporating soft power projection among the goals and objectives of India's foreign policy: MEA need to incorporate fully integrated effective soft power projection into India's foreign policy goals and objectives. This will help Embassies assign the appropriate priority to soft power projection.

The recommendations of the Committee are under consideration of the Government/ICCR.

3.56 The Committee are aware that currently 37 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) are functional overseas and three are proposed to be set up in Paris, Washington and Tel Aviv. As principal instrument of India's institutional cultural outreach abroad, Indian Cultural Centres are located in countries with significant strategic, economic, political and cultural interests. The Committee are surprised to note that despite these parameters in place, the Ministry does not have a Indian Cultural Centre in the entire Gulf Region. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a Cultural Centre should be opened in the Gulf also in view of the large Diaspora and India's strong and sustained strategic and cultural ties with the region. The Committee also recommend that the

much delayed centres in Washington, Paris and Tel Aviv should also be opened by the end of this year.

(Recommendation No.38)

3.57 The Ministry has enlisted lack of finances, difficulty in identification of space and policies of host countries as constraining factors in opening of new Cultural Centres abroad. The Committee note that in 2016, ICCR had constituted a Committee under Ambassador Veena Sikri to conduct performance audit of Indian Cultural Centres. It has been informed that the said Committee has submitted its Report and the recommendations are being considered for implementation. In this backdrop, the Parliamentary Committee desire to have a detailed status note on the implementation status of the recommendations and implementation schedule made within three months.

(Recommendation No. 39)

IV. ICCR Regional Centres

3.58 The Council has 19 Regional Offices (ROs) across different States of India. These ROs undertake outreach activities at the State level for both cultural and academic work. The role of ICCR's Regional Offices in various States is to facilitate ICCR's programmes in the region, especially smooth implementation of ICCR's scholarship programme for the foreign students including admissions, monitoring of their studies, disbursement of stipend to foreign students and payment of fee to Indian Universities. ROs also coordinate with local Universities regarding various day-to-day issues related to foreign students throughout the year. Regional Offices play a significant role in organizing inbound cultural programmes, exhibitions, conferences, seminars, visits and lectures. They also liaise with State Governments , cultural Institutions, local artists and scholars. They also engage local Indian artists, *inter alia*, through Horizon/Kala vishwa series performances.

3.59 With regard to overlapping mandate between ICCR Regional Centre and Regional Centres of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that idea behind establishing ICCR's Regional Offices (ROs) in various states was to facilitate ICCR's programmes in the region, especially smooth implementation of ICCR's scholarship programme for the foreign students including admissions, monitoring of their studies and

disbursement of stipend to foreign students and payments to Indian universities. The ROs also coordinate with local universities various day to day issues of foreign students throughout the year. However, the role of ROs has expanded to also cover various aspects of ICCR's activities in their respective regions, including hosting foreign cultural groups, facilitating programmes of ICCR's Distinguished and Academic visitors. They also engage local Indian artists, *inter alia*, through Horizon Series performances. Mandate of ICCR's Regional Offices is very clear and in no way conflicts with the mandate of offices of Ministry of Culture or Department of Culture of the State Governments.

3.60 Clarifying the exact role of ICCR Regional Centre, the Foreign Secretary during evidence on 20 December 2019 stated:

“As I said in my witness testimony, the reason for regional centres are threefold: first, they look after foreign students of ICCR scholarships in those States which is not the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture; secondly, they are there to identify individuals and cultural groups whom we sponsor for ICCR troupes abroad which again is the responsibility of the ICCR.”

3.61 On the Committee's further query about existence of ICCR Regional Centre and Ministry of Culture's Regional Zonal Centres during the Sitting on 26 August 2020, the representative of MEA further submitted:

Now, the Ministry of Culture has Regional Zonal Centres in every State. Our whole idea of coordination is, wherever ICCR does not need to be present, we hand over ICCR activities to Regional Cultural Centres. That is number one. Number two, the Ministry of External Affairs is in the process of putting in place a series of Videsh Bhavans in all the States to coordinate the foreign policy aspects of each State with the Ministry. We are going to give the activities of the ICCR of that State to the Regional Videsh Bhavans and the head of the Videsh Bhavans to handle it. So, it is not that we are closing them. When we say that we are merging, we are having hubs which can look after this; and in each place either the Videsh Bhavan or the Zonal Cultural Centre will take it over. We need to do this because a lot of activities that we have done in the past are not being done anymore. Many of these have become slightly outdated in a way. We have done a complete study of it. We will be cutting it down, but we will not be cutting down the activities. The Centres may go down but the activities will continue.”

3.62 The Committee note that ICCR has 19 Regional Offices across different States of India that undertake outreach activities at the State level for both cultural and

academic work. The three major responsibilities of the Regional Offices are looking after foreign students of ICCR scholarships, hosting incoming cultural troupes, and engaging local artists. Over the issue of overlapping mandate between ICCR Regional Centre and Ministry of Culture's Regional Zonal Centres, the Committee have been apprised that the process of putting in place a series of Videsh Bhavans in all the States to coordinate the foreign policy aspects of each State with the Ministry is underway and the role of Regional Offices is proposed to be subsumed under the Regional Videsh Bhavans. Welcoming the decision of the Ministry on establishment of Videsh Bhavans, the Committee recommend that such Bhavans should be opened in each State capital for better coordination with State Governments. The Ministry should submit a roadmap for setting up the Videsh Bhavans along with timeline and budgetary requirements to this Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

(Recommendation No.40)

CHAPTER 4

Other Stakeholders

Soft power projection as well as promotion of Indian culture is a Government of India approach and involves various Ministries/Departments and agencies. Various Ministries/Departments are engaged in the task of promoting India's soft power and cultural diplomacy. The Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Culture play the lead roles in projection and promotion of soft power and cultural diplomacy. ICCR is an important instrument within the Ministry of External Affairs and Chapter 4 contains detailed examination of its organization, function and activities.

4.2 Apart from ICCR, External and Publicity Division (XPD), Planning and Research Division (PP&R), Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and various Indian Missions/Posts abroad are actively involved in conduct of India's soft power diplomacy. Similarly, the Archaeological Survey of India, the National School of Drama, the Sahitya Kala Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi within the Ministry of Culture play a pioneering role in cultural diplomacy. In this chapter, these Divisions within their concerned Ministries will be briefly examined in relation to their role in India's soft power and cultural diplomacy.

I. External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division (XPD)

4.3 Elucidating upon the exact role of External and Publicity Division (XPD) in facilitating soft power diplomacy, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that the XPD Division provides publicity material and other inputs to the different Divisions of the Ministry and the Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad to facilitate their engagement, partnership and dialogue with the relevant stakeholders for India's soft power promotion. Apart from XPD Division, Ministry's different Division also closely coordinate with Indian

Missions and Consulates abroad to implement various Public Diplomacy related initiatives on cross cutting themes.

4.4 XPD Division has swiftly adapted to India's rising global profile and rapidly evolving communications environment through responsive and focused outreach to both the domestic and global audience. This has been achieved by expanding India's public diplomacy footprint both at home and abroad and leveraging social media and other modern tools to maximize the outcome.

4.5 XPD Division commissions short films, documentaries, audio-visual clips for social media promotion, and shares it with Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad for publicity purpose. In addition, rights of commercial Hindi and regional films are procured for screening abroad on not-for-profit basis. These films are also subtitled and dubbed in different foreign languages for wider reach. To promote Indian music and songs, special music collections of classical and popular songs are curated for gifting purpose abroad.

4.6 XPD Division also publishes e-books, coffee table books and procures books for supplying to Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad. XPD Division also supplies books to Indian Embassies and Consulates for setting up 'India corners' in university and public libraries abroad. Under 'Bharat Ek Parichay' initiative of XPD Division, more than 650 India corners have been set up around the world.

4.7 In the domestic front, the Distinguished Lecture Series where retired ambassadors interact with university students on the topics of foreign policy has been expanded to include universities in Tier II and Tier III towns. Another initiative called 'SAMEEP - Student and MEA Engagement Programme', where an officer of MEA interacts with students from his alma mater, has been further intensified. XPD division also publishes 'India Perspectives', a bi-monthly digital magazine in 14 foreign languages, besides in English and Hindi. The content of the publication is widely used by Indian Embassies and Consulates for local publicity purpose across various digital platforms.

4.8 Spelling out the function performed by the XPD Division, the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on 20 December 2019 submitted:

“The External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division is a key facilitator in our cultural diplomacy within the Ministry of External Affairs. This division has regularly commissioned articles and documentary films on a variety of subjects related to our culture since 1981. In addition, suitable Indian feature films are regularly procured with non-commercial screening rights in order to promote Indian cinema abroad. Special documentaries have been commissioned in the last two years, such as those on Dr. Ambedkar called Mook Nayak and on the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra; and three special short films on the Indian general elections, Gandhiji and Guru Nanak Devji since these are all major events in 2019 which have been done by the Government of India to commemorate these important events abroad.

The XPD Division has led the Ministry’s efforts to celebrate lives and achievements of Gandhiji and Guru Nanak Devji worldwide from 2018 to 2020. Artistes from 150 countries rendered Gandhiji’s favourite bhajan ‘Vaishnav Jan To’ in the Gujarati language and the compilation has been universally appreciated throughout the world. We have a book published – we would certainly be happy to give it to everybody – which is a compilation of all 150 countries. It has a pen drive and CDs as well. We would hope that the Members of the Committee would see this. It is indeed something which has been very highly appreciated.”

