

NINTH REPORT

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (1995-96)

(TENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 19th December, 1995,
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 19th December, 1995*



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 1995/Agrahayana, 1917 (Saka)

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* Not printed. Minutes appended to the Report in cyclostyled form. One copy laid on the table of both the Houses and five copies placed in the Parliament Library.

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(1995-96)

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Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee

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2. Shri Bijoy Krishna Handique
3. Shri Venkata Krishna Reddy Kasu
4. Shri V. Sreenivasa Prasad
5. Shri Anwari Basavaraj Patil
6. Shri Inder Jit
7. Shri A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury
8. Dr. Girija Vyas
9. Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar
10. Prof. (Smt.) Savithri Lakshmanan
11. Shri Udaysingrao Gaikwad
12. Shri K.P. Reddaiah Yadav
13. Smt. D.K. Thara Devi Siddhartha
14. Shri Rajnath Sonkar Shastri
15. Shri Satya Deo Singh
16. Shri Anand Ratna Maurya
17. Dr. Lal Bahadur Rawal
18. Shri Ashtbhuja Prasad Shukla
19. Dr. A.K. Patel
20. Shri Mahavirsinh Harisinhji Gohil
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22. Mohd. Yunus Saleem
23. Shri Roshan Lal
24. Dr. Sudarsan Raychaudhuri
25. Dr. Sudhir Ray

26. Smt. Geeta Mukherjee
27. Shri R. Naidu Ramasamy
28. Shri Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait
29. Shri Chandra Shekhar
30. Shri Arjun Singh

Rajya Sabha

31. Shri Sikander Bakht
32. Shri Somappa R. Bommai
33. Shri Tridib Chaudhari
34. Shri Jagesh Desai
35. Shri T.N. Chaturvedi
36. Shri G. Swaminathan
37. Shri G.G. Swell
38. Shri V.N. Gadgil
39. Shri K. Mohammad Khan
40. Shri K. Rahman Khan
41. Shri Inder Kumar Gujral
42. Smt. Vyjayantimala Bali
- *43. Shri Mohd. Yunus

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Ashok Kumar Pandey | — | <i>Additional Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri. G.R. Patwardhan | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 3. Shri O.P Ghai | — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 4. Shri Ashok Sarin | — | <i>Under Secretary</i> |

* Ceased to be a Member of the Committee consequent upon his retirement from Rajya Sabha *w.e.f.* 14.6.1995.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (1995-96) having been authorised by the Committee to present on their behalf, this Ninth Report on the Indian Council for Cultural Relations relating to the Ministry of External Affairs.

2. In its First Report, the Standing Committee on External Affairs (1993-94) had proposed to undertake a detailed examination of the functioning of the ICCR, a subject of immense significance. Consequently, the Committee (1993-94) took up the examination of the ICCR. Giving due importance to the subject, a Sub-Committee was constituted for the purpose which made an in-depth study of the functioning of the ICCR. The Sub-Committee constituted of the following Members :

- Shri Inder Jit — *Convenor*
2. Shri Sikander Bakht
 3. Smt. Geeta Mukherjee
 4. Shri Sudarsan Raychaudhuri
 5. Shri Syed Shahabuddin
 6. Shri Satya Deo Singh
 7. Shri G.G. Swell
 8. Smt. D.K. Thara Devi Siddhartha
 9. Dr. Girija Vyas
 10. Smt. Vyjayantimala Bali

3. Apart from taking evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and the ICCR and obtaining relevant written material from them, the Sub-Committee also heard the views of the representatives of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Department of Culture, the three National Akademies *viz.* Lalit Kala Akademi, the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Sahitya Akademi and the National School of Drama on the ICCR. The Sub-Committee then invited various eminent artistes and art critics to seek their views and suggestions for improvement of the working of the ICCR.

4. The Sub-Committee adopted the Report at its sitting held on 21st November, 1995. The Committee then considered and adopted the Report at their sitting held on 6 December, 1995. The Minutes of the sittings of the Sub-Committee and Committee form Part II* of the Report.

5. The Committee wish to express their thanks to representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs, the ICCR, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, the Department of Culture, the three National Akademis and the National School of Drama for appearing before the Committee and offering their valuable comments/suggestions. The Committee also thank the eminent artistes and art critics for tendering their views before the Sub-Committee. The Committee express their appreciation for the cooperation extended by the President, ICCR in discussing with the members the working of the ICCR and sharing his considered views on the subject.

6. For facility of reference and convenience, the observation and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

NEW DELHI;
11 December, 1995
20 Agrahayana, 1917 (Saka)

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on External Affairs.

* Not printed. A cyclostyled copy laid on the table of both the Houses and five copies placed in the Parliament Library.

REPORT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The Standing Committee on External Affairs, in its first report presented to the Parliament in April, 1993, decided to have a thorough study of the working of the ICCR. The Committee felt :—

“The External Affairs Ministry provides a substantial amount of money as grant-in-aid. They should have some more effective system of exercising periodical review and assessment of its activities over this body. Efforts should invariably be made to ensure that the objectives for which the Council is established are achieved. In this respect the Committee propose to have a detailed examination of the ICCR.”

1.2 In pursuance of this, the Chairman of the Committee set up on 17.8.1993 a Sub-Committee with Shri Inder Jit as Convenor and the following as members : Shri Sikander Bhakt, Smt. Geeta Mukherjee, Shri Sudarshan Ray Chaudhuri, Shri Syed Shahabuddin, Sri Satya Deo Singh, Prof. G.G. Swell, Smt. D.K. Thara Devi Siddhartha and Dr. Girija Vyas. On 17.4.1995 Smt. Vyjayantimala Bali was also appointed a member. The Sub-Committee undertook its indepth study by inviting as witnesses senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the President and the Director-General of the ICCR, representatives of the three National Academies, eminent artistes and others involved in the cultural field. Opinions in writing were also sought from several well-known personalities in the field of culture. The objectives of the Committee's study of the ICCR were two-fold :—

- (i) to examine and assess the activities and programmes of the ICCR so as to determine whether these meet with the objectives for which the Council was established; and
- (ii) to consider and recommend whether the ICCR should reorient and restructure its priorities and activities to adapt to the new requirements of India's foreign policy in a new international environment.

1.3 Relations between countries are governed by enlightened national interest. Political, economic and strategic considerations, no

doubt, form the basis on which the edifice of foreign policy is built. But no foreign policy, however wisely conceived, can remove misunderstandings or overcome prejudices unless it is formulated in the light of the historic background, temper and contemporary trends prevailing in the other country. Without this knowledge there is little likelihood that nations with different traditions, values and ideologies can overcome their preoccupations sufficiently to develop a common ground of shared perceptions, interests and meaningful cooperation. Seen in this context, the role of "cultural diplomacy" can be broadly defined as a subtle exercise in correcting distortions and influencing the way in which a country/people are perceived. In other words, cultural diplomacy aims at improving the overall environment between nations by appealing to the minds and hearts; or, in Dale Carnegie's words, is designed to "win friends and influence people". This exercise can be undertaken both within and outside formal governmental structures.

1.4 The aims of India's cultural diplomacy in the early years of independence were rooted in the country's preceding historical experience. Perceptions about India and things Indian in the outside world had been mainly influenced by British writers and observers during the days of the Raj. India till independence in 1947 was seen by the world largely through 'British eyes' even as great scholars, thinkers and philosophers of the world, such as Max Mueller of Germany and Romain Rolland of France, and several other eminent indologists, sought to understand and interpret India, its 5000-year-old civilisation, culture and ethos. Understandably, the portrayal of India abroad by the British was influenced by their imperial interests and not the least by racial disdain for a colonised people. At the same time, some Indian thinkers and philosophers endeavoured to project Indian culture and tradition through "Indian eyes", as in the case of Swami Vivekananda through his epoch-making speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Nevertheless, popular perceptions about India suffered from colonial stereotypes. India and its arts and culture were shown in poor light. Our country was generally depicted as an exotic and romantic land of maharajas, tigers, snake charmers and the Taj Mahal. It was also projected as a country of grinding poverty and of heat and dust with few redeeming features. The image of Indian culture abroad was one of a fossilised monolith frozen since an era long past. There was little, if any, understanding of the living essence of Indian culture, its vitality and resilience or of the Indian renaissance. *Consequently, the prime endeavour of India's cultural diplomacy since independence can be said to have been one of*

correcting and rehabilitating the Indian personality and of presenting India through Indian eyes with a view to changing the perceptions about India steeped in stereotypes of the colonial past and to project the vibrant and many-splendoured cultural-civilisational personality of India in the international area. These broad objectives have been achieved by and large over the last four decades.

1.5 The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 led to momentous transformation in regional and global alignments. Simultaneously, there has been an emergence of a western ideological totalitarianism based on self-righteous conceptions of virtue and intolerant universalist vision; in other words, the onset of a new form of cultural imperialism facilitated by globalisation of the media. Some scholars in the West (Prof. Samuel Huntington being pre-eminent among them) are even peddling theories about the looming future confrontation between nations based on the cultural divide. Judeo-Christian civilisational values are seen to be universalist and in conflict with Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism and the African outlook.

1.6 This has implications and challenges for the cultural and social basis of countries like India. Our tradition is a wealth of tolerance and is reflected in our pluralistic democracy and India's unique and composite culture. All this has, indeed, necessitated a major structuring of our foreign policy priorities and objectives in tune with the new pressures and demands in the International fora. It is imperative that the threatened emergence of a new cultural hegemony is firmly, if subtly, challenged at a people-to-people level on a sustained basis.

1.7 The role of cultural diplomacy has thus become crucial in projecting India's policies, perceptions and concerns abroad, not only to better the environment of relationship between India and various countries but also to defeat concerted attempts by unfriendly quarters at image distortion. All this is certain to eventually help being about increased interaction in political, economic and commercial fields.

1.8 Projection of India's culture abroad must not, therefore, remain devoid of social, economic and political influences. Indeed it is this interface with the 'real world' and with the 'here and now' that moulds and reflects culture. Attempts to promote culture for culture's sake and to filter away culture from the different interfaces which give it its holistic character often leads to distortions and misconceptions of what a nation and its people truly are. In fact, there is a tendency for some time past to equate cultural projection abroad only with the exchange of performing and visual arts. This has led to wrong

priorities and emphasis on the kind of programmes and activities undertaken in terms of cultural projection abroad.

1.9 In the light of all these factors, the Committee undertook a detailed examination and assessment of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations as one of India's premier institutions for fostering cultural exchanges and mutual understanding with the wide world.

CHAPTER II

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND THE ROLE OF THE ICCR

2.1 One of the aims of India's freedom struggle was to revive and strengthen the country's cultural ties with the outside world. This was reflected in the historic Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1946 wherein it was resolved to set up an Indian Council for Cultural Cooperation to revive and promote closer cultural ties with the other Asian Countries and to project the Indian personality and its rich culture through "Indian eyes". The Indian Council for Cultural Relations came to be set up some three years later. However, its scope was not confined to the Asian region alone. Free India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and its first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, enlarged its mandate to include the task of forging closer cultural ties with the rest of the wide world.

2.2 The ICCR was established and formally inaugurated in April, 1950. Its objectives as defined in the Memorandum of Association were as follows:—

- to establish, revive and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries.
- to promote cultural exchange with other countries.
- to adopt all other measures as may be required to further its objectives.

2.3 Maulana Azad, as the Education Minister, became the founding President of the ICCR in 1950 and held this office until 1958. The ICCR was then under the administrative jurisdiction of the Education Ministry. This arrangement continued till 22 April, 1970, when the jurisdiction of the Council was transferred to the Ministry of External Affairs following a decision of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs. Interestingly, the proposal for the transfer was initiated in 1967 by Shri M.C. Chagla, following his appointment as the Minister of External Affairs from his earlier charge as the Minister of Education.

2.4 The Ministry of External Affairs assumed administrative and operational control of the Council in 1970-71 with a view to making the Council an effective and non-controversial instrument of India's foreign policy. In 1978, in keeping with the recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee, the Council took over from the Department of Culture all work pertaining to incoming and outgoing cultural delegations and delegated activities relating to implementation of cultural exchange programmes.

2.5 In the initial years, the aims and objectives of the ICCR were two-fold: (a) *to project an Indian Personality on the international cultural map and to present India through Indian eyes so as to correct various distortions about India created by established stereotypes of the colonial era; and (b) to forge people-to-people contacts with the other countries, particularly the newly emerging nations, which years of colonial rule had prevented.* By and large, the ICCR's activities have helped in achieving these broad objectives.

2.6 Now, in the changed and new evolving international context, the ICCR has to adapt perforce to the changing perceptions, circumstances and environment. Cultural diplomacy objectives thus need to be redefined and linked even closer to the Indian foreign policy and its response to the many new and varied challenges.

2.7 It, therefore, becomes evident that the ICCR is required to play a more important supporting role in tandem with the Ministry of External Affairs in projecting India's policies, concerns and perceptions abroad. The ICCR has certain built-in advantages to undertake this task. Firstly, its autonomous status provides a great deal of flexibility in dealing for instance, with a large number of individuals/institutions who would otherwise normally shy away from being involved directly with a Government Ministry/Department. Equally, it provides flexibility in dealing with individuals/organisations or even issues with which the MEA would not like its association publicly acknowledged. Thus the ICCR provides a useful and effective conduit outside the formal structures of Governments for interaction at various levels.

2.8 Secondly, the credentials of the ICCR as a cultural organisation of long standing allows it to project our concerns and perceptions abroad without being branded as "propagandist". This is achieved largely through the Council's publications and its visitors programme.

2.9 Thirdly, in the new climate of political and economic liberalisation in the developing and erstwhile socialist countries, there is less and less talk in terms of government-oriented cultural exchanges. In fact, State patronage in the form of subsidies and grants is getting reduced. In other words, the activist role of the government is lessening and as in the developed countries, cultural interaction with foreign countries will hereafter take place more and more through autonomous institutional linkages. In this newly evolving scenario, the ICCR has become more relevant and its distance from the MEA would make it a more effective and credible instrument of cultural diplomacy.

2.10 The Committee note the stand of the Ministry of External Affairs that the ICCR is autonomous and is only administratively

attached to it. Yet, it is surprised to find that the Annual Report of the Ministry presented to Parliament includes a chapter on the work of the ICCR. It is equally surprised to note that the Director General of the ICCR is designated ex-officio head of the Ministry's Cultural Division. Both seem to be incongruous in the context of the Ministry's claim that the Council is autonomous. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the ICCR should prepare its own Annual Report and that the same be presented to Parliament and appropriately considered by the Parliament's Standing Committee on External Affairs and the two Houses.

2.11 The Committee therefore feel that there is urgent need to examine in depth how the ICCR could be reoriented and given real autonomy to enable it to function effectively in response to the changing needs and priorities of our national objectives. This essentially means that the ICCR's activities and mandate should adapt to the new demands in the conduct of our cultural diplomacy. Basically, the ICCR should function as a nodal agency to enable it to project more effectively an integrated and unified image of India's personality, perceptions and concerns abroad. That would, among other things, entail a subtle but meaningful shift in its methodology. The ICCR must gradually de-emphasise some of the very general cultural programmes which have generated over the years little else beyond passing goodwill.

CHAPTER III

ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ICCR

3.1 According to its constitution, the ICCR is a Corporate Body and has a perpetual seal. It may sue and be sued in its corporate name. The Council is administered by a *General Assembly, a Governing Body and a Finance Committee*. The General Assembly consists of 64 members, the Governing Body of 18 members and the Finance Committee of 6 members. In addition, the constitution of the ICCR provides for six office-bearers, namely, President, three Vice-Presidents, (the Foreign Secretary is *ex-officio* Vice-President while the other two are elected by the General Assembly), Financial Adviser and the Director General. The constitution also lays down that the Director-General shall be the Principal Executive Officer of the Council.

3.2 The organisational set up of the Council for the day to day conduct of its activities, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, is as follows :—

- (a) President
- (b) Director-General
- (c) Two Deputy Directors-General
- (d) Secretariat at the headquarters with 22 Programme Directors, 29 Programme Officers and a supporting Staff of 279
- (e) Eight Regional Offices, each headed by a Regional Director/Regional Officer, and
- (f) Twelve Indian Cultural Centres abroad.

3.3 The Director-General of the ICCR is a senior officer of the Indian Foreign Service, who is also designated as the *ex-officio* Joint Secretary (Culture) in the Ministry of External Affairs. He is assisted by two Deputy Directors-General of Director's rank from the Indian Foreign Service.

General Assembly

3.4 To constitution of the ICCR requires the General Assembly to meet at least once every year at a place and on a date to be fixed by the President. Special meetings may be called by the President as and when necessary.

Governing Body

3.5 According to the constitution of the ICCR, the governing body shall consist of the following members *viz.*

- (i) President
- (ii) Three Vice-Presidents
- (iii) Secretary
- (iv) Financial Adviser
- (v) Three members nominated by the Government of India from among these/their nominees on the General Assembly.
- (vi) Nine members to be elected by the General Assembly from amongst its members of whom at least one shall be a member of the Rajya Sabha and two members of Lok Sabha.

3.6 The Governing Body meets a least twice every year at a place and a date to be fixed by the President. More meetings may be called by the President on his own initiative or at the request received in writing from two-thirds of the members of the Governing Body.

3.7 Keeping in view the need for a reorientation of the ICCR's role in the changed international context, the Committee feel it is time to review the Council's existing organisational set up and functioning, including the selection of its President, the choice and tenure of the Director-General and the composition of the General Assembly and other bodies.

3.8 The Vice-President of India was nominated by the President of India as the President of the ICCR for many years. This practice worked well without raising any controversy. The Vice-President of India added much-needed dignity and stature to the ICCR. In 1993, however, the practice was changed and a former Minister was appointed as a "full time" President and given the rank of a Cabinet Minister. The Committee went into the change affected and its impact on the effectiveness and functioning of the ICCR. It has come to the broad conclusion that the change has undermined the ICCR's smooth functioning and effectiveness and involved it in controversy. In fact, this was reflected in the "shortened tenure" of the former Director-General, who was specially chosen for the assignment in the light of his experience and background. Complaints were also received about the huge expenditure incurred by the President on his travels at home and abroad and on his office.

3.9 The Committee are of the view that the previous system of having the Vice President as the President of the ICCR should be revived. The Vice-President may be enabled to take over ex-officio as the President of the ICCR and he need not necessarily be appointed each time by the President. It may be pointed out that projection of Indian Culture abroad today has become complicated and sophisticated involving the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, besides the Ministry of External Affairs. This calls for effective coordination and cooperation among these Ministries and other Government agencies. The Vice-President as ex-officio President of the ICCR is best suited to perform the required role. He would have the status, authority, and influence to get various Ministries and authorities to cooperate, apart from having access to official briefs, papers, and documents.

3.10 The Committee considered the question whether the ICCR should continue to be under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs or revert to the Ministry of Education and Culture, now called the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Culture). It is of the considered view that the ICCR may continue to be under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs since Indian Missions/ Posts abroad have to play a crucial role in continuously assisting the ICCR in conducting its cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the Committee strongly feel that the Council should be accorded real autonomy, which should among other things entitle it to present its own report to the Parliament. In such a set-up, the Director-General should continue to be from the Ministry of External Affairs but should be upgraded to the rank of Additional Secretary. There should be two Deputy Directors General, one from the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the other from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure functional coordination between the three main Ministries actively involved. Both the Deputy Directors General should be of the rank of Joint Secretary. Simultaneously, the permanent staff should be provided much needed motivation and incentives to serve the ICCR and its mission to the best of their ability. Good work and welcome initiatives should be rewarded by way of promotions to senior administrative levels at the headquarters and postings abroad.

3.11 The Constitution of the ICCR provides that the Director-General, who is the Principal Executive Officer of the Council with the approval of the Governing Body. The Committee feel that the

Ministry of External Affairs should be required to submit a panel of three names to the President of the Council for the appointment of a new Director-General. Likewise, the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should submit a panel of three names each to the Director-General for the appointment of the two Deputy Directors-General proposed by the Committee with the approval of the President of the Council.

3.12 The Committee also favour some changes in the organisational set up and functioning of the ICCR. The General Assembly should meet at least twice every year, not annually. Also, instead of 15 representatives from the educational institutions in its composition, it should have 10 representatives from the educational institutions and 5 from the print and electronic media. Worthwhile representation should also be given to the Private Sector to involve in meaningfully in the work of the Council. On the basis of past experience, only such persons should be nominated as can spare sufficient time to contribute significantly to its deliberations. Further Clause 7(vi) of the Constitution should be revised to provide that nine members to be elected to the Governing Body by the General Assembly from amongst its members should belong to various categories of whom at least one should be from the media. The Governing Body should meet at least once every quarter.

3.13 Among the "authorities" of the Council as provided in Clause 3 of the present Constitution, a new Committee known as the Programme Committee should be set up. The Programme Committee may draw up an annual programme and plan of action for the ICCR and also ensure and monitor its effective implementation on a regular basis.

3.14 The Committee desire that Clause 11 (ii) of the Constitution (Functions of the Finance Committee), should be changed to read as follows :

"It shall consider and make recommendations on financial matters relating to the administration and programme of the Council which may be referred to it from time to time by the President or the Governing body or the General Assembly."