4.9 Explicating the rationale behind the merger of External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division, the Ministry submitted that the Publicity Division in MEA was set up in 1949 as one of the pioneering Divisions in MEA which later came to be known as External Publicity (XP) Division. Public Diplomacy activities were very much part and parcel of External Publicity Division. In 2006, a separate Public Diplomacy (PD) Division was created in line with international practices as public diplomacy was acquiring higher profile. PD Division provided a framework to public diplomacy activities carried out by the Ministry and our Missions abroad while XP Division was mandated to take care of media engagement both in India and abroad. However, it was felt that there was a lack of synergy and overlapping mandates since both the Divisions were engaged in the business of promoting “Brand India”. Further our Missions abroad would often not be clear as to which of the two Divisions they approach in the Ministry for their outreach activities in the changed system. In order to address these problems, the Ministry decided to merge XP and PD Divisions into a single division- External Publicity and Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division in January 2014. Hence forth, the External Publicity & Public Diplomacy Division (XPD) of the Ministry of External Affairs continued its mandated task of effectively

articulating the position of the Government of India on various foreign policy issues to the national and international media, as well as engaging with domestic and global audiences to explain India, its foreign policy and various aspects of India's engagement with the world. Alongside an active engagement with the electronic and print media, the Ministry has simultaneously increased its public diplomacy initiatives, especially of the digital variety, resulting in a magnified impact in shaping public opinion and reaching out to a wider audience.

4.10 When asked about the manner in which the merger has enhanced efficiency in propagation of India's soft power, the Ministry stated that the merger has led to a synergy in the media outreach activities and public diplomacy initiatives. It has resulted in three significant advantages:-

- A Holistic Communication Strategy: The merger has helped to shape a holistic perspective of India's soft power projection and foreign policy narrative that is directed towards either media or our missions and posts abroad. The move has ensured that an officer in charge of Public Diplomacy is also aware of the media perspective and therefore, this enhances his capability to address any situation. It has helped fine-tune our communication strategy, in all outreach areas (Soft power projection, Public diplomacy initiatives, media communication, etc.). This integration has helped to leverage the power of digital diplomacy for setting the right narrative and putting things in the right perspective for all concerned.
- A Single Point of Contact for Missions: The merging of the two divisions has also streamlined communication between the Division and missions/posts on any media/public diplomacy/soft power projection. It has ensured that the Division has become the single point of contact for our missions/posts with respect to any outside communication. The media implications of any communication/soft power projection are relayed to the Mission through the Division, ensuring that there is no room for confusion as far as communication strategies for the missions are concerned.
- Efficiency in Human Resource Deployment: The merger has also helped in optimizing human resource deployment. Following the merger, a total of 14 posts

were surrendered by both Divisions including a post of a Joint Secretary and a Director level officer.

4.11 Further, the merger had infused a new vigour and the Division has ramped up its public diplomacy initiatives especially through various social media platforms. A case in point is the declaration of 21st June to be observed as the International Day of Yoga (IDY) by the United Nations. XPD Division coordinated the celebration of first ever International Yoga Day across the world in 192 countries with live streaming events, and social media updates in real time. These took place as events unfolded from East to West, with the main celebrations in India as well as that in the UN Headquarters and Times Square, New York being the highlight. Consequently each year down the line IDY saw more number of people and places to celebrate yoga. Events like celebrations of 125th anniversary of Dr. B. R Ambedkar, India –Africa Summit etc. used the Ministry’s social media channels effectively. The XPD Division played a nodal role in the 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi in India and abroad. Of special note was the launch of a video medley of the Mahatma’s favourite hymn, *Vaishnav Jana Toh Tene Kahiye*, performed by singers from 155 countries around the world. Similarly the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji was organized all over the world with the assistance of our Missions and Post abroad in 2019.

4.12 The Committee note that in order to impart greater synergy in media outreach activities and public diplomacy initiatives within MEA, the External Publicity (XP) Division was merged with the Public Diplomacy (PD) Division to create the External Publicity & Diplomacy (XPD) Division. The XPD Division provides publicity material and other inputs to the different Divisions of the Ministry and the Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad to facilitate their engagement, partnership and dialogue with the relevant stakeholders for India’s soft power promotion. The Committee observe that the role of the XPD Division includes commissioning of short films, documentaries, audio-visual clips for social media promotion, publishing e-books, coffee table books, procuring books for supplying to Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad and organizing Distinguished Lecture Series. The Committee are pleased to know that the XPD Division has played an instrumental role in worldwide celebrations

of 125th Birth Anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar, 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

As a key facilitator in India's soft power and cultural diplomacy within the Ministry of External Affairs, the Committee urge that the XPD Division should expand India's public diplomacy footprint and resort to active usage of print and social media to maximize the tangible outcomes. The Committee also desire that with the active involvement of Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Division should continue to make focused and persistent efforts towards popularization of Indian personalities and historical events on a regular basis.

(Recommendation No. 41)

II. POLICY PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION

4.13 The Policy Planning and Research (PP&R) Division is the nodal division of MEA for medium and long-term planning and organizing public diplomacy initiatives with the strategic and academic community. The Division is also the administrative agency for matters pertaining to Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) AND Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

4.14 While tendering evidence before the Committee on 20 December 2019, the Foreign Secretary outlined the role of the PP& R Division as under:

“The Policy Planning and Research Division is another important facilitator in the promotion of cultural diplomacy through Ministry's three annual flagship events. Since 2016 the Raisina Dialogue, the Indian Ocean Conference and the Global Technology Summit are designed to bring global audiences to India and our region and they have become platforms to highlight different aspects of our soft power in surrounding regions including the Indo-Pacific. The Indian Ocean Conference in particular which is held in different countries of the Indo-Pacific region each year is intended to cast the spotlight on our historical and cultural ties stretching back to thousands of years and to link it to our current diplomatic efforts with this region.”

4.15 The Committee note that the Policy Planning and Research (PP&R) Division is involved in medium and long-term planning and organizing public diplomacy initiatives with the strategic and academic community. Since 2016, the Division has been organizing three annual flagship events - Raisina Dialogue, the Indian Ocean

Conference and the Global Technology Summit to underscore various facets of India's soft power. The Committee recommend that the Division should engage more vigorously and constructively with foreign think tanks, Universities and academic communities to widen the net of India's global outreach. The Division should also devise mechanisms to formulate annual policy and plan for enhanced cultural engagement with different countries and circulate it to the concerned Missions/Posts abroad for timely execution.

(Recommendation No.42)

III. INDIAN MISSION/POSTS ABROAD

4.16 As regards the role of Indian Missions/Posts in projection of our soft power the Ministry of External Affairs stated that MEA, India's Missions abroad and ICCR constitute the triangle within which the task of India's soft power projection through public and cultural diplomacy is fulfilled. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) accept the strategic significance of the work of soft power projection through public and cultural diplomacy as among the key tools in the formulation and implementation of India's foreign policy and therefore, Heads of Mission attach top priority and importance to the task of soft-power projection. All ICCR's activities, including those conducted through its extended arms Indian Cultural Centers, the Chairs of Indian Studies in Foreign Universities, and the foreign students' scholarships programme, are conducted in close coordination with Indian Missions/posts in the country concerned.

4.17 Missions draw the country-specific demand based on local interest and recommend activities, which should be effective in promotion of the soft power. Also Missions identify the major cultural events happening in the host country and recommend a fitting participation from India. MEA in consultation with other stake holders would arrange to send the desired delegation to represent India. Missions maintain close contacts with sources of soft power and carry out such activities which further enhance the soft power impact of India.

4.18 When asked whether there is a mechanism for regular engagement of Embassies/Missions abroad with media, think tanks and other institutions shaping public

opinion in respective countries the Ministry stated that Indian Embassies and Consulates have been asked to proactively engage with foreign media, think tanks and key interlocutors who shape public opinion. Indian Embassies and Consulates regularly organize background briefing and briefing on important developments to local foreign media. Heads of Missions have been encouraged to remain actively engaged with foreign media explain official positions and address issues of mutual interest.

4.19 The Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Missions have developed institutional linkages with think tanks. The Ministry supports four flagship annual conferences conducted by prominent think-tanks in the following domains:

Theme	Conference Name	Organising Think-Tank Partner
Geopolitics	Raisina Dialogue	ORF
Geoeconomics	Asian Economic Dialogue	Pune International Centre
Geotechnology	Global Technology Summit	Carnegie India
Geostrategy	Indian Ocean Conference	India Foundation

These conferences have evolved into influential platforms for engaging think tanks and prominent individuals. Ministry also supports other conferences that engage think-tanks and academic constituencies.

4.20 On the Committee’s query regarding measures taken to counter negative press that have the impact of tarnishing our image abroad, the Ministry submitted that articles by External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary have been translated in local foreign language and published in local print and online media. Wherever needed Head of Missions give interviews and write op-ed pieces and articles in local media. Indian Missions/Posts generate publicity content in local language. Missions/Posts are increasingly using locally translated/subtitled publicity material for wider dissemination. Indian Missions/Posts have established system of communication with prominent NRIs and Indian Diaspora groups. Publicity material including short video clips, info graphics and e-pamphlet etc are provided containing facts and figure for dissemination locally by Indian Missions/Posts abroad. Positive articles highlighting success stories and achievement of Indians in the different spheres are shared with foreign interlocutors and local media by Indian Missions/Posts.