3.15 The Committee observe that most of the officers posted as Director-General of the ICCR were unable to do full justice to their assignments because of inadequate tenures. In some cases, they did not have enough time to fully understand the nature and scope of their work and bring about marked improvement in the working of

the ICCR. Shri Niranjana Desai, for instance, was Director-General from 30.11.1992 to 1.7.1994 and Shri S.S. Mukherjee from 1.7.94 to 30.9.95 only. The Committee therefore, strongly feel that the post of Director-General of the ICCR should not be treated casually and should be given due importance in the scheme of things. Those appointed Director-General should be normally assured a minimum tenure of 3 years. In special cases, the tenure may even be extended to 5 or 6 years. Apart from affording the officer adequate opportunity to understand, plan and implement his plans and ideas, it would also enable him to function as a think-tank and suggest ways and means to make the ICCR a more effective instrument of India's cultural diplomacy. Likewise, the posts of the two Directors-General should be for normally assured tenures of at least 3 years.

CHAPTER IV

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE OF THE ICCR

4.1 ICCR receives an annual grant from the Ministry of External Affairs for its activities. The budget grants for the last six years were as follows :

Years	(Crores of Rs.)
1990	12.09
1991-92	13.50
1992-93	14.55
1993-94	15.00
1994-95	21.00
1995-96 (BE)	20.00

4.2 It is seen from the above that the ICCR received the maximum annual grant of Rs. 21 crores in 1994-95. This amount is much too small compared to the grants received by similar institutions in other countries during 1994-95. The British Council, for instance, got Rs. 675 crores, the United States Information Service Rs. 3,662 crores and Max Mueller Bhavan in Delhi alone, Rs. 18.6 crores.

4.3 Explaining the financing pattern of the ICCR, the representative of Ministry of External Affairs stated during evidence :

“A majority of the activities of the ICCR are financed by the Ministry of External Affairs. However, they do some activities on agency basis such as for the Festivals of India. In those cases, the expenditure has been borne by other departments, in particular the Department of Culture.”

4.4 The Committee drew the attention of the witnesses to the fact that for 1992-93 and 1993-94, the total grant for activities of the ICCR was Rs. 14.55 crores and Rs. 15.00 crores respectively which implied that despite inflation there had been an increase of only 2 per cent in the grant in 1993-94. The representative of Ministry of External Affairs stated in reply :

“Rs. 15 crores is not adequate. We are aware of the financial constraints. We also know that the allocation for culture does

not take a leading place in the Budget. We would certainly like to increase our expenditure on cultural projection. There has, in fact, been a modest continuing increase in the allocation towards culture in the Budget."

4.5 During the examination of Demands for Grants for 1994-95 also, the Committee felt that even if no new cultural centres were envisaged, the maintenance of activities at the present level would justify an increase of 20 per cent over 1992-93. The Foreign Secretary informed the Committee during the course of evidence that the requirement of the ICCR for the Revised Estimates had been projected at Rs. 22 crores to the Ministry of Finance and at Rs. 27 crores for the Budget Estimates. However, the eventual grant at BE 1993-94 stage and in BE 1994-95 remained the same *i.e.* Rs. 15 crores. During the evidence, D.G., ICCR stated that they required at least Rs. 3.50 crores more to maintain during 1994-95 the same level of performance as during 1993-94.

4.6 The Committee are constrained to observe that there was virtually no increase in the annual grant to the ICCR and it has remained static during 1992-93 and 1993-94 at the level of Rs. 15.00 crores, which implied that it had, in fact down in real terms. The grant for 1994-95 was raised to Rs. 21 crores, but the same for the Budget Estimates for 1995-96 was no more than Rs. 20 crores. The Committee are of the view that even without opening any new centres, the more maintenance of the existing level of activities would justify an increase of the present grant by over 20%. There is need not only to maintain the work being done by the Cultural Centres abroad but also to step up substantially their activities in coordination with Indian Missions/Posts abroad and also by opening more Centres. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry of External Affairs should present the case of the ICCR forcefully and effectively before the Finance Ministry so as to convince it of the need and desirability of more funds for cultural diplomacy in the light of the huge grants received by similar foreign institutions such as the British Council, USIS and Alliance Francaise.

4.7 The Committee also feel that steps may be initiated to explore the possibility of supplementing the government allocation of the ICCR by involving private industrial and business houses in the promotion and financing of cultural activities abroad. After all, they also benefit from cultural exchanges as these pave the way for further business interaction and transactions. The possibility of giving meaningful tax exemption incentives to the private sector should also be examined to attract private sector involvement in the arts and in other cultural activities.

CHAPTER V

ACTIVITIES OF THE ICCR

5.1 Currently India has Cultural Agreements with 65 countries. These provide broad principles of cooperation in the field of art, culture and education including academic activity in the fields of science and technology, sports and mass media by encouraging and facilitating reciprocal visits of delegations, experts, performing arts troupes, sports teams and scholars, exchanges of books, periodicals and other publications, films and radio/television Programmes. The responsibility for formulation and implementation of cultural exchange programmes primarily rests with the Department of Culture. However, the ICCR is one of the most important implementing agencies for certain categories of items of cultural exchange programmes. In addition, the ICCR takes up independent programmes of cultural exchanges with various countries.

5.2 According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the Council has been able to achieve its objectives through various programmes *viz.* scholarships and overseas students' welfare, exchange of cultural delegations and visitors, setting up of Chairs and Professorships at the Centres for Indian Studies abroad, exchange of exhibitions, seminars and conferences, presentation of books, musical instruments, objects of art, activities of Indian Cultural Centres abroad, the ICCR publications and through special bilateral programmes. Over the past 40 years, the ICCR has also sought to promote people-to-people contacts overseas and thereby give a cultural dimension to the country's foreign policy objectives.

5.3 In terms of current budgetary allocation, the major programmes of the ICCR are (i) Scholarships (ii) Indian Cultural Centres and Chairs of Indian Studies abroad and (iii) Performing Arts. These three programmes account for the bulk of the ICCR's budget. Other important programmes of the ICCR are publications, conferences and seminars, Distinguished Visitors Programme; although the budgetary allocation for these programmes is relatively small.

5.4 After consultations with the Indian Missions abroad and other "partner" cultural institutions and organisations abroad, the ICCR draws up a draft Annual Plan of Action for approval by the Finance Committee/Governing Body and General Assembly. Programmes and activities are then undertaken in terms of the Plan of Action as approved by the General Assembly.

Scholarships to Foreign Students

5.5 Providing scholarships to foreign students on behalf of the Government of India is one of the most important activities of the ICCR. On an average, it offers about 1000 scholarships under various scholarship schemes to overseas students to study graduate, post-graduate and post-doctoral courses as well as to pursue courses in medicine, engineering and pharmacy. According to the Ministry there are about 1600 overseas students presently studying under various scholarship schemes. The Council is responsible for selection, placement, payment and general administration of the scholarship scheme. About three crores of rupees are being disbursed as scholarships and other dues to overseas students under various schemes.

5.6 The total number of scholarships given to foreign students during the period 1990-91 to 1994-95 was as follows :—

1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	Total
574	573	495	518	519	2679

The region-wise break up the students from 1990-91 to 1992-93 was as under :—

Asia	1092
Africa	349
Europe	173
Latin America & Caribbean	21
USA and Canada	7
Total	1642

5.7 The Committee are of the firm view that the ICCR's programme of giving scholarships to foreign students is most important as it has generated considerable goodwill for India. Over 40 years ago, when the Council was created, it was part of the genius and vision of Nehru and Maulana Azad to envisage and institution to foster fraternal relations among nations. It is through the Council's foreign students programme that this vision has been principally realised. Indeed, the scholarship programmes are a demonstration of our commitment to South-South cooperation. Today, several persons occupying important positions in Africa, South-East Asia and the Carribeans studies in India. Some even became Heads of States and Heads of Governments. Myanmar's leader and Nobel

laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi for instance studied in India for many years. Such students may be viewed as good friends of India after having lived and studied here for at least three years and after getting first hand experience of India's cultural, economic, political and social ethos.

5.8 The Committee feel that with new global realignment and recent development in our economic and development strategy, the entire scholarship programme could be restructured to make it country specific and targetted to our foreign policy aims and objectives. This would give a more meaningful edge to the programme and would also earn us more dividends in terms of the resources expended. The Committee therefore recommend that an indepth study should be jointly carried out by the Ministry of External Affairs and the ICCR in this respect. The Committee would particularly like to recommend the following :—

- (i) Without affecting the total number of scholarships offered by the Council annually, an increasing number of scholarships should be earmarked for encouraging Indian studies. Meritorious students should be encouraged to work on bilateral economic and political relations. This would help in building up a new generation of Indian scholars. In this context, the Council should explore the possibility of establishing exchange programmes with Centres of Indian Studies abroad.
- (ii) Regular workshops should be organised for those students studying engineering and computer science in collaboration with Indian private and public sector companies so as to give these students an exposure to Indian products. Visits to factories and industrial centres should be an integral part of the scholarship programmes.

5.9 The Committee are also of the view that foreign students play an important role in projecting a holistic image of India when they return to their countries after their studies in India. Their experiences will naturally influence their perceptions. It is important, therefore, that the stay of the students here is made both comfortable and memorable.

5.10 During the evidence, the Committee expressed the view that in a number of cases, students who had come to India on scholarships, had returned to their respective countries with bitter experiences and desired to know the reasons for the same. Explaining the position, the Ministry stated that it was aware that some of the scholars had

unfortunate experiences during their stay in India. However, a majority had been satisfied both with regard to the level of education and their stay in India. The Committee was informed that the ICCR had constantly endeavoured to get a feedback on foreign students' welfare and their experiences through the students themselves, the Foreign Students Advisors in various Universities and through the ICCR's Regional Offices.

5.11 According to the Ministry, the reasons for complaints by the foreign students could be broadly classified as follows :—

- (i) Some students find that the scholarship at times is not commensurate with their life style or is inadequate.
- (ii) Non-availability or inadequate hostel accommodation in cities like Bombay and Delhi which perforce makes the students spend more on accommodation.
- (iii) A feeling of isolation because of lack of social interaction with the local population.

5.12 The Committee were informed that while it was the ICCR's endeavour to take all necessary measures within its resources to redress the problems mentioned in at (i) and (ii) above, the major sociological problem of lack of interaction with the local population was beyond its capabilities whatever small measures it might take towards its amelioration. The ICCR, for instance, organises summer camps, study tours and social get-togethers; but these by themselves are not adequate. The problem is to get the local population to understand the need to make foreign students feel at home. The Committee appreciate the nature of the problem, and feel that it was necessary to expose foreign students to a better appreciation of India's social and political culture so as to make their stay in India more useful and enjoyable. The Committee feel that organisations like the Rotary Club and Lions Clubs etc. may be motivated to organise get-togethers for foreign students to meet the local population, as was done in the past. Visits to the Parliament/State Assemblies, local, urban and village bodies and informal get-togethers with the Parliamentarians, State Legislators and members of the local bodies would be extremely useful in enabling the foreign students to appreciate and understand India better and would also help them in overcoming their feeling of isolation. Such measures would have a lasting impact on the students and could contribute in a substantial measure towards winning permanent friends for India.

5.13 The Committee also feel that it was equally essential to ensure that contacts with foreign scholars should not be lost once they returned to their countries. Special contacts should be

maintained with the more meritorious and those the Indian missions identify as occupying positions of influence. The Committee note with special satisfaction that the ICCR encourages this by providing special grants to selected Indian Missions to organise special get-togethers of the alumni of Indian universities on November 11, the birth anniversary of Maulana Azad, which is commemorated as "International Students' Day". Other similar forms aimed at maintaining contact should be identified to sustain the links.

Cultural Centres Abroad

5.14 According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India's foreign policy always had a cultural dimension right from independence. In addition to the cultural work done by our Missions abroad, as part of Mission's diplomatic functioning, the ICCR has established 12 cultural centres abroad in the following countries :—

1. Georgetown (Guyana)
2. Paramaribo (Surinam)
3. Port Louis (Mauritius)
4. Jakarta (Indonesia)
5. Moscow (Russia)
6. Berlin (Germany)
7. Cairo (Egypt)
8. London (UK)
9. Tashkent (Uzbekistan)
10. Almaty (Kazakhstan)

The Council also opened two other centres in Johannesburg and Durban (South Africa) in the financial year 1994-95. These centres, although financed from the Budget of the ICCR, are under the administrative control of the Heads of Missions in these respective countries.

5.15 These twelve Cultural Centres were established in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs, taking into consideration our political and economic interests as well as the needs of persons of Indian origin in countries with a large Indian concentration. Cultural centres in Georgetown, Paramaribo and Port Louis have, for instance, been established primarily to cater to the cultural needs of the local population of Indian origin which constitutes a significant percentages of the population of these countries. The people of Indian origin play an important role in these countries and have contributed considerably in furthering India's political and economic interests.

5.16 Further, according to the Ministry, the Centre in Jakarta has become important in South East Asia in view of our growing interest in the region and the major role being played therein by Indonesia. Centres in Moscow, Berlin, Cairo, London, Tashkent and Almaty and those opened recently in Johannesburg and Durban are also stated to have been opened because of the importance of these countries *vis-a-vis* India's political and economic interests.

5.17 When queried about the role and thrust of the Cultural Centres abroad, the Ministry informed that :

“The thrust of the activities is to promote greater awareness and appreciation of India's cultural heritage abroad, disseminate information about contemporary developments in India and enhance people-to-people contact.”

5.18 Explaining the position further in this regard the Ministry have stated that :

“The objective of these Cultural Centres is to promote greater awareness and appreciation of the composite Indian cultural heritage abroad and to conduct lessons in Indian languages, dance, music and yoga. The Cultural Centres also have certain regular activities like arranging lectures, talks, film shows, exhibitions etc. on various aspects of Indian culture. Thus, these Centres project Indian culture in the area of their location depending upon the local conditions and requirement.”

5.19 The Committee was informed during evidence that some of the ICCR's cultural centres abroad had, notwithstanding modest resources, done appreciable work in projecting India's culture abroad as well as in providing useful fora for interaction with the local population. The Committee was also informed that the ICCR had initiated an exercise for reviewing the functioning of the Council's centres abroad. During the evidence, the then DG had expressed the view that the Centres abroad needed to shift away from music and dance classes even where these had been set up to cater principally to the cultural demands of the ethnic Indian population and should rather emerge as facilitators for institutional linkages.

5.20 Since a significant part of the ICCR's annual budget is spent on maintaining these Centres abroad, the Ministry as well as the then DG, ICCR proposed during the evidence that the members of the Committee or at least some of them should visit all or a few of the Centres for an on-the-spot evaluation of their working. This, it was urged, would also help the ICCR in its own exercise with

regard to the functioning of the Cultural Centres. The Khosla Committee also underlined the need for such a review in its report of 1973 on the working of the three National Akademies. It observed :

“The Committee was unable to visit any of the foreign countries where the Council is endeavouring to project an image of Indian culture and Indian traditions. Our appraisal of this body had per force to be based on the recital of its performance by the Secretary of the Council and by the views expressed by a few witnesses who claimed knowledge of the Council’s working. And since these views were by no means unanimous, and since we were unable to make an on-the-spot study of the Council’s work in foreign countries, what we say on the subject will carry very little conviction. This is an unfortunate admission to make, but in the circumstances, it was not possible to conduct a more satisfying review or invest our recommendations with the same measure of conviction and confidence as have gone to shape our findings, conclusions and recommendations in respect of three National Akademies.”

5.21 The Committee agreed with the views of the Khosla Committee and found itself in no position to make any satisfactory or worthwhile observations and recommendations since it was unable to visit and conduct on-the-spot study of any of the twelve Centres abroad. However, the Committee was clear that such a study-visit, strongly emphasised by the Khosla Committee, should have been made. In the circumstances, the Committee felt that it could not over-emphasise the need for a meaningful assessment of the working of the Cultural Centres abroad. Such a review is imperative if these Centres are to achieve the Council’s avowed objectives on their limited budgets.

5.22 The Committee were given to understand that presently the Indian Cultural Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, known as the Nepal Bharat Sanskritik Kendra, which is serving as a major instrument in India’s public relations exercise in Nepal, does not have adequate infrastructure and facilities. It is located in the premises of the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC) under a lease due to be over by January 1, 1997. The Committee feel that keeping in view the importance of India in Nepal and the necessity for an institutionalised and organised window for Indo-Nepalese cultural interaction, it is imperative to have a properly-equipped full-fledged Cultural Centre in Kathmandu. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR should take suitable steps in this regard. In fact, the Committee firmly feels that the ICCR should also consider the need for Cultural Centres in all the SAARC countries for closer cultural interaction in the region and strengthening mutual understanding.

Chairs of Indian Studies

5.23 The Council maintains 19 Chairs of Indian Studies and visiting professors abroad as follows :

- (i) University of Sofia, Sofia (Bulgaria).
- (ii) Indian Cultural Centre, Georgetown (Guyana).
- (iii) The Gadjah Mada University, Jogjakarta (Indonesia).
- (iv) University of Warsaw, Warsaw (Poland) (2 Professors).
- (v) The Adam Machiewicz University, Warsaw (Poland) (No one is deputed there at present).
- (vi) Indian Cultural Centre, Paramaribo (Surinam).
- (vii) School of Foreign Languages, Port of Spain (Trinidad).
- (viii) The University of West Indies, St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad (2 Professors).
- (ix) The Catholic University of Louvain, Louvain (Belgium).
- (x) Beijing University, Beijing.
- (xi) The Hankook University, Seoul (South Korea).
- (xii) The Helsinki University, Helsinki (Finland).
- (xiii) Ankara University, Ankara (Turkey).
- (xiv) Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre, Moscow (Russia).
- (xv) Sipakorn University, Bangkok (Thailand).
- (xvi) Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest (Hungary).
- (xvii) University of Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris (France).

The Sub-Committee was informed that the visiting professors teach Indology, Indian languages and other related subjects and are deputed under bilateral cultural exchange programmes and the ICCR's own institutional arrangements. The Indology Department of the Oriental Institute at Warsaw University in Poland, for instance, teaches Sanskrit (compulsory for all students), Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Punjabi and Pali. It has over 50 students and the staff comprises 15 Polish Scholars and two lecturers from India : Tamil and Hindi. The main subjects of research are : literature, religion and philosophy (Hindu and Buddhist), history, folk-lore and linguistics.* Complaints

* See Annexure I.

were received by the Convenor of the Sub-Committee at Warsaw on October 25, 1995 in regard to the functioning of the ICCR from the head of the Indology Department of the Warsaw University and other Professors of the Faculty. It was pointed out that the teaching of Hindi had been disrupted because of the delay in the provision of a replacement for the Hindi teacher by the ICCR. The post had fallen vacant in February 1995. But the ICCR had failed to provide the replacement until October 25 despite repeated reminders by the Embassy. In one case, a Hindi Professor joined the University of Krakow in October 1992, but went back to India in January, 1993. A member of the Faculty teaching Punjabi at Warsaw University stated that she had sought from the National Library at Calcutta photocopies of certain documents. Required charges were paid. But the material had not been received even after two years despite reminders.

5.24 At the same time, several suggestions were received. Prominent among these were : (1) A nodal point in the ICCR should be established where necessary information on all the points could be provided to the visiting students/teachers who go to India under the scholarships offered by the ICCR. In addition, there should be a nodal point in the Ministry of Human Resource Development for providing information on all aspects for scholars visiting India; (2) The functioning of the ICCR should be more decentralised, i.e., Regional Centres should be made more active to decide matters instead of referring everything to Delhi and waiting for a reply, which, in turn, delayed matters for the students at the Regional Centres; (3) Visiting scholars should have free access to University Libraries, India International Centre Library and other leading Libraries. At present visiting scholars encounter great difficulty in securing access to these Libraries in the pursuit of their studies.

5.25 **The Committee feel that the ICCR should review the various Chairs set up in different Universities abroad to assess their utility in the context of contemporary needs and complaints. It should also promote setting up of new chairs with emphasis on the study of contemporary India in selected target countries.**

Performing Arts

5.26 Exchange of performing arts groups with various countries is currently an important activity of the ICCR, with substantial budgetary allocation for this programme. Most of the exchanges take place under the relevant provisions of the Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) with various countries where the ICCR has been designated as the agency for this purpose under the various CEPs. Of course, the ICCR

also sends and receives performing arts groups under bilateral arrangements.

5.27 The ICCR sent troupes to 58, 57 and 56 countries during the years 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93 respectively. Further, the ICCR received cultural troupes from 48 countries in 1990-91, from 20 countries in 1991-92 and from 25 countries in 1992-93. The details of the region-wise break up is as under :

Region	INCOMING			OUTGOING		
	1990	1991	1992	1990	1991	1992
Africa	08	02	Nil	06	11	12
Asia	14	06	10	21	19	15
Europe	18	09	11	19	15	19
America	08	03	04	12	12	10
Total	48	20	25	58	57	56

5.28 During the evidence, the Sub-Committee were informed that while the performances by our artists abroad are treated as major programmes of the ICCR and quite a good amount of money is allocated to it, Indian presentation has not quite reached the mainstream performance network which, in a number of countries is handled by professional and commercial impresario organisations. As a result, Indian presentation is at small and out-of-mainstream places with the audience consisting substantially of resident Indians abroad. Similarly there were also complaints that the facilities provided to our artists by the local organisers (in cases where the ICCR only provides travel assistance) were not commensurate with their eminence.