4.21 Additionally, the Ministry organizes visits of foreign journalists to India with the objective of familiarizing them with the country. The familiarization programme includes engagements with Ministers/senior Government officials in the MEA and other Ministries/Departments, and field visits to places of commercial, scientific, educational, and touristic interest. Besides regular dissemination of information by Missions/Posts to government interlocutors, media outlets, business chambers, civil society institutions and Diaspora, there is regular engagement with foreign media to facilitate objective coverage on various issues of global and national interests. XPD Division coordinates with Indian Embassies and Consulates for dissemination of Government of India's policies, programmes and initiatives.

4.22 The Committee are aware that Indian Missions/Posts abroad have been playing a critical role in advancing India's soft power and cultural outreach. The Committee note that all the cultural activities of Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) are carried out through close coordination with the Missions/Posts in the concerned country. Missions/Posts also chalk out country-specific requirements and activities that can be effective in promotion of the soft power. The Committee also notice that the Missions identify the major cultural events happening in the host country and recommend a fitting participation from India.

While acknowledging the significant role performed by the Indian Mission/Posts abroad, the Committee feel that there is lack of vigor in countering negative press that have the impact of tarnishing our image abroad. The Committee therefore recommend that the Ministry should ensure every Mission/Post has one Public Relations officer, specifically for the purpose of giving diplomatic push to Brand India. The Missions/Posts should continue charting annual cultural enhancement plans for constructive, focused and meaningful cultural engagement with the concerned country.

(Recommendation No.43)

III. Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)

4.23 Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) was set up in 1983 in New Delhi as a leading policy research institution of developing countries on

international economic policy issues. The institute owes its origin to the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in New Delhi in 1983. It functions as a Registered Society with independent Governing Council and is funded by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. In the various Group of 77 (G-77) and NAM Summits in the late 1970s it was increasingly recognised that developing countries should have their own institutional support for devising policy options and negotiating strategies so as to promote and safeguard their interests in a more effective manner.

4.24 Specifying the exact role of RIS in promotion of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy the Ministry stated that soft power is the ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction, RIS is steadfastly engaged in promoting India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam – वसुधैवकुटुम्बकं" and our Government's policy of laying emphasis on 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' and 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' through its ongoing policy research studies to defend and promote the trade and economic interests of the country, as well as of Global South.

4.25 As a consequence of its constant efforts to work for the promotion of the interests of the developing countries, India's solidarity based development cooperation initiatives are receiving far greater traction abroad than ever before, particularly since it is not based on any sort of pre-conditions. It is conducted in accordance with the priority, programmes and approval of the recipient countries, treats its recipients as development partners and does not result in mounting debts for them unlike the OECD prescribed Western development paradigm for economic aid which is linked to a wide range of conditionality for developing countries. Further, unlike China, India's development programme is free from accusations of trampling sovereignty or integrity of its partners or strangulating them financially with unbearable debt trap.

4.26 In order to promote India's unique international development cooperation narrative, RIS convenes a wide range of dialogues and discussions at the regional and global level. In this context, RIS organizes an annual international conference on South-South Cooperation in which global development research scholars, policy shapers, academia, think-tanks, civil society organizations, and thought leaders take part apart from UN Office for South-South

Cooperation. In addition, RIS has also added the dimension of University Connect to it by inviting young scholars from India and abroad to its dedicated sessions as part of its larger strategy to prepare the next generation of young scholars and thinkers to adopt India's policy postures on key trade and economic issues for accelerated advancement of Global South.

4.27 As such the entire spectrum of the work programme of RIS is anchored on issues having a major bearing on India's national interest as well as Global South in areas such as Blue Economy, Indo-Pacific Trade, digital trade, ASEAN connect, IBSA and BRICS, STI and SDGs and RIS shares its knowledge, experience and expertise through a wide range of dialogues and publications to promote India's soft power abroad. Currently, RIS is also giving added importance to its research work on the impact of Industrial Revolution 4.0 on developing countries, covering Artificial Intelligence, Science, Technology and Innovation, automation and robotics, digital technology, and nontechnology which constitute a vital part of global trade, financial and economic world order. RIS not only gives vital inputs to the Government in its policy making process but also shares its expertise with its wide network of international partners to promote clearer understanding of India's standpoint on such important and emerging issues impacting the interests of the developing countries.

4.28 Further, RIS devotes a major component of its research work on Trade in Services and e-commerce which are gaining far higher importance at regional and global level than ever before and are posing major challenges for the developing countries. RIS has also intensified its research work on SDGs, in addition to climate change, emergence of new renewable energy policies etc to address the emerging challenges being faced by the country and other developing countries.

4.29 As these issues require intense engagement with national, regional and global research scholars and policy shapers, RIS organizes them through a wide range of webinars, dialogues, workshops and conferences and brings out practical, evidence-based and rigorous research studies which are widely appreciated in Global South. Seeing the growing influence of specific studies being conducted by RIS, many of the Western countries and think tanks regularly seek the participation of RIS in their policy research dialogues to

understand the key interests of the developing countries. Over the years, they have also increasingly started using the expressions of partnership, assistance and demand driven approaches advocated by India through its research studies on international development assistance. Over the years, RIS has taken several institutional initiatives to promote India's policy and programmes among developing countries, including AIC, GDC, FISD, BEF, FITM, STIP, SACEPS, BRICS Academic Forum BNPTT, AINTT, IBSA Academic Forum, NeST and FIDC.

4.30 The mandate and objectives of RIS are as follows:-

- a) To promote the concept of self-reliance among the developing countries and to forge and maintain a system of effective links amongst the various research institutions of these countries with a view to utilize their research capabilities for the maximum common benefit;
- b) To undertake and/or commission analytical studies; to evaluate and interpret information and data; to conduct or cause to conduct research in current trends and future projection concerning social, economic, scientific and technological matters on a global and regional basis as appropriate;
- c) To disseminate factual information and data relating to diverse aspects such as trade, industrialisation, finance, energy, raw materials, technology transfer, education, health, etc. in such form and manner as best calculated to strengthen the unified position and approach of the non-aligned and other developing countries;
- d) To serve as a national focal point for co-ordination of research activities among the non-aligned and other developing countries and to this end organize conference, meetings, seminars and workshops as appropriate;
- e) To serve and effectively function on a continuous basis as a data bank/information storage, processing and retrieval centre, on global and regional problems bearing on the interest of non-aligned and other developing countries;
- f) To promote research studies bearing on cooperation among developing countries to economic, scientific, technological and related areas;

- g) To advise the Government of India on all matters pertaining to multilateral economic and social issues, as may be referred to it from time to time, including collaborative arrangements with developing countries;
- h) To give grants for publications of research undertaken by RIS and for periodicals and journals devoted to such research; and
- i) To undertake all such other activities as are incidental to or necessary for or conducive to achieving all or any of the above objectives.

4.31 In order to share India's development experience with partner developing countries the Global Development Centre has been set up at RIS. When asked about the objectives and functioning of the Centre, the Ministry stated that India as a developing country is gaining increasing relevance as a major global actor extending development assistance to its partners in Global South. It is also actively engaged in shaping narratives, policies and institutions in the global governance system and is playing a crucial role for the achievement of the 2030 agenda for the rest of the developing world through the creation of an ecosystem that allows for cross pollination of ideas and solutions.

4.32 In order to deepen India's development and economic partnerships, GDC is engaged in the formation of partnerships with relevant key Ministries in India, particularly those that have attained considerable expertise through Government's flagship programmes to share with GDC partner countries. It is engaged in the process of developing sound mechanisms through which it can sustainably collaborate other experienced development actors as well its partners.

4.33 GDC is giving shape to extend its support to India's development initiatives by building on multi stakeholders' engagement through platforms like IBSA, BRICS, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, UNOSSC, G-20 etc. It can be accomplished by conducting series of roundtables, events etc. in which RIS would be the anchor partner. As such, GDC works at governmental and other levels contributing to strengthening of its partnerships at multiple levels of engagement through government, civil society and think tanks, academia, private sector etc.

4.34 On SDGs, GDC is developing a vibrant, cooperative and constructive engagement for development with the aim of making accelerated progress within the country, across its borders among interested partners and with other partner countries in Asia and Africa. As a matter of fact, GDC aims to effectively function as the reliable single window depository of developmental experience, expertise and capabilities with a strong network of partners coming from the government, civil society, academic, private sector and other players to further strengthen South-South and global partnerships.

4.35 The focus areas of GDC are as follows:

- i) Building of resilient health services;
- ii) Agriculture with particular focus on nutrition and sustainable healthy food systems;
- iii) Digital financial inclusion; and
- iv) Women's economic empowerment with particular focus on women's entrepreneurship.

4.36 GDC is attempting to promote India's role in the international development echo system as a major provider of development assistance by sharing its innovations for development with other countries thereby supporting South-South Cooperation. It is working to diffuse evidence based good practices from India, learning from global good practices of other developing countries and strengthening GDC's commitment for policy implementation within India and abroad in its partner countries.

4.37 Specifying the role of RIS in projection of soft power projection, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs while giving evidence before the Committee on 18 December 2020 stated:

“As far as soft power is concerned, RIS exercises this through South-South Cooperation, sharing of best developmental practices with developing and least developed countries, propagating the Indian technical and economic programmes, which we call as ITEC programmes, hosting of India, Brazil, South Africa, which are IBSA scholars, providing a common platform for discussion and finding solutions to developmental problems, etc. RIS also attempts to be the voice of the global South when it comes to economic policy issues. The publications and

occasional papers of RIS are referred to by policy and decision makers, academics and think tanks.

The work programme of RIS also includes promotion of traditional medicine systems which have been a strength for dealing with multiple health issues. RIS has set up the Forum on Indian traditional medicines with the support of the Ministry of AYUSH in the Government of India.”

4.38 The representative of the Ministry further added:

“What is often ignored is economic soft power. I would like to say, that is what RIS best represents in terms of Indian economic power which, I would say for the sake of understanding, is the polar opposite of Chinese economic soft power. The Chinese economic soft power is: you lend money; you take your own people; you build something; you get countries into debt. I would like to say that we do exactly the opposite. Our intention is to first ask the countries what they need from us. So, it is a bottom-up approach. Second, we do not create dependency. We create inter-dependency so that India and the Southern countries can work together for their advancement. The third and the most important is capacity building for developing and least developed countries. So, this is what RIS is about. RIS is about creating a voice for the global South. It is because, between you and me I am frankly speaking, many countries do not understand the grave implications of global economic fora, the positions to take in WTO, the positions to take in G20. They do not understand. For example, we had a detailed seminar on e-commerce, electronic commerce, and there are negotiations currently going on in WTO on e-commerce. Many countries do not understand why data is considered the new oil. The way oil and coal were, we say data is the new oil. But what is significant about data? How do the countries have to protect data? Even India is grappling with this subject.”

4.39 The Committee note that Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) is an autonomous body within MEA and is entrusted with the task of conducting research on international economic issues. Role of RIS in soft power projection involves South-South cooperation, sharing India’s development experience with partner countries, propagating Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programmes, hosting India Brazil South Africa (IBSA) scholars, promotion of traditional medicine system, etc. The Committee also note that RIS has set up a Global Development Centre to serve as a single window depository of India’s developmental experience, expertise and capabilities. While noting that RIS has been playing a pioneering role in promoting India as an economic power, the Committee find that its

mandate is still rooted in Cold War lexicon. The Committee, therefore, urge that the MEA should re-formulate the objectives, functions and structure of RIS to make it more contemporary and relevant.

(Recommendation No.44)

IV. Archaeological Survey of India

4.40 The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation. Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI. Besides it regulate all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. It also regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

4.41 Set up to preserve and conserve monuments and historical sites of national importance, ASI has gone past national boundaries to act as India's cultural ambassador in nations such as Vietnam, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia, Nepal, Bahrain, Angola, Afghanistan, Maldives, Bhutan and Egypt. The efforts have helped foster favourable public opinion towards India and Indians and opened doors to a myriad of opportunities. Some of the major activities of ASI that directly impinges on promoting India's cultural diplomacy are as follows:

(a) Project Mausam is a project of the Ministry of Culture launched by India at the 38th Session of the World Heritage Committee held in Doha, Qatar. 39 countries in the Indian Ocean region have been identified under Project Mausam.

The objectives include Achieving Transnational Nomination on 'Indian Ocean Maritime Routes' under World Heritage List of UNESCO, listing of sites, intangible heritage and inscriptions on the Memory of the World Heritage Register; creating links to existing World Heritage Sites; reviving lost linkages with nations; Redefining 'Cultural Landscapes; to support promotion of cultural relations with several countries in the Indian Ocean region.

(b) The conservation work of Ta Prohm temple in Cambodia is being executed by the ASI since May 2007. Phase-I and II of conservation work have been

completed and the Phase-III of the conservation work of this temple amounting to Rs. 29.32 crores is being executed since 2016-17.

(c) The conservation work for the Vat Phou temple in Lao PDR by the ASI took 8 years from 2009 to 2017. The Phase-II work for Vat Phou temple will be completed within a period of 10 years beginning 2018-19.

(d) The structural conservation and chemical preservation work of Ananda Temple, dedicated to Lord Buddha, at Bagan in Myanmar was taken up by ASI from May, 2012 to June, 2018. The work has been completed. Another project for structural conservation & chemical preservation of 12 earthquake damaged monuments at Bagan has been approved and is proposed to be initiated shortly.

(e) Conservation works of Cham monuments in Vietnam is being undertaken by ASI under the purview of India-Vietnam Cultural Exchange Program. The ASI Team is being deputed since 2017 for execution of conservation work.

(f) ASI has undertaken the project for structural conservation and chemical preservation of Friday Mosque at Male, Maldives. ASI Team has proceeded to Maldives on 10.12.2019 for execution of work. The conservation work is proposed to be completed over a period of two years.

4.42 The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), as an attached office under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation. As part of its cultural diplomacy, ASI and MEA have been actively involved in restoration of historical sites and monuments in our immediate as well as extended neighbourhood. ASI has crossed national boundaries and undertaken conservations works in Bhutan, Vietnam, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and so on. The Committee feel that such endeavours have opened up new avenues for international diplomatic and economic cooperation. The Committee suggest that the Ministry of External Affairs should cooperate with ASI and tap these new avenues for promoting India's cultural diplomacy by forging collaboration with international and national institutions.

(Recommendation No. 45)

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS (2019-20) HELD ON 20 DECEMBER, 2019.**

The Committee sat on Friday, the 20 December, 2019 from 1500 hrs. to 1700 hrs in Room No. 53, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Pakauri Lal Kol
3. Smt Meenakshi Lekhi
4. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
5. Shri P.C.Mohan
6. Shri Borlakunta Venkatesh Netha
7. Shri Ritesh Pandey
8. Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
9. Shri Ravindra Shyamnarayan Shukla
10. Shri Manoj Tiwari

RAJYA SABHA

11. Shri K.J. Alphons
12. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
13. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
14. Shri Neeraj Shekhar

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai Director

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Vijay Gokhale	Foreign Secretary
2.	Shri Dinesh K. Patnaik	Additional Secretary (CPV&OIA)
3.	Shri Akhilesh Mishra	Additional Secretary, DG (ICCR)

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 4. | Smt. Namrata Kumar | Joint Secretary, DDG (ICCR) |
| 5. | Smt. Shubhdarshini Tripathi | Joint Secretary, DDG (ICCR) |
| 6. | Shri Prashant Pise | Joint Secretary, DDG (ICCR) |
| 7. | Shri Raveesh Kumar | Joint Secretary |
| 8. | Shri Robert Shetkintong | Joint Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to the Sitting of the Committee convened to have a briefing on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations'. The Chairperson also drew the attention of all the representatives to Direction 55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in order to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings.

3. The representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs set the context and tone for discussion on the subject and delved upon issues which *inter alia* included objectives of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy; definition, scope and tools of soft power; role of Indian Diaspora in promoting cultural diplomacy; budgetary constraints; coordinating mechanisms between multiple agencies involved in soft power projection; Public Diplomacy Division; rebuilding historical monuments displaying Indian influence; sports training; Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas; role of Diaspora in cultural diplomacy; engagement with press and so on.

4. Thereafter, the Members raised pertinent queries impinging on issues such as; objectives, mandate and activities of ICCR; empanelment of artists in ICCR; scholarship to foreign students; overlapping of mandates of concerned line Ministries; youth exchange programmes etc.

5. The representatives of both the Ministries responded to the concerns raised by Members. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson also directed the witnesses to furnish written replies to the points raised by the Members of the Committee to the Secretariat at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

**MINUTES OF THE NINTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS (2019-20) HELD ON 7 JANUARY , 2020**

The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 7 January, 2020 from 1500 hrs to 1705 hrs in Committee Room 'E', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi

PRESENT

Shree P.P Chaudhary – Chairperson

Lok Sabha

1. Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi
2. Shri Ritesh Pandey
3. Dr. K.C. Patel
4. Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
5. Shri Ravindra Shyamnarayan Shukla alias Ravi Kishan
6. Shri Manoj Tiwari
7. Shri N.K. Premchandran

Rajya Sabha

8. Shri K.J. Aphons
9. Shri P. Chidambaram
10. Shri Neeraj Shekhar

Secretariat

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Director
2. Shri Paolienlal Haokip - Additional Director

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Smt. Vijay Thakur - Secretary (EAST)
2. Shri Dinesh K. Patnaik - Additional Secretary (CPV & OIA)
3. Shri Akhilesh Mishra - DG (ICCR) (Additional Secretary)
4. Smt. Namrata Kaur - DDG (ICCR) (Joint Secretary Rank)
5. Smt. Shubhdarshini Tripathi - DDG (ICCR) (Joint Secretary Rank)
6. Shri Raveesh Kumar - Joint Secretary (XP)
7. Shri Robert Shetkingtong - Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

1. Shri Yogendra Tripathi - Secretary
2. Shri S. C. Barmma - Joint Secretary

3. Shri Pranav Kullar - Joint Secretary
4. Ms. Nirupama Kotru - Joint Secretary
5. Ms. Amita Prasad Sarbhai - Joint Secretary
6. Shri P. L. Sahu - Joint Secretary

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

1. Shri Yogendra Tripathi - Secretary (Tourism)
2. Mrs. Meenakshi Sharma - Director General (Tourism)
3. Shri Vikas Rustagi - Joint Director General (Publicity)

MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

1. Shri Radhe Shyam Julaniya - Secretary (Youth Affairs Sports)
2. Shri Asit Singh - Joint Secretary (Youth Affairs)

MINISTRY OF AYUSH

1. Shri Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha - Secretary (AYUSH)
2. Shri P. N. Ranjit Kumar - Joint Secretary
3. Dr. Manoj Nesari - Advisor (Ayurveda)
4. Dr. Anupam Srivastava - Director (Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth)

2. At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Ministry of AYUSH to the Sitting of the Committee convened to have a briefing on the subject 'India's soft power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations'. He also drew the attention of the representatives of the Ministries to Direction (55)1 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. The Secretary (EAST) briefed the Committee on the various issues pertaining to the subject which inter-alia included various activities being carried out by the ICCR towards promoting India's soft power through the cultural centres, by collaborating with other Ministries, through overall functioning of the missions abroad as well as through External Publicity and Diplomacy Division, Indian Overseas Division and celebration of the International Yoga Day in collaboration with Ministry of AYUSH etc. Thereafter, representatives of Ministries of Tourism and Culture made PowerPoint presentations on their respective initiatives. Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports also briefed the Committee on their role and achievement.