5.29 When asked to comment on these aspects, it was stated that in some of the important 'market-oriented' countries like the USA, UK, France and Japan, there are no government/official agencies for implementation of cultural exchange programmes. In such countries, private/corporate agencies promote cultural exchange programmes.

5.30 The Committee also noted that there was an element of unequal exchange in terms of direct financial participation of the ICCR in programmes organised in India by organisations like the British Council, Alliance Francaise and Max Mueller Bhavan when there was no such participation by any of these organisations or their governments in programmes organised by the ICCR in their countries.

It is a cardinal principle of cultural exchanges that these should be based on strict reciprocity.

5.31 The Committee are of the view that the programme of exchange of performing arts groups should be commensurate with the available resources of the ICCR. Over the last few years, the ICCR, in public perception, has been unwittingly identified as a kind of impresario organisation whose sole function is to arrange the exchange of cultural troupes with various countries. And in the ICCR also there has been an undue emphasis on this programme partly as a result of the various Festivals of India and partly because of the glamour aspects. Thus there is need to restore a relative balance as for the programme of exchange of performing arts. Over the last four decades or so, the ICCR has done a creditable and credible task of acting as an impresario group in familiarising the world with our classical and traditional performing arts. However, in the new situation which demands other priorities, the ICCR's role as an impresario group cannot be open-ended. It is, therefore, time for private impresario groups to come forward and carry on this task on a commercial basis as in most parts of the world. This is, however, not to suggest that the promotion of Indian performing arts by the ICCR is to be discouraged.

5.32 In order to get the maximum mileage in terms of its expenditure, the ICCR should also consider interacting with cultural institutions and professional and commercial impresario organisations abroad. This would require planning for two to three years in advance. But such arrangements would ensure presentation in the right kind of auditoria in major cities which are associated with quality performance with a regular clientele of cognoscenti and proper publicity and coverage by leading critics in the media. This would ensure that the impact of the performance was more serious in nature and one which would eventually bring the Indian performing arts into the mainstream network.

5.33 The Committee are also of the view that all exchanges must be firmly based on the principle of reciprocity. The ICCR must emphasise on its partner institutions that exchanges where the ICCR is required to have direct participation could only take place on the principle of reciprocity. There is little scope for one way traffic as has been happening in various cases.

5.34 With regard to the CEPs, the Committee further feels that India is hosting far too many performing art troupes from foreign countries without corresponding obligations on the part of those countries to host such troupes from India. The Committee also feel

that while the ICCR spends considerable amount in organising foreign tours by India's best artistes of proven calibre, it must be ensured that they are treated by the local organisers with dignity and courtesy. The ICCR must see that the quality of facilities and technical paraphernalia being provided to our artistes is upgraded to a satisfactory level. The Committee recommend that Cultural Exchange Programmes, should provide for some sort of a diplomatic understanding within the Governments in terms of a *quid pro quo* so that terms could be negotiated with regard to reciprocal facilities to be given to the artistes.

5.35 The Committee also feel that to supplement the live performance of our artistes abroad, the ICCR should endeavour to make optimum use of the electronic media to promote our art and culture which would have a greater impact on a larger number of people and prove to be advantageous in the context of paucity of funds with the ICCR.

5.36 With the emergence of satellite television and other forms of electronic media, new and powerful avenues are now available for presenting Indian Culture abroad. Effective steps should, therefore, be taken to make maximum use of the means provided by the electronic media. For example, the ICCR should enter into arrangements with the Doordarshan which today has its foot-prints in many neighbouring countries away from the borders of India. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should explore the possibility of entering into arrangements with electronic media abroad such as INTERNET, for projecting India's cultural image to audiences in other countries. The ICCR should set up a special Committee of people in the field of electronic communication as well as scholars and artistes to go into the matter. It should also produce floppies on different aspects of the Indian culture for projection abroad through the electronic media.

5.37 The Committee also heard evidence on the selection and empanelment of artistes sent abroad by the ICCR for performance. Complaints were heard about favouritism and subjectiveness. In order to get a proper feedback on the subject, the Sub-Committee met and held discussions with eminent Indian artistes who had participated in performances abroad such as Smt. Uma Sharma, Dr. (Smt.) Yamini Krishnamurty and Smt. Sonal Mansingh. Opinion of Shri R.K. Chakravarti, impresario for Smt. Hema Malini, who is a well-known film star and eminent artiste, were also sought. Views of some leading art critics such as Shri Raghav Menon, Smt. Amita Malik and Smt. Shanta Serbjeet Singh were also sought. Their experiences and suggestions for improving the working of the ICCR were duly noted

by the Sub-Committee.* It was agreed that if India was to genuinely present high standards of professionalism abroad, artistes must necessarily be of acknowledged standing in the respective fields. Our artistes abroad were our cultural ambassadors. They must uphold the dignity of India.

5.38 According to the Ministry, Advisory Committees in respect of various art forms are constituted for this purpose and are delegated authority to select artistes for empanelment in the ICCR's reference list. Only empanelled artistes are thereafter considered for sponsorship, travel grant and assistance for tours sponsorship, travel grant and assistance for tours abroad. Further, according to the Ministry, the procedure for selection requires that the artistes send their personal particulars in detail along-with a video/audio cassette and most recent reviews from the media.

5.39 In reply to a question whether there had been any complaints/suggestions regarding the selection of the artistes etc. by the Council, the Ministry have stated that complaints and suggestions regarding selection of artistes have been received from time to time as most artistes are keen to travel more frequently than the norms of the ICCR permit. No artiste is sponsored on more than one occasion within a period of three years. In view of the high standard maintained for empanelment in the reference panel, complaints do come from artistes who are not empanelled. With the ICCR's modest resources, all artistes cannot be sponsored for tours abroad or participation in festivals abroad and in view of this, complaints do follow. However, the Council's policy has to be equitable and fair to all artistes to the fullest extent possible.

5.40 Clarifying the position in this regard, the Foreign Secretary stated during evidence :

“Generally they follow the criteria which I outlined just now. But I must confess that where such things have happened where some artistes have gone, I am not denying that it has not happened that way.”

5.41 Detailed records made available to the Sub-Committee show that the three-year period has been violated on many occasions. The Ministry conceded that exceptions to the rule had been made in several special cases and special reasons/occasions e.g. when an eminent artiste was invited to participate in major events abroad. Accordingly sponsorship/assistance was extended with the specific

*See Annexure II.

approval of the President. During the last 5 years, 38 artistes/groups were sponsored for more than one visit within a period of 3 years.

5.42 The issue of the three-year limitation for an artists for going abroad through the ICCR also came up before the Sub-Committee during its examination of some non-official witnesses who are eminent exponents of various art forms. In this context, one eminent artiste submitted the following :

“Presently, there is a restraint on the ICCR sponsoring artistes for foreign tours more than once in three years. While this may be desirable in the case of young and upcoming artistes, this restriction should not be imposed on senior artistes, groups, music ensembles etc. under the provisions of various bilateral cultural agreements.”

5.43 Another artiste deposed before the Sub-Committee as under :

“What is often forgotten is that a lot of pressure is often brought to bear on the ICCR top brass by their seniors in the External Affairs Ministry as well as other important functionaries. How to insulate the head of the ICCR from these pressures, how to make its internal Committees play more vigilant role in the selection procedure and how to make the organisation as a whole more accountable to the organisation as a whole more accountable to the cultural community is the challenge. The obvious solution would be to make the selection known through publicity and to circulate the selections for cultural delegations for different countries to the media in an open unsolicited manner. This would deter irresponsible and weak choices which may not be able to stand up to criticism in the media.”

5.44 Explaining the view-point regarding the issue of empanelment, a third artiste stated :

“The idea of artistes running to the ICCR and begging for programmes should be discouraged. In earlier days they used to invite artistes and give assignments to them. Such a procedure would be more dignified for the artistes. A serious inter-communication between the artiste and the bureaucracy is essential for the growth and promotion of our culture abroad. If an artiste gets an invitation from abroad, the ICCR should be happy to support by giving passage which would ease the situation for the organisers.”

5.45 The Committee find that various cultural troupes and delegations comprising artistes, scholars and academicians are sent

by the ICCR abroad to foster better understanding and strengthen cultural relations with other countries. For this, artistes are selected and empanelled by the Advisory Committees, which are constituted in respect of various art forms. For scholars and academicians, a selection committee constituted by the ICCR scrutinises papers of the applicant. Only the artistes empanelled in the ICCR's reference list receive sponsorship and assistance.

5.46 Although as per the rules, an artiste is not sponsored/assisted on more than one occasion within a period of 3 years, yet 38 artistes/groups were sponsored on more than one occasion within a period of 3 years during the last 5 years. Repeated violation of the rules in this regard only reconfirm the charges of unfair selection procedure voiced by some of the artistes.

5.47 Further, in order to ensure that eminent personalities are not left out while others manage to go abroad quite easily and frequently, it is important that Advisory and Selection Committees are headed by distinguished personalities in their respective fields. There should be an openness in perfection and the merit and the standing of the artistes should be given due weightage by these Committees depending upon the programmes for which their selection is made. The best among the artistes, especially those who are charismatic and have capacity to communicate with the western audiences, should generally be selected to represent India abroad.

5.48 The Committee further feel that the main thrust of the cultural representation of India abroad should be to present India's composite culture. Yet, the procedure for selection of artistes followed so far has not projected a balanced picture of our culture. For instance, West Bengal and other States of the North-East Region have so far received little representation. The Council therefore needs to adopt appropriate means to ensure that all the regions of the country get due representation and projection abroad.

5.49 Since merit and excellence in a particular field of art and communicative skills of the artiste matter a lot in the long run and pay dividends in promoting goodwill and admiration for the country, only top eminent artistes or those close to the top may be considered by the ICCR to represent India abroad. It is not the legitimate task of the ICCR to groom younger artistes and help them achieve eminence.

5.50 The ICCR should not content itself by sending prominent performing artistes abroad only. It should ensure that prominent scholars, academicians and people from other pursuits of excellence

are also deputed to project Indian culture, traditions and values to foreign audiences.

5.51 Complaints were received from witnesses representing national bodies such as Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama that they were not being closely and meaningfully associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR. This feeling should be removed forthwith and representatives of these eminent bodies should be invited to participate actively in the programme/activities in the ICCR and thereby enable India to put across its best cultural heritage.

5.52 The Haksar Committee, constituted in 1990 to look into the performance of the National Academies and the National School of Drama, had made a reference to the working of the ICCR in their report. Though the terms of reference to this Committee did not specifically cover the ICCR, yet while reviewing the linkages between organisations in the field of art and culture, the Committee did make a few observations on the programmes of the Council. The Committee had *inter-alia* observed :

“Its legitimate role is to handle cultural exchanges between India and other countries. One aspect of this is pertaining to the receiving of musicians, dancers and theatre groups from other countries and arranging further performances in India as well as sending out our artistes to countries with which we have cultural exchange programmes. In the recent years we have found that the ICCR is organising events and shows of Indian artistes within the country. We are constrained to observe that this is not the legitimate task of that Institution.”