4. Thereafter, the Members of the Committee raised various queries related to rationale for the merger of External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division; budgetary allocation of ICCR and its utilization; lack of clarity about the revamping of ICCR by the Ministry of Culture; requirement of legislation for approval of AYUSH medicines; appointment of Cultural ambassadors; use of Indian diaspora for cultural activities etc. The need for close cooperation between the various concerned Ministries was stressed by the Committee. The representatives of all the Ministries responded at length to the queries of the Members. The Ministries were asked to furnish written replies to some queries, replies to which were not readily available.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A Verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2019-20) HELD ON 26 AUGUST, 2020**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 26 August, 2020 from 1500 hrs. to 1740 hrs in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Margani Bharat
3. Smt Meenakshi Lekhi
4. Shri P.C.Mohan
5. Shri Ritesh Pandey
6. Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
7. Shri Ravindra Shyamnarayan Shukla
8. Shri Manoj Tiwari
9. Shri Premachanndran

RAJYA SABHA

10. Shri K.J. Alphons
11. Shri Swapan Dasgupta

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai Director
2. Shri Paolienlal Haokip Additional Director

WITNESSES

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Manoj K. Bharti	Special Secretary (AD)
2.	Shri Akhilesh Mishra	Additional Secretary (DPA)
3.	Shri Dinesh K Patnaik	DG (ICCR)
4.	Shri Prashant Pise	DDG (ICCR)
5.	Dr. Anupam Ray	Joint Secretary (PP & R)

6. Shri Manish Joint Secretary (OIA-II)
7. Shri Anurag Srivastava Joint Secretary (XP)
8. Shri Rober Shetkintong Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1. Shri Amit Khare Secretary
2. Ms. Neeta Prasad Joint Secretary

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

1. Shri Darpan Jain Joint Secretary
2. Ms. Sangeeta Saxena Director

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING

1. Shri Amit Khare Secretary
2. Shri S.S Vempati CEO, Prasar Bharti
3. Shri K. S. Dhatwalia Pr. DG, PIB
4. Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari Additional Secretary
5. Ms. T.C.A Kalyani Joint Secretary (Films)
6. Ms. Neerja Sekhar Joint Secretary

NITI AAYOG

1. Dr. Rakesh Sarwal Additional Secretary
2. Shri Avinash Mishra Adviser (JS Rank)
3. Dr. Prem Singh Adviser (JS Rank)

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs, Education, Commerce & Industry, Information and Broadcasting and NITI Aayog to the Sitting of the Committee convened to take oral evidence on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations'. The Chairperson then drew the attention of all the representatives to Direction

55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in order to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings. The Chairperson also apprised the witnesses about the provisions of Direction 58 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. After presenting a brief overview of the mechanisms for the welfare, protection and engagement of Indian Diaspora, the Representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs delved upon issues such as role of private players in soft power projection, Soft Power Matrix, diaspora as cultural ambassadors, Videsh Bhawans, coordination with State governments, ICCR Cultural Centres, ICCR Regional Offices, Yoga Certification Board and so on. Thereafter, the representatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Education and NITI Aayog gave a brief overview of the role of their respective Ministries/organizations in the conduct of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy.

4. During the course of discussion, the Chairperson and the Members raised a number of queries about single admission portal for foreign students, religious diplomacy, UN Democracy Fund, Champion Sector Service Sector Scheme, ICCR Scholarships, Prasar Bharati ,DD India , etc.

5. The representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs, Education, Commerce & Industry, Information and Broadcasting and NITI Aayog responded to the concerns raised by the Members. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson directed the witnesses to furnish written replies to the points raised by the members of the Committee at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21) HELD ON 28 OCTOBER, 2020**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 28 October, 2020 from 1600 hrs. to 1810 hrs in Main Committee Room, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
3. Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel
4. Smt Meenakshi Lekhi
5. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
6. Shri Ritesh Pandey
7. Shri N.K. Premachandran

RAJYA SABHA

8. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
9. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
10. Shri Shamsher Singh Manhas

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri P.C. Koul Additional Secretary
2. Shri Paolienlal Haokip Additional Director

WITNESSES

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri Manoj K. Bharti	Special Secretary (AD)

2.	Shri Dinesh K Patnaik	DG (ICCR)
3.	Ms. Manika Jain	Joint Secretary (OIA-II)
4.	Dr. Anupam Ray	Joint Secretary (PP &R)
5.	Shri Prashant Pise	DDG (ICCR)
6.	Shri Anurag Srivastava	Joint Secretary (XP)
7.	Shri Anil Kumar Rai	Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

1.	Shri Raghvendra Singh	Secretary
2.	Ms. Nirupama Kotru	Joint Secretary
3.	Ms. Amita Prasad Sarbhai	Joint Secretary
4.	Ms. Sanjukta Mudgal	Joint Secretary
5.	Dr. K. Sreenivasarao	Secretary, (Sahitya Akademi)
6.	Dr. Uttam Pacharne	Chairman,(Lalit Kala Akademi)
7.	Shri Ramakrishna Vedala	Secretary, I/C (Lalit Kala Akademi)
8.	Ms. Rita Swami Choudhary	Secretary Sangeet Natak Akademi

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs (MEA) and Culture to the Sitting of the Committee convened to have oral evidence on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations'. The Chairperson drew the attention of all the representatives to Direction 55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in order to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and also apprised the witnesses about the provisions of Direction 58 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. At first, the Representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs delved upon issues such as soft power approach, sending of cultural troupes abroad, promoting democracy, comparison with other soft power organizations, coordination mechanism between concerned Ministries, organizational strength within the Indian Cultural Centres abroad and so on.

4. Thereafter the representatives of the Ministry of Culture apprised the Committee about Cultural Exchange Programmes, cultural activities undertaken through multilateral organizations, role of Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi and Sangeet Natak Akademi in cultural diplomacy, cultural spaces, Project Mausam, Indo-Foreign Friendship Cultural Societies, participation in Indian Book Fairs etc.

5. The Chairperson and Members raised a number of queries on the subject. Thereafter, the representatives of the Ministries responded to the queries raised by the Members. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson also directed the witnesses to furnish written replies to the points raised by the Members of the Committee to the Secretariat at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2020-21) HELD ON 18 DECEMBER, 2020

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 18 December, 2020 from 1100 hrs. to 1300 hrs in Committee Room D, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

LOK SABHA

2. Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal
3. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
3. Smt Meenakshi Lekhi
4. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
5. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
6. Shri Ritesh Pandey
7. Shri N.K. Premachandran
8. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
9. Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
10. Shri Rebati Tripura

RAJYA SABHA

11. Shri K.J. Alphone
12. Shri Swapan Dasgupta

SECRETARIAT

2. Shri Paolienlal Haokip Additional Director

WITNESSES

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Shri Arun Kumar Chatterjee Additional Secretary
2. Dr Mohan Kumar Chairperson, RIS
3. Shri Dinesh K Patnaik DG (ICCR)

4.	Dr. Anupam Ray	Joint Secretary (PP &R)
5.	Shri Prashant Pise	DDG (ICCR)
7.	Shri Anil Kumar Rai	Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)
8.	Shri Sachin Chaturvedi	DG, RIS

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

1.	Ms. Nirupama Kotru	Joint Secretary
2.	Ms. Amita Prasad Sarbhai	Joint Secretary
3.	Ms. Sanjukta Mudgal	Joint Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs (MEA) and Culture to the Sitting of the Committee convened to have a briefing on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations'. The Chairperson also drew the attention of all the representatives to Direction 55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in order to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and also apprised the witnesses about the provisions of Direction 58 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. The representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) gave a detailed account of the role of RIS in India's soft power diplomacy, Global Development Centre (GDC), work programme of RIS, policy inputs provided to other countries, South-South cooperation, digital connectivity, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Responsible Research and Innovation and so on.

4. After providing a broad overview of the functioning of the National School of Drama (NSD) through a Power point presentation, the representatives from the Ministry of Culture briefed the Committee on issues relating to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) signed by NSD, and various measures being taken to internationalize the standards of NSD.