5.53 When asked about the views of the Ministry of External Affairs, their representatives stated before the Committee during evidence :

“In 1990-91, the ICCR was organising cultural performances within India. After that Haksar Committee Report came out. It said that the ICCR should not organise Indian cultural performances in India. The matter was considered in the governing body and in reference to the Haksar Committee Report, it was decided to stop organising cultural performances in India.”

5.54 The Committee are of the clear view that the ICCR's main task is to project India's rich cultural heritage abroad. It should, therefore, not be spending its time, money and energy in organising Indian performing arts events within India. Any such exercise would be only duplicating what other Institutions are legitimately required to do.

The ICCR Publications

5.55 According to the ICCR, it has a publication programme to create a better understanding and appreciation of Indian arts cultural heritage abroad. So far it has published more than 180 titles in English, Hindi and some foreign languages on art, literature, culture and philosophy. Recent notable publications include a four-volume set on Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, 'Rubaiyat-e-Sarmad' (both in English and Urdu-Persian editions) and the 'Contemporary Relevance of Sufism'. Further, some of the Council's earlier titles have gone in for multiple reprints, for example, 'India Music', 'Discovery of India' (abridged version) and 'Vision of India'. In addition, the ICCR publishes on a regular basis six quarterly journals : two in English namely 'Indian Horizons' and 'Africa Quarterly' Hindi *Gagananchal*, Arabic-*Ihaqataful-Hind*, French-*Recontre Avec Le Inde* and Spanish - *Papelas de la India*, 'Africa Quarterly'—is the only journal on Africa published in India. Out of these six, two quarterlies in English and the one in Hindi are priced publications while the three quarterlies in foreign languages are distributed free abroad.

5.56 The Sub-Committee desired to have statistics on the print order, month-wise distribution list, number of subscribers, cost of production and dates of the last issues of each of the quarterly journals published by the ICCR. Accordingly, relevant information was furnished by the Ministry and it is seen therefrom that all the journals are up-to-date. The cost of production is the highest for *Thaqafatul-Hind* (Rs. 1.45 lakhs for 1000 copies) and lowest for the French and Spanish journals (Rs. 0.47 lakh for 1000 copies), 1900 copies of *Indian Horizons* are printed as compared to 1200 each of *Gagananchal* and *Africa Quarterly* and 1000 each of the foreign language journals. It is also seen from the statement furnished by the ICCR that most of the printed copies of these publications are distributed abroad through our Missions and in India also.

5.57 The Sub-Committee also note that under the erstwhile Director General, a new thrust was given to the publications programme which had become erratic and low giving affair; most of the journals were not coming out regularly and in any case were a melange and unfocussed. Attempts were made for the first time to structure the journals thematically and thereby give them a direction. The special issue of the Hindi journal *Gagananchal* brought out on the occasion of the International Hindi Conference in Mauritius put together for the first time articles written in original Hindi by non-Indian writer all over the world. Similarly a magnum opus titled 'India and China', a special issue of English quarterly 'Indian Horizons' brought out on the occasion of the Festival of India in China, received widespread

acclaim as a reference book on Indo-China relations. These instances are cited here to emphasise that the Council's publications can be and must be used as a principal medium of publicizing India's policies, perceptions and objectives without being branded as propagandist. Wide acceptability of the journals is claimed to have been established. If so, this is a plus factor which needs to be built upon.

5.58 The Committee feel that the publications programme of the ICCR should strive to act in the direction as detailed below so as to achieve their best results with limited available resources :

- (i) The publication programme of the ICCR should principally have 3 target groups in mind; these are first, academics, intellectuals and opinion markers, second University Students and third, school children (and through them the family).
- (ii) The publications should be learned, objective, accurate and at the same time, should be readily understood by the general reader and should consciously avoid the language and jargon of any particular discipline. The guiding principle should be that the publications should be "academically inspired but meant for general audiences."
- (iii) The Council should bring out a set of publications reasonably priced on different aspects of India, including our ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. The target of such publications should be high school and university students, and this would enable a better understanding of India at an early stage and take the perception of India to the family. Indian Scholars may be usefully associated in such a project for their involvement may contribute to the introduction of such publications in the curricula of school/universities abroad.
- (iv) The Council should consider bringing out a set of publications for school children. This needs to be carefully designed and should include work kits. Kits could be of interest to the entire family, and if prepared well, they could be a source of enjoyment and learning for the entire family.
- (v) The Council should attempt periodic readership surveys of all its journals through Missions abroad so as to assess their utility readability and popularity. This would also help in setting up distribution goals.
- (vi) The ICCR may take suitable steps to devise a distribution mechanism with the help of Indian Missions/posts abroad

so that the publications produced with lot of efforts reach the target groups easily on time.

Distinguished Visitors Programme

5.59 The Council's *Distinguished Visitors Programme*, though with a relatively small budgetary allocation, is an extremely useful programme under which the Council invites distinguished opinion makers and such like persons to visit India for interaction with the Indian leadership. With greater emphasis on this programme, it could be made more receptive to the new needs and priorities of our foreign policy objectives.

5.60 At present the Territorial Divisions, the ICCR and XP Division all separately invite different individuals to India for interaction at various levels, participation in discussions/seminars or for lectures.

5.61 There is an imperative need for drawing up an annual coordinated programme specifically targetted towards inviting eminent scholars, opinion makers and persons in public life, keeping in mind our central focus and thrust areas. Therefore, the ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme must be suitably expanded in close consultation with the MEA. Such a programme of concentrated visits combined with talks, meetings and briefings would not only help in building suitable friendships but would create greater awareness. Certainly, the cumulative effect of such a programme would be a lot more at a fraction of the cost than what might be achieved through expensive public relations agencies. This is also timely in a way. It is a sad but regrettable fact that the ranks of influential India lovers, scholars and friends in many of the key countries are gradually thinning. Consequently the inputs in state policies in these countries lack the insight and perceptions of such individuals of eminence. The ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme can provide a very useful mechanism outside formal structures to build up a powerful coalition of friends. The programme allows the MEA considerable flexibility as a result of the Council's autonomous status. In short, the Council could provide a very useful conduit to conduct quiet diplomacy through people-to-people contacts thus winning influential friends whose perceptions and insights could provide helpful inputs in the policies of their respective countries.

5.62 The Committee feel that in order to make the Distinguished Visitors Programme more meaningful and useful for overall image projection, it is necessary to identify some of the main themes in

which a negative image of India can be harmful to overall interests. Perceptions of India can be changed in our favour only when the negative images and their details are identified. Further there is a need to broaden the Distinguished Visitors' Programme. Besides scholars and academicians, the programme may also bring into its fold specialists, intellectuals and mediapersons.

5.63 It is therefore essential that the MEA identifies the main themes where an effective projection of India is required and those where there has been an orchestrated negative portrayal (and hence, requires correction). Similarly, it is important to identify those countries/regions where such distortions have received widespread publicity, and hence, possible acceptance. It would also be useful to identify key persons who have been influenced by this negative campaigning. Even bitter critics should be identified in this regard to enable a pragmatic assessment of how deep-rooted and widespread the negative image of India is. Similarly, it would be equally important to identify influential persons who are inclined to be supportive of India generally. Such an exercise would have to be carried out jointly between the MEA and the ICCR. Once this is done, the ICCR would be in a position to reorient its Distinguished Visitors Programme and target persons and through them groups and institutions through quiet diplomacy aimed at improving perceptions, removing distortions and knowing India better. Only then will the image of India abroad undergo a radical transformation and receptivity to India and things Indian increase. In other words, we can effectively assist opinion makers, academics, and such identified target groups in "Knowing India" better only when we ourselves can identify in the first instance areas where image perceptions need to be corrected and improved.

5.64 Additionally, it is important to identify those who can turn out to be an investment in the long term. This latter category includes children and young persons who have some links with India. There are, for instance, a very large number of Indian children who have been adopted by European and American families. Studies have demonstrated that such children are keen to retrace and maintain their roots and, more importantly, that they tend to adopt strong anti-root attitude in case their overtures are not met with a warm response. Some adopted children are known to have saved money for years to pay for a ticket to India.

The majority of foster parents in Europe and America are known to encourage links of their adopted children with their mother country. The Council can, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, organise package know-India programmes for such families.

If the programme is for the entire family, the correcting of misperceptions of India is likely to be sustainable. Such programmes should, as far as possible, associate the tourism industry and the media, and package a glimpse of India in its totality. Such experiences will not be short-lived and would contribute towards the creation of a lobby for India, not only among these children but also their parents.

5.65 The other group of people the Council should target are those who are potential political allies. The Council should extend this programme in consultation with the MEA and other Ministries and go beyond simple political relations into international economic relations, especially in the context of our current measures for economic liberalisation. Issues such as child labour in the carpet industry, the Narmada Valley Project and environmental issues, education and population control related programmes, AIDS awareness etc. can also be included. There is a tendency among critics of India to focus on a selected set of themes without fully comprehending the scale of issues involved. The principal objective behind such programmes should be not only to correct misconceptions, but also to focus on the magnitude of the issue confronting the Government and people of India. It would therefore, be extremely useful to include visits by journalists. A favourable report in a leading newspaper powerfully influences perceptions.

5.66 Bilateral contacts and exchanges are presently made at various levels. These are mostly at the official, diplomatic or ministerial levels. Once in a way, these are also held at the Parliamentary level through the exchange of Parliamentary delegations. These contacts are useful in improving mutual understanding and strengthening friendly ties. But as experience shows, these by themselves are not enough. Most of these exchanges are in accordance with official briefs and guidelines which limit the scope of a free and frank people-to-people contact. Some countries have therefore, chosen to constitute informal Parliamentary Groups on a bilateral basis for a candid exchange of ideas on matters of mutual interest. The Committee feel that the ICCR should examine the feasibility of inviting the leaders/members of such informal groups to India so that the scope for people-to-people contact could be given a new and worthwhile dimension.