5. The Chairperson and Members raised a number of queries on the subject. Thereafter, the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs and Culture responded to the queries raised by the Members. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson also

directed the witnesses to furnish written replies to the points raised by the Members of the Committee to the Secretariat at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FOURTH SITTING OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 30 JUNE, 2021**

The Committee sat from 1100 hrs. to 1320 hrs. in Committee Room 'C',
Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
3. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
4. Smt. Preneet Kaur
5. Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi
6. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
7. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
8. Shri P. C. Mohan
9. Shri Ritesh Pandey
10. Dr. K.C. Patel
11. Shri N.K. Premachandran
12. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
13. Shri Rebaty Tripura

Rajya Sabha

14. Shri K. J. Alphons
15. Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia
16. Shri P. Chidambaram
17. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
18. Shri Brijlal

WITNESSES

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

1	Shri Dammu Ravi	Shri Dammu Ravi OSD (Secretary level)
2	Shri Dinesh K Patnaik	DG (ICCR)

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

1	Shri Raghvendra Singh	Secretary
2	Shri Rohit Kumar Singh	Additional Secretary
3	Shri Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma	Additional Secretary
4	Ms. Lily Pandeya	Joint Secretary
5	Ms. Amita Prasad Sarbhai	Joint Secretary
6	Ms. Sanjukta Mudgal	Joint Secretary
7	Ms. V. Vidyavathi	Director General (ASI)

Secretariat

1.	Dr. Ram Raj Rai	-	Director
2.	Shri Paolienlal Haokip	-	Additional Director
3.	K. Muanniang Tunlut	-	Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs and Culture to the Sitting of the Committee convened to take oral evidence on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations'. The Chairperson then drew the attention of all the representatives to Direction 55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in order to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings. The Chairperson also apprised the witnesses about the provisions of Direction 58 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. At first, the Representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs delved upon issues such as tools of soft power diplomacy; restructuring of ICCR; literary festivals; promotion of arts, theatres, language, cuisines etc; mechanism for inter-Ministerial coordination, cultural troupes and so on.

4. Then, the representatives of the Ministry of Culture presented detailed views on steps taken to raise standard of Indian Museums; enlargement of cultural spaces; Indian Institute of Heritage; Buddha Gallery; cultural mapping of villages; digitization of cultural places and excavated sites; non-personal data etc.

5. During the course of discussion, the Chairperson and the Members raised a number of queries on issues related to scholarship to foreign students; overlapping of mandates; heritage buildings; recruitment of art historians, curators and conservationists; policy for empanelment of artists in ICCR etc.

6. The representatives of both the Ministries responded to the concerns raised by Members. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson also directed the witnesses to furnish written replies to the points raised by the Members of the Committee to the Secretariat at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

MINUTES OF THE FIFTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 31 JANUARY, 2022.

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1610 hrs. in Committee Room ‘D’, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

Present

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

Members

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
3. Shri P. C. Mohan
4. Shri Ritesh Pandey
5. Shri N.K. Premachandran
6. Smt. Navneet Ravi Rana

Rajya Sabha

7. Shri K. J. Alphons
8. Shri Brijlal
9. Shri Prakash Javadekar
10. Shri K. Somaprasad

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Dammu Ravi | Secretary(ER) |
| 2. | Shri Kumar Tuhin | DG(ICCR) |
| 3. | Shri Anil Kumar Rai | Joint Secretary (Parl. & Coord.) |
| 4. | Shri Rajeev Kumar | DDG (Admn), ICCR |

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Shri Govind Mohan | Secretary |
| 2. | Shri Partha Sarthi Sen Sharma | Additional Secretary |

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 3. | Ms. Uma Nanduri | Joint Secretary |
| 4. | Ms. V. Vidyavathi | Director General(ASI) |
| 5. | Shri Dinesh Khanna | Director (NSD) |

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai | - | JS(RR) |
| 2. | Smt. Maya Lingi | - | Director(C, R &EA) |
| 2. | K. Muanniang Tunlut | - | Deputy Secretary |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministries of External Affairs and Culture to the Sitting of the Committee convened to take oral evidence on the subject ‘India’s Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations’. The Chairperson then drew the attention of all the representatives to Direction 55 (1) of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha in order to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings. The Chairperson also apprised the witnesses about the provisions of Direction 58 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.

3. In their initial remarks, the representatives of the Ministries of Culture and External Affairs shared broad observations on the various facets of the conduct of India’s soft power and cultural diplomacy. They delved upon issues such as people to people cultural exchange programmes; Democracy Network Programme; promotion of Yoga; Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav and so on.

4. Thereafter, the Chairperson and the Members raised pertinent questions on issues related to restructuring of ICCR; Bilateral Cultural Agreements; Cultural Exchange Programmes; exorbitant tickets fee for foreign tourists; popularization of Ayurveda; soft power matrix; ICCR scholarships; coordination and consultation among multiple agencies; empanelment of artists; ICCR Cultural Centres, etc.

6. The representatives of both the Ministries responded to the queries raised by Members. Before the Sitting concluded, the Chairperson also directed the witnesses to

furnish written replies to the points raised by the Members of the Committee to the Secretariat at the earliest.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

**MINUTES OF THE FOURTEENTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2021-22) HELD ON 8 AUGUST, 2022**

The Committee sat on Monday, the 8 August 2022 from 1000 hrs. to 1030 hrs in Committee Room No. 2, Block A, Extension to Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson

LOK SABHA

2. Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal
3. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
3. Smt Preneet Kaur
4. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
5. Dr. K. C. Patel
6. Shri N.K. Premachandran
8. Shri Soyam Babu Rao
9. Dr. Harsh Vardhan
10. Shri E.T. Mohammed Basheer

RAJYA SABHA

11. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
12. Shri. Brijlal
13. Shri. Abdul Wahab

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai Joint Secretary
2. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunglut Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the Sitting of the Committee.

3. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations'.

4. The Chairperson invited the Members to offer their suggestions, if any, for incorporation in the draft Report. The members suggested some minor modifications. The Committee adopted the draft Report with these minor modifications.

5. The Committee then authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Report incorporating the suggestions made by the Members and present the same to Parliament.

The witnesses then withdrew.

The Committee then adjourned.

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

KEY CULTURAL EVENTS ON MULTILATERAL PLATFORM IN THE RECENT PAST BY MINISTRY OF CULTURE

BRICS –

- Indian delegation led by Hon'ble MOS (I/C) for Culture participated in BRICS Culture Ministers Meeting held through video conference under the Chairpersonship of Russia on 3.9.2020
- Under the auspices of BRICS alliance of Art Museums and Galleries, the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi curated an in-house exhibition entitled *A Glimpse into Modern Indian Art* that showcased 15 works of art works of art. The exhibition was organized as a part of BRICS Cultural Festival at Xiamen Art Gallery, China from 15th – 22nd September 2017
- Under the auspices of BRICS Alliance of Art Museums and Galleries, National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi participated in the exhibition entitled *Uniqueness and Convergence* along with national level museums from Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa held at National Art Museum of China, Beijing from 10th April – 23rd April 2018. NGMA Delhi presented an in-house exhibition entitled *Reflections: Man and Nature in the paintings of Bireswar Sen*. The exhibition showcased 20 works of art from NGMA collection.
- The next edition of proposed joint-exhibition titled '*Bonding Regions & Imagining Cultural Synergies*' under *BRICS Alliance of Art Museums & Galleries* had been postponed due to Global Pandemic Covid-19. However, it is proposed to organise the same in 2021 coinciding with the BRICS event that India would be hosting in 2021. Works of art from Brazilian National Museum of Fine Arts from Brazil, State Museum of Oriental Art from Russia, National Gallery of Modern Art India, National Art Museum of China and Iziko Museum from South Africa are proposed to be on display at the National Gallery of Modern Art.
- The National Library has initiated the process for Opening of BRICS Corner. In this regard National Library has identified 1500 sq ft. area at the Second Floor of BhashaBhavan Building for opening the BRICS Corner. The corner will display the books, periodicals and other E-resources gifted by the BRICS countries, viz, Brazil, Russia, China and South Asia. The Corner is proposed to be opened during India's BRICS Presidency in 2021.
- BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting is proposed to be hosted by India during the BRICS Presidency of India in 2021. Cultural events are also proposed to be held on the occasion.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) –

- Hon'ble MOS(I/C), Culture participated in the 17th SCO Culture Ministers' Meeting held through video conference under the Chairpersonship of Russia on 10.9.2020.
- Artists from SNA participated in SCO Gala Concert on sidelines of SCO Heads of State Summit on 13.6.2019
- 2 Artists from Sahitya Akademi nominated for Kyrgyz Epic Festival during 26-30 June, 2019.
- An Online Digital exhibition on "SCO shared Buddhist Heritage" is being organized by National Museum in India as a part of SCO Calendar of activities.
- Sahitya Akademi is carrying out the translation work of 10 Indian literary works into Russian and Chinese as a follow up to the announcement made by Hon'ble P.M during his speech in SCO Summit 2019. These translations are proposed to be released during the upcoming SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting (PM Level) in November, 2020

BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

- Officers/Minister Participate in the meeting from time to time. As a follow-up to the PM announcement at Kathmandu in 2018, a three days training program cum workshop was proposed for training and capacity building of conservation professionals from the BIMSTEC countries. Two days program has been proposed at Institute of Archaeology under Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for 18 Professionals.

SAARC –

- Officers from the Ministry of Culture participate in Governing Board Meeting of SAARC Cultural Centre from time to time to finalize programme schedule of calendar of cultural events assigned to member states. Recently seminar on 'Hindu Cultural Trails' under the aegis of SAARC Cultural Centre, Sri Lanka was hosted by India.
- National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi (NGMA Delhi) participated in the *SAARC Artist Camp & Exhibition of Paintings 2017 - Nepal* organised by the SAARC Cultural Centre - Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal from 28th to 31st July 2017. Five artists from India participated in the said camp. The theme for the camp was *Sacred Sites* and *The Beauty of Nature*.

UNESCO

- India is a member of all the significant cultural conventions of UNESCO such as
 - (a) UNESCO's Convention for 'Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)'. So far 13 elements from India have been inscribed on this list.
 - (b) UNESCO's 2005 Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
 - (c) UNESCO's World Heritage Convention, the purpose of which is to protect and preserve the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. So far 38 Indian sites have been included in the UNESCO's World Heritage List.
 - (d) UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme vision is that the world's documentary heritage should be preserved and protected with due recognition of cultural mores and practicalities and permanently accessible to all without hindrance. So far, 9 documentary heritages from India have been included in the Memory of the World Register.
 - (e) UNESCO's Creative Cities Network (UCCN) aims to strengthen cooperation among cities that have recognized creativity as a strategic factor of sustainable development with regard to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects. So far, 5 cities from India have been designated as creative cities i.e. Varanasi and Jaipur in 2015 as creative cities of Music and Crafts & Folk Arts respectively, Chennai in 2017 as Creative City of Music and Mumbai and Hyderabad in 2019 as creative cities of Film & Gastronomy respectively.

M/o Culture regularly participates in Inter-Governmental meetings of the above UNESCO Conventions in order to claim a leadership role and also regularly sends nominations for inscription for tangible and intangible heritage, memory of world and creative cities network.

ANNEXURE-II

**STATUS NOTE ON MOUs AND YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES
ORGANIZED BY DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AFFAIRS**

S.No	Name of the Country	No. of delegates exchanged	Date of Signing of MoU / Place	Status
1.	Armenia	-	25.04.2017/ Yerevan	Yet to begin
2.	Bahrain	20	19.02.2014 / Ne Delhi	Regular Exchange Programmes are being organized
3.	Bangladesh	-	05/10/2019	Yet to Begin
4.	Belarus	-	12.09.2017 / Ne Delhi	Yet to begin
5.	BRICS Nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)	-	06.07.2015 / Kazan	BRICS Youth Forums are being organized annually. Russia – 2015, India – 2016, China – 2017, South Africa – 2018, Brazil 2019
6.	Indonesia	-	12.12.2016 / Ne Delhi	Yet to begin
7.	Kuwait	-	08.11.2013 / Ne Delhi	Since, no activities are being held, we have recommended for discontinuation of MoU.
8.	Kyrgyzstan	20	20.12.2016 / Ne Delhi	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized
9.	Mozambique	-	07.07.2016 / Maputo	Yet to begin
10.	Morocco	-	18.02.2019 / Rabat	Yet to begin
11.	Nepal	50	25.11.2014 / Kathmandu	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized
12.	Palestine	50	16.05.2017 / Ne Delhi	One delegation of 50 members was exchanged from each side during 2017. The quantum of the exchange was increased from 50 to 100 consequent upon the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Palestine on 10.02.2018. A 50-member Palestine Youth Delegation visited India from 1 – October, 2018.

13.	Portugal	10	24.06.2017 / Lisbon	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized.
14.	Russia	50	18.11.2016/ New Delhi	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized
15.	South Korea	25	18.05.2015 / South Korea	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized
16.	Sri Lanka	25	13.03.2015 / Colombo	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized.
S.No	Name of the Country	No. of delegates exchanged	Date of Signing of MoU / Place	Status
17.	Tajikistan	10	08.10.2018 / Dushanbe	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized.
18.	Tunisia	20	30.10.2017 / New Delhi	Regular Exchange Programmes are being organized
19.	Vietnam	10	15.09.2014 / Hanoi	Regular Exchange programmes are being organized

Apart from the above the following Youth Exchange programmes are also being organized by Department of Youth Affairs

- (a) Exchange of 100-member Youth Delegations with China has been continuing since 2006 on the strength of Joint Statement during the visit of Chinese President in 2006 (with exception that during 2011, 500-member delegations were exchanged). In the Joint Statement issued on 19.09.2014 on the occasion of visit of Chinese President, it has been decided to exchange 200-member youth delegations from 2015 to 2019. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of bilateral Diplomatic relations with China, it has been decided in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs that during the year 2020, a 500-Youth delegation will be exchanged from each side.
- (b) A 100-member youth delegation from Bangladesh has been visiting India since 2012. No youth delegation from Indian side is sent to Bangladesh. This is a joint programme of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Ministry of External Affairs;
- (c) Youth Exchange Programme with Maldives are also continuing with Maldives since 2016 on the basis of MoU signed by Department of Sports;
- (d) On the recommendation of MEA and in pursuance of the meeting held by a delegation with Hon'ble MoS (IC), YAS in 2017, a 22-member Youth delegation from Uzbekistan visited India from 12-20 December 2017. Reciprocal visit of the Indian Youth delegation is expected in 2019.

- (e) Delegations are also sent to participate in “the Ship for World Youth Leaders Programme” organized by the Government of Japan as and when invitations are received

List of Countries with whom India has EEP/MOC/JDI/LoI

Sl No	Name of the Country
1.	AFGHANISTAN
2.	ARMENIA
3.	AUSTRALIA
4.	BELARUS
5.	BOTSWANA
6.	BRAZIL
7.	BRICS (countries)
8.	BURUNDI
9.	CANADA
10.	CHILE
11.	CHINA
12.	CROATIA
13.	CZECH REPUBLIC
14.	ECUADOR
15.	ESTONIA
16.	ETHIOPIA
17.	FRANCE
18.	GERMANY
19.	GUYANA
20.	HUNGARY
21.	INDONESIA
22.	ISRAEL
23.	JAPAN

SI No	Name of the Country
24.	KUWAIT
25.	MALAYSIA
26.	MAURITIUS
27.	MEXICO
28.	MONGOLIA
29.	MOROCCO
30.	MOZAMBUQUE
31.	MYANMAR
32.	NEW ZEALAND
33.	NORWAY
34.	OMAN
35.	PERU
36.	PORTUGAL
37.	QATAR
38.	REPUBLIC OF KOREA
39.	RUSSIA
40.	RWANDA
41.	SAUDI ARABIA
42.	SOUTH AFRICA
43.	SRI LANKA
44.	SYRIA
45.	TAJIKISTAN
46.	TANZANIA
47.	THAILAND
48.	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Sl No	Name of the Country
49.	TURKMENISTAN
50.	UNITED KINGDOM
51.	U.A.E.
52.	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
53.	UZBEKISTAN
54.	VIETNAM
55.	YEMEN

SPARC: Country-Wise Data

SI No	Country	Number of Proposals approved in 2018-19	Number of Proposals currently under evaluation in 2019-20
1.	Australia	54	199
2.	Austria	2	6
3.	Belgium	4	8
4.	Brazil	2	8
5.	Canada	19	84
6.	China	9	32
7.	Denmark	4	23
8.	Finland	5	15
9.	France	7	19
10.	Germany	20	30
11.	Hong Kong	3	5
12.	Israel	8	17
13.	Italy	5	23
14.	Japan	12	28
15.	Netherlands	7	24
16.	New Zealand	4	12
17.	Norway	7	17
18.	Portugal	3	10
19.	Russia	2	20
20.	Singapore	9	66
21.	South Africa	4	5
22.	South Korea	6	21
23.	Spain	4	13
24.	Sweden	6	18
25.	Switzerland	2	7
26.	Taiwan	3	26
27.	United Kingdom	66	160
28.	United States of America	117	326
	Grand Total	394	1222

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION UNDER NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 (NEP 2020)

1. Curricular and Institutional Reforms under NEP 2020 will promote internationalization, by aligning Indian systems to international systems, facilitating credit transfer and equivalence of degrees, improving quality of education, attracting students with better choice of subjects (**Para 12.7**) . Some of the major reforms in this regard are :

- Developing Multidisciplinary universities/ colleges/ HEI clusters/ knowledge Hubs (Para 10.1, 10.7, 10.9, 11.11.5)
- Flexibility in Curriculum – (Para 11.6, 11.7)
- Credit based Education/ Bank of Credit (Para 11.8, 11.9, 12.2)
- Catalyzing Research through National Research Foundation –Para 17
- Single Regulator with four verticals (Para 18)
- Governance Reforms – Graded Autonomy (Para 10.4), Board of Governors (Para 19)

2. Campus of Foreign Institutions can open in India and of Indian Institutions Abroad (Para 12.8)

- A legislative framework / guidelines will be put in place for this
- Special Dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms will be given to foreign institutions at par with autonomous institutions of India.
- High Performing Indian Universities will be encouraged to set up Campuses in Other Countries.

3. Energizing Research/Academic Collaborations (Para 12.8)

- **National Research Foundation** will foster research and innovation culture
- Focus on **enhancing research/teaching collaborations**, faculty/student exchanges, knowledge creation and exchange
- **Credits earned in foreign universities** will be counted for the award of a degree.