Institutional Linkages, Seminars and Symposia

5.67 The ICCR also needs to concentrate on one other area : establishing linkages with important think tanks in key countries and educational institutions and universities in various countries

and to jointly sponsor seminars and symposia on matters/concerns vital to us. Such institutional linkages provide excellent opportunities for interaction at various levels. A case in point is an International Polish-Indian Seminar on Indology planned by the Indology Department of the Warsaw University in 1997. The participants would be 5-6 prominent scholars from India and Polish Scholars. The objectives are to establish close scholarly contact with leading Indian scholars who represent those fields of Indian study which are taught and researched in Poland, to undertake common projects in the area of Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil etc. studies and to prepare publications in these subjects.*

5.68 The core premise is that India has powerful friends in India scholars. Eminent and renowned academics have close links with the political hierarchy in different countries like the USA, UK, Germany and elsewhere. It is necessary to build carefully on these contacts. They are our friends and their words can sometimes reach certain quarters more effectively and much quicker than ours. It is critical therefore for the Council to establish collaborative arrangements with India scholars and with different think-tanks. It is well established that in the US, the Asia Society, Brookings Institution, the American Enterprise Institution, the Carnegie Endowment, the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, the Heritage Foundation and a whole host of other institutions 'watch India' and report on India. Their perceptions play a crucial role in influencing official US perceptions of India. Linkages with such institutions are likely to prevent misconceptions and distortions from gaining ground. An organisation like the ICCR, by virtue of its autonomous character is in a much better position to do this than any Government department. These different institutions have over the years contributed towards an understanding of those societies and regions, where Americans have a strategic or business interest. These institutions have also built on their reputations and today command considerable respect and support, not only in the USA but also elsewhere. Active exchanges with such institutions are therefore important, as indeed is the sustaining of relationships with India scholars. Enlightened linkages should therefore be established with similar institutions in key countries.

5.69 It is a known fact that there has been a marked decline in interest in Indian studies in North America and Europe. This is an area where considerable work needs to be done and where economic and commercial aspects impinge on cultural interaction, each promoting the other. An important aspect would be for an

*See Annexure III.

organisation like the ICCR in India and similar groups in these countries to interact. As it happens, the ICCR had taken a major initiative in this regard through its "International Symposium on India Studies" in November/December, 1994. During this Symposium, 30 scholars from India interacted with 30 scholars from the UK, USA, France, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Russia, Iran, Israel, Australia, Japan, China and Austria. The symposium was aimed at (a) taking a critical review of the achievements and current work in studies relating to India in all its aspects, (b) encouraging discovery of new dimensions of Indian life and thought, and (c) attempting to suggest new directions for such studies, so that they become more comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and relevant for understanding the actualities that constitute present-day India.

5.70 Similarly, in consultation with the MEA, carefully planned lecture series, conferences and seminars on various India-related issues, particularly where there is a negative perception, could be organised in key countries targetting not only the media and opinion makers but a much wider spectrum in the universities, educational institutions and academia. The credentials of the ICCR as a cultural organisation of long standing provides it the flexibility of dealing with politically sensitive topics, without being branded as propagandist.

Travel Grants

5.71 The Sub-Committee were informed that the Council has a programme of travel grants under which scholars, intellectuals, academicians, artistes, etc. are sponsored or assisted to participate in seminars, symposia, study tours, etc. abroad.

5.72 The Committee were further informed that a review of the programme was done and following guidelines for the travel grants programme were approved:

- (i) travel grant would be restricted to 50% of the cost of travel and would be available for one destination;
- (ii) no one shall be assisted with a travel grant more than once in three years;
- (iii) all applications for travel grants would have to be submitted at least three months in advance so as to enable the ICCR to examine them in consultation with concerned Indian missions abroad and other relevant agencies; and
- (iv) travel grants would be restricted only for fields of arts and humanities.

5.73 On the basis of evidence available, the Committee are of the view that the travel grants programme is administered on an ad hoc basis without relevance to the above guidelines. There is also a great element of patronage in the programme. For instance, in one case the Committee found that 2 travel grants were approved for two round-the-world tickets for a very vague programme of lectures in total violation of the guidelines approved. According to the latest annual report of the ICCR (April 1994 — March 1995), one journalist representing a Calcutta daily was sent to Egypt in November 1994 to “attend” the Cairo International Film Festival and a freelance journalist of Bombay was sent to France in January 1995 to “participate” in the 7th Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival at Paris. In another case, seven persons, including two journalists from New Delhi, a photo journalist from Lucknow and a well-known artiste from New Delhi, were sent to Thailand in December 1994 to attend the 11th International Ramayana Conference in Bangkok. Reputed Ramayana scholars were overlooked and ignored. In another case, a well-connected publisher was sent to Kazakhstan for a week in February 1995 for collecting “material to publish biographies of the Presidents of these countries.” No wonder, therefore, that the ICCR is sometimes dubbed as a travel agency since over the years it has provided travel grants to various persons without even assessing their utility to the Council. The Committee therefore recommend that the Council should at the earliest reassess the utility of its travel grants scheme so that it is restricted to only those persons who are categorically identified in keeping with the Council’s restructured basis. Moreover, the Council must institute proper procedures to make the scheme as transparent as possible and leave no scope for controversy and condemnation.

CHAPTER VI

FESTIVALS OF INDIA

6.1 With a view to providing an extra dimension to its cultural relations, the Government of India have so far organised Festivals of India in the U.K., USA, France, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany and the former Soviet Union and China.

6.2 The nodal agency/department in India involved in organising the Festivals is the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development. The National Organising Committees of Festivals of India abroad consult all relevant agencies/departments before finalising a Festival. On finalisation of a Festival of India abroad, the relevant agencies are assigned the task of implementing, while the Department of Culture continues to coordinate all events/activities. The ICCR is designated to present performing arts at the Festivals of India abroad.

6.3 The Committee desired to know that total expenditure incurred on each of the Festivals held so far by different agencies/departments. In reply, the Ministry of External Affairs stated that all expenditure on Festivals in India and abroad had been borne on the Festival Budget of the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

6.4 The expenditure incurred by the Department of Culture and the ICCR for events assigned to the ICCR are as follows:-

I. Out-going Festivals/Days of Indian Culture

S.No.	Event	Country	Period	Expenditure (Rs.)
1	2	3	4	5
1.	Festival of India	U.K.	March-Nov. 1992	30,88,712.00
2.	Festival of India	France	June, 1985 June, 1986	83,61,039.00
3.	Festival of India	U.S.A.	June, 1985 June, 1986	89,14,244.00
4.	Festival of India	Switzerland	May-Sept. 1987	26,20,000.00

1	2	3	4	5
5.	Festival of India	USSR	July, 1987 July, 1988	3,94,83,500.00
6.	Festival of India	Sweden	August-Nov. 1987	30,45,640.00
7.	Days of Indian Culture	Bulgaria	June, 1988	11,02,400.00
8.	Days of Indian Culture	Czecho-slovakia	April-May, 1989	10,04,268.00
9.	Festival of India	Germany	Sept. 1991 March, 1992	1,70,00,000.00
10.	Days of Indian Culture	Hungary	April, 1993	11,71,686.00
			TOTAL	8,57,91,489.00

II. Incoming Festivals/Days of Culture

S.No.	Event/Country	Period	Expenditure (Rupees)
1.	Festival of USSR	Nov., 1987	77,20,622
2.	Festival of France	Feb., 1989 Jan., 1990	5,35,18,252
3.	Days of Bulgarian Culture	5 Jan. to 12 Jan., 1989	7,57,461
4.	Festival of China	Dec., 1992	76,28,836
5.	Days of Czechoslovak Culture	11-20 Nov., 1989	26,87,989
6.	Swedish Cultural Manifestations	Dec., 1991 October, 1992	39,19,587
		TOTAL	7,62,32,747

S.No.	Event/Country	Period	Expenditure (Rupees)
I.	Outgoing Festivals/Days of Indian Culture		Rs. 8,57,91,489
II.	Incoming Festivals/Days of Culture		Rs. 7,62,32,747
		TOTAL	Rs. 16,20,24,236

6.5 From the above statement, it is seen that the largest expenditure was incurred on the Festival of India in the erstwhile Soviet Union as compared to that on festivals in the other six countries. The Ministry tried to justify this by stating that the Festival of India in the USSR incurred the highest expenditure as it was the largest in scale, involving about 142 troupes and the organisation of festival events in all the Republics of the Soviet Union. But in retrospect, the Committee feel that the total amount spent lacked proportion in the overall context.

6.6 The ICCR has a leading role to play in organising the Festivals of different countries in India also. In the year 1992-93, two such major festivals were held in India *viz.* the First South Asian Festival of SAARC countries in October, 1992 and the Festival of China in December, 1992. As stated by the Ministry, the South Asian Festival facilitated for the first time presentation of the sub-continental culture in one single event as well as interaction between the artists from the sub-continent and thus enhanced people-to-people contact. The Festival of China in India also achieved a grand success with repeat shows in each venue for people from all walks of life including special shows for students and children.

6.7 While examining various other aspects relating to cultural exchanges, especially within the framework of the Festivals of India, the Committee tried to make an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Festivals. They sought the views of some eminent artists and critics in the field of art. Replying to a query relating to the impact of these festivals, one of the artistes stated before the Sub-Committee:—

“As far as the Festivals are concerned, we had them in France, USA and U.K. I don't think they have improved very much our relations with the USA inspite of all the publicity we got at that time. Culture did not count one bit when it comes to politics. I find that the Festivals are a thing of the moment only...Even without Festivals we can forge links. We invest money in Festivals which does not give corresponding good returns in terms of establishing good relations with that country.”

6.8 When enquired about the impact of these Festivals of India from the Ministry of External Affairs, it was explained:—

“The Festivals of India have been by all accounts acknowledged as an outstanding success in the field of cultural exchanges. The concept of a holistic festival for the first time was initiated in the U.K. and was cited as a success by media and other accounts. However, it was the grand success of the Festival of India in the USA which established the concept of holistic festivals as a model for cultural manifestation for a country. The fact that other countries have sought to organise such national festivals in India and in other countries validates the concept of Festivals.”

6.9 The Ministry further added that:—

“Certainly the interest in India and things Indian has noticeably gone up in countries where Festivals of India were organised...the free publicity received by the various events of the Festivals of India and aspect of India in the U.S. over a period of 18 months amounted to paid up editorial space with US \$ 2.3 billion according to an Independent newspaper clipping agency. These are random instances of how the success of the Festivals is measured.”

6.10 The Committee note that Government of India organises Festivals of India abroad in different countries with a view to presenting India through Indian eyes and upgrading the perceptions about India away from established stereotypes. Such Festivals have been organised in 11 countries so far. The nodal agency involved in organising the festivals is the Department of Culture. The ICCR is designated to present performing arts at the festivals. These Festivals are stated to be acknowledged as an outstanding success in the field of cultural instances. It has also been contended that the interest in India has noticeably gone up in countries where Festivals of India were organised.

6.11 All expenditure on Festivals in India and abroad is borne on the Festival Budget of the Department of Culture. The information regarding the total expenditure incurred on the festivals held so far by all the concerned agencies together has not been furnished to the Committee. Only the figures of expenditure incurred by the Department of Culture and the ICCR for events assigned to the ICCR has been given. According to these figures the expenditure on outgoing Festivals/Days of Indian culture was Rs. 8.58 crores and on incoming Festivals/Days of culture it was Rs. 7.26 crores. In the absence of figures for total expenditure on the Festivals, it is difficult to come to any conclusion about the total amount of

money and resources put in to achieve the success of such endeavours as indicated by the Ministry.