- Regulations being put in place to allow **Joint Degrees, Twinning Arrangements and Dual Degrees** between Indian and Foreign institutions

4. On Campus Support for Foreign Students (Para 12.8)

- An International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students
- Coordinate matters relating to welcoming and supporting students
- Quality Residential Facilities, International Cuisine
- Meaningful opportunities for Social Engagement.
- Course in English as per requirement

III. FURTHER PLAN TO STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONALIZATION (IN 2020-21)

- 1. Building Synergy** between educational collaborations and programmes by various ministries/ institutions through a **Common Admission Portal**
- 2. Foreign Students Office in top 20 institutions** taking foreign students
3. Universities to start **Alumni Connect** – to leverage goodwill of alumni in the process of internationalizing Indian education
4. UGC and AICTE to formulate regulations for **Credit Transfer** with **Equivalence**
5. UGC and AICTE to formulate regulations for **Joint Degree/ Dual Degree/ Twinning**

(e) Languages,

Ministry of Culture through one of its organization Sahitya Akademi has undertaken the following work of translation of Indian literary master pieces into foreign language:

1. 10 titles of modern Indian literature in to Russian and Chinese under SCO translation project.
2. Herbert by Nabarun Bhattacharya into German (Publisher – Draupadi Verlag)
3. Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh into Swedish (Publisher – Aranan Publishing House)
4. KaattilOruMaan by Ambai into French (Publisher – Zulma)
5. Bhartala Da NatyaShastra by Kapila Vatsayan into Russian
6. Indian Short Stories by E.V. Ramakrishnan into Russian

7. Kabita into Slovenian
8. The Dual of the Heart (Slovenian) in English
9. The Ayodhya Canto of the Ramayana as told by Kamban from Tamil into English
10. Chemmeen from Malayalam into English and several Eastern European languages
11. GarambicaBapu by S.N. Pendse into English

As far as languages are concerned, we have a special division in the Ministry of External Affairs – RashttraBhasha. They look after all the Indian languages. The effort is to promote all Indian languages. We had a programme which is called Bharat EkParichay and we had sent out a set of 51 books to most of our Embassies overseas.

(1630/SNT/IND)

They were to approach various universities and try to setup an Indian corner where these books would be housed, and those books, Sir, had regional languages. We had books about India and we had regional languages there. So, Sir, the effort is to promote all Indian languages.

We also have Chairs abroad. We have Chairs on Hindi, we have Chairs on Sanskrit, Tamil, Urdu and Bengali. So, the effort is to work on all Indian languages.”

Annexure-VI

DETAILS OF COUNTRY WISE SCHOLARSHIP PROVIDED UNDER ICCR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME

Sl. No.	Country	2013-1	2014-1	2015-1	2016-1	2017-1	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Afghanistan	1004	1000	1000	1000	1000	1500	1421	1381	1361
2	Algeria	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	1	1
3	Angola	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	34	30
4	Argentina	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	Armenia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
6	Australia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
7	Azarbaijan	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	Bangladesh	202	202	202	202	222	222	222	222	222
9	Belarus	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
10	Belgium	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	Belize	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12	Benin	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	2
13	Bhutan	20	23	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
14	Botswana	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	50	50
15	Brazil	1	1	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
16	Bulgaria	0	0	0	6	6	6	6	6	6
17	Burkina Faso	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	1	2
18	Burundi Concurrently with Ugnada	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	5
19	Cambodia	15	15	17	23	23	23	23	23	23

20	Cameroon	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0	3
21	Canada	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
22	Cape Verde(Cabo Verede) concurrent with Senegal	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	2	2
23	Central African Republic	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	0	1
24	Chad concurrent with Nigeria	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
25	Chile	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
26	China	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
27	Colombia	2	2	2	10	10	10	10	2	2
28	Comoros concurrent with Madagascar	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	5
29	Congo (Republic of congo)	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	0	1
30	Cote d'Ivoire	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	7	7
31	Cuba	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	Cyprus	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
33	Democratic Republic of Congo	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	5	5
34	Djibouti	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	15	15
35	Egypt	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	11	13
36	Equatorial Guinea	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	1
37	Eritrea	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	5	5
38	Ethiopia	55	55	55	55	55	55	55	60	60
39	Fiji (Suva)	25	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

40	Fiji (Tuvalu)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
41	France	2	2	2	7	7	7	7	7	7
42	Gabon	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	1
43	Gambia concurrent with Senegal	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	33	33
44	Georgia	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
45	Germany	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
46	Ghana	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	50	35
47	Greece	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
48	Guatemala	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
49	Guinea	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	1
50	Guinea-Bissau	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0	1
51	Guyana	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
52	Hungary	4	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	3
53	Indonesia	34	32	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
54	Indonesia (Timor Leste)	0	0	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
55	Iran	30	30	10	20	20	20	20	20	20
56	Iraq	50	50	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
57	Israel	7	7	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
58	Jamaica	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
59	Japan	12	12	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
60	Jordan	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
61	Kazakhstan	14	14	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
62	Kenya	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	50

63	Kuwait	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
64	Kyrgystan	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
65	Laos	14	14	10	12	12	12	12	12	12
66	Lebanon	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
67	Lesotho concurrent with South Africa	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	43	35
68	Liberia concurrent with Cote d'IVOIRI	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	6	1
69	Libya	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	0	1
70	Loa PDR	10	10	12	10	10	10	10	10	10
71	Madagascar	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	23	20
72	Malawi	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	30	20
73	Malaysia	8	8	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
74	Maldives	37	37	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
75	Mali	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	7	7
76	Mauritania	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	1
77	Mauritius/Rodrigue	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	70	70
78	Mexico	2	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
79	Mongolia	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
80	Morocco	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	4	4
81	Mozambique	34	34	34	34	34	34	34	38	38
82	Myanmar	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
83	Namibia	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	29	29
84	Nepal	119	119	134	134	134	134	134	134	134
85	Netherlands	0	0	1	5	5	5	5	5	5

86	New Zealand	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
87	Niger	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	5	5
88	Nigeria	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	15	20
89	Norway	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
90	Oman	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
91	Palestine	8	8	10	25	25	25	25	50	50
92	Papua New Guinea	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3
93	Poland	11	11	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
94	Portugal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
95	Qatar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
96	Reunion Island	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
97	Romania	0	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
98	Russia	17	17	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
99	Rwanda	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	0	5
100	Sao Toem & Prinicpe concurrent with Angola	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	1
101	Saudi Arabia	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
102	Senegal	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	1
103	Serbia	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
104	Seychelles	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	5	5
105	Sierra Leone	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	15	15
106	Slovenia	5	5	3	1	1	1	1	1	1
107	Somalia	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17
108	South Africa	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	26	30

109	South Korea	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
110	South Sudan	7	7	7	7	7	15	15	15	20
111	Spain	5	5	7	10	10	10	10	10	10
112	Sri Lanka	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
113	Sudan	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	60	60
114	Suriname	2	8	1	5	5	5	5	5	5
115	Swaziland	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	25	25
116	Syria	19	19	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
117	Tajikistan	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
118	Tanzania	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	79	79
119	Thailand	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
120	Togo concurrent with Ghana	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	5	5
121	Trinidad & Tobago	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
122	Tunisia	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	0	2
123	Turkey	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
124	Turkmenistan	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
125	UAE	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
126	Uganda	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	35	35
127	Ukraine	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
128	United Kingdom	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
129	Uzbekistan	18	18	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
130	Venezuela	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4
131	Vietnam	40	40	44	48	48	48	48	48	48
132	Yemen	52	52	58	58	58	58	58	58	58

133	Zambia	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	10	10
134	Zimbabwe	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	10	10
	Total(A)	3140	3153	3137	3207	3227	3738	3659	3655	3616

Schemes(Slots offers Globally)

*	ICCR Scholarship Scheme for Training in Indian Music and Dance	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
*	Ayush Scholarship Scheme for Bimestic Countries	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	54
*	Ayush Scholarship Scheme for non-Bimestic Countries	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	20	27
*	Ayush Scholarships Scheme(for Malaysian)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	5
*	Ayush Scholarships Scheme for South East Asian Region	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	29	23
	Total (B)	204	204	204	204	204	204	204	199	209
	Grand Total	3344	3357	3341	3411	3431	3942	3863	3854	3825

[Ref: Annexure II, Replies to Additional LOPS, MEA]

Annexure-VII

STATE-WISE LIST OF CULTURAL GROUPS SENT ABROAD

Sl. No.	States	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22 (till date)
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands										
2	Andhra Pradesh	1	1	1	2		4		1		
3	Arunachal Pradesh		1								
4	Assam	1	2	5	1	3	2	3	2		
5	Bihar			1			1				
6	Chandigarh										
7	Chhattisgarh			1				2			
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu										
9	Delhi	33	26	19	28	58	48	19	28	2	7
10	Goa	2		1	1		1	1			
11	Gujarat	10	3	3	12	4	3	10	1		
12	Haryana			1	1		1	2	3		
13	Himachal Pradesh										
14	Jammu and Kashmir	1		2		1	2				1
15	Jharkhand	1	2	1			1		1		
16	Karnataka	10	2	1	5	8	14	9	4		1
17	Kerala	8		2	6	4	7	8	7		
18	Ladakh							1			
19	Lakshadweep										
20	Madhya Pradesh	1		2	2	1	1	1	2		
21	Maharashtra	19	10	12	13	18	23	12	11	2	3
22	Manipur	5		4	3	7	5	5	4		
23	Meghalaya	1			1		1				
24	Mizoram			1		1	1				
25	Nagaland	1		1		2	2		1		
26	Odisha	4	1	1		4	7	6	7		2
27	Puducherry										
28	Punjab	4	1	1	6	2	4	3	7	1	
29	Rajasthan	6	4	7	11	8	13	8	3	2	
30	Sikkim						1				
31	Tamil Nadu	9	6	7	6	10	8	10	3	1	1
32	Telangana				2	6	1	1		1	1
33	Tripura										
34	Uttar Pradesh	4	1	2	8	7	6	5	6	1	

35	Uttarakhand							1			
36	West Bengal	17	1	8	13	22	23	9	2	1	2
	Total	154	61	86	121	166	175	118	94	12	18