6.12 In view of substantial expenditure being incurred on these Festivals and the views expressed by some eminent artists/critics regarding their effectiveness, the Committee feel that there is need to constantly monitor/assess the impact created by these Festivals in enhancing mutual understanding and good relations with these countries.

6.13 The Committee feel there is also need to take a fresh look at the organising of the Festivals. For each festival, there should be a National Organising Committee set up by the Governing Body of the ICCR, over which the Vice-President of India presides. The National Organising Committee should have representatives from various Ministries, institutions and States. There should also be a Specialised Working Committee under the National Organising Committee to ensure effective and meaningful implementation. Every festival should normally have a specific theme and a specific targeted audience in accordance with the changing perceptions of the country in which the festival is held. Of late the Festivals have tended to be organised somewhat mechanically and, according to one expert, have become "glorified versions of the Cultural Exchange Programmes." The Committee feel that efforts should be made to involve local endowments, foundations and corporate sponsorship in the financing of such festivals, since this would ensure greater success of the exercise in projecting India abroad.

6.14 Apart from holding such Festivals abroad in different countries, the Government of India may also examine the feasibility of organising some sort of serially organised programmes of shorter duration and less expensive in different countries so as to arouse and sustain the interest of these countries in India's composite culture and its age-old traditions. Much also depends upon the initiatives of Ambassadors as reflected in a successful well-long Festival of India Culture organised in Poland early in September, 1995. A visit by some Kathak dancers was thoughtfully developed into a festival providing both the best of India cuisine and films.

CHAPTER VII

REGIONAL OFFICES

7.1 Within India, the ICCR has eight regional offices located at Bangalore, Bombay, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Madras and Trivandrum. The Regional Offices serve several purposes. Firstly, they are required to oversee the welfare of foreign students studying in various universities in different States. The Regional Offices are mainly located in States with a number of foreign students. Secondly, the Offices help manage the functions of the artistes and foreign guests who come to visit India at the invitation of the ICCR and visit different parts of the country. These offices, therefore, function as local liaison and has pitativity offices. Thirdly the Regional Offices liaise with the State Governments and furnish information to the ICCR headquarters on the regional artistes.

7.2 During evidence the DG, ICCR explained in this regard:

“All these centres are in cities where there is a reasonable concentration of foreign students who are coming to India on the ICCR’s scholarships. They basically provide liaison for foreign students’ community and so on. They also look after the guests of the ICCR when they come to India with foreign cultural troupes. They also try to identify new talents in the field of performing arts. Most of the centres were set up at the specific requests of the State Governments. I think a review is necessary because in some places, we may need to close down one or two centres because there is not much activity.”

7.3 With regard to foreign students, the regional offices of the ICCR liaise with the international students, cultural activities for the students, answer queries regarding the scholarship disbursement, deal with welfare activities including liaising with police and other officials in case of death/arrest etc. of the foreign students.

7.4 The Committee desired to know whether the Regional Centres interact with the Cultural Departments of State Governments. To this, the DG, ICCR stated:

“I think by and large, our Regional Directors keep in touch with the Cultural Departments of the State Governments.”

7.5 In this connection, the Ministry further stated that the Regional offices interact with various departments of the State Government, which include the police, Department of Home, Department of

Education, Department of Information and Public Relations, Department of Tourism, Department of Culture etc. Instructions have been reiterated to all the Regional Centres to maintain frequent interaction and communication with all appropriate departments in the State Government, including Zonal Cultural Centres, State Cultural Bodies etc. Interaction with the Department of Culture is, principally, to enable joint identification of promising young artistes, organising of joint cultural programmes etc.

7.6 It would be useful for the ICCR to have an on-the-spot assessment of the working of the Regional Offices and constraints under which they operate. It was brought to the attention of the Committee at the Regional Offices operate from inadequate office space. In many cases, it has not been possible for the State Government to provide adequate office space to the Council's Regional Offices. Similarly while some of the Regional Offices are over-staffed, others are under-staffed.

7.7 The Committee feel that the ICCR must undertake an urgent review of its Regional Offices so as to assess how their overall functioning could be improved. The Council should also consider whether some of the functions like disbursement of scholarships etc. could be delegated to the Regional Offices. The Committee desire that the Regional Centres need to be activated. They should not only seek the cooperation but also consult the Cultural Departments of the State Governments concerned with a view to identifying and promoting local talent.

7.8 The ICCR may also examine the feasibility of getting the Heads of all the Regional Centres to meet once or twice a year to monitor and take stock of their working; periodically call for reports about their performance and seek their suggestions for improvements. The ICCR should use this exercise to remove such constraints as are faced by these Centres.

CHAPTER VIII

RELATION BETWEEN THE ICCR, MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

8.1 According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the ICCR is an autonomous body and administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs. In reply to a question as to how the autonomy of the ICCR was being maintained while remaining administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry have stated that autonomy of the organisations is maintained through the statutory authorities of the ICCR who direct and approve the activities of the council. Funds/Grants for the activities of the ICCR are made available by the Ministry of External Affairs from its budget. While being funded by the Ministry of External Affairs, utilisation/allocation of funds received for the activities of the ICCR is done under the direction of the Finance Committee/Governing Body/General Assembly and President of the ICCR. Further, according to the Ministry, all activities of the ICCR are planned to meet the objectives of India's Foreign policy through cultural diplomacy while maintaining its autonomous status as defined in its constitution.

8.2 The Committee desired to know as to how the ICCR could be an autonomous body and the administratively attached to the Ministry at the same time. To this, the D.G., ICCR stated:

"We are an autonomous body, registered society, but we are administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs in the sense that all our grants are from the Ministry. But, we are an autonomous body and we are not a cultural wing of the Ministry of External Affairs. I will not say that it is formally a Cultural Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. But functionally, we do work very closely with the Ministry of External Affairs and we have day-to-day contact with our Missions on cultural matters so, in a functional way perhaps we do work as an extension of the Ministry as far as cultural diplomacy goes."

8.3 When asked about the coordination being maintained by the ICCR with the Ministry of External Affairs, DG, ICCR stated :

"There is a perfect coordination between the ICCR and the Ministry of External Affairs because we take our directions about the policy guidelines from the Ministry of External Affairs. We do get advice from the Ministry, we consult them on a number of matters. There

is an ongoing consultation between the Ministry of External Affairs and the ICCR all the time."

8.4 Explaining further in this regard, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs stated:

"Foreign Secretary is also Vice-President of the Government Body and they work in very close coordination not only with the Ministry but also with other organs of the Government of India which are concerned. Even as autonomous body, they are also supposed to project cultural exchanges of various kinds. Obviously there is political injunction into this matter. There is a very close liaison between the ICCR and the Ministry of External Affairs even though it is an autonomous body."

8.5 In this connection, the Khosla Committee had recommended that:

"The Council should not hesitate to act independently of the Ministry of External Affairs with foreign countries. We do not think that the status of the Council should be that of a hand maiden to the Foreign Office. It should be a help-mate and a coordinator, exchanging information and experimenting, not merely in carrying out the behest's of the Ministry, but also doing original research and undertaking original projects."

8.6 Reacting to this recommendation, the Ministry of External Affairs have stated that the autonomous status of the ICCR gave it an added advantage to conduct its activities to enhance people-to-people contact. However, cultural relations cannot be maintained exclusively in isolation from India's Foreign Policy. The ICCR's activities therefore are done in conjunction with India's national, political and economic interests. In the new international environment the role of cultural diplomacy has become very crucial and it cannot be divorced from the broad thrust of foreign policy objectives, and hence there has to be close interaction between the ICCR and MEA.

8.7 Clarifying the position in this regard, the Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and former Secretary in the Department of Culture stated:

"One of the problems that we face is that our cultural relations depend on the political relations that we have with other countries. We do send delegations after delegations to other friendly countries. My thinking is that we should not devalue cultural relations. Cultural relations must stand by itself, irrespective of what our political relations may be with other countries...if we take this

stand, then the role of the ICCR has a different form altogether. In that case our cultural relations will begin to have some kind of a meaning and greater significance. Therefore, my own opinion is that only when this fact is recognised and the ICCR is allowed to function on its own, cultural relations achieve greater significance. Cultural relations should not be valued in diplomatic or political logic."

8.8 As regards the coordination the ICCR is having with the Department of Culture, the Ministry of External Affairs have stated that there is an intrinsic link between the ICCR and the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development and foreign policy and the promotion of culture abroad cannot be separated and would be impractical. In this context, the Department of Culture and the ICCR work together and co-ordinate their activities at various levels. The Secretary, Department of Culture, is a member of the General Assembly and the governing body of the ICCR. The Cultural Exchange Programmes, based on existing political realities, are signed by the Department of Culture after these are finalised in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs, the ICCR and other implementing agencies. The ICCR has been designated by the Department of Culture to implement some of provisions both of the Cultural Exchange Programmes as well as special programmes in the Festivals of India abroad. In view of the above, the objectives of the Department of Culture and the ICCR being identical, both should ensure coordination in their activities so that the objectives of cultural diplomacy are achieved in conjunction with maintaining India's political and economic interests.

8.9 The Committee desired to know the level of coordination maintained by the ICCR with various other concerned Ministries for organising cultural activities abroad. In reply, the Ministry of External Affairs have stated that the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, is the nodal agency for all many implementing agencies. Implementation of items in a cultural exchange programme is not exclusive to the ICCR. All cultural activities within the framework of Cultural Exchange Programmes are coordinated by the Department of Culture. It draws out its policy and exchange programmes in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs. As regards events organised by the ICCR outside the framework of CEP, the ICCR consults the Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Culture, Department of Education and all other relevant Ministries related to the event being presented.

8.10 In this connection, the Asoka Mehta Committee had recommended that one Ministry should have overall responsibility for

all aspects of cultural relations with other countries. The Ministry of External Affairs should be vested with the overall responsibility for conducting international cultural relations and the ICCR should be the nodal agency for implementing all programmes which would involve transfer of work from the Department of Culture to the Ministry of External Affairs.

8.11 The Committee referred to the Memorandum of Association of the ICCR according to which the ICCR has to revive and establish cultural relations and mutual relations between India and other countries and has to adopt all other measures as may be required to further its objectives and desired to know whether the ICCR was functioning as "a nodal agency" by coordinating with various other agencies such as the Department of Culture etc. To this the Secretary, Department of Culture stated:

"If we go back into the history, the ICCR began its life under the Ministry of Education and Culture. Now the ICCR is an autonomous organisation. We as a coordinating agency, formulate cultural exchange programmes between our country and other countries and get them implemented through agencies like the ICCR. I am a member of the Governing Council of the ICCR and therefore, I am fairly closely associated with its functioning. In that respect, the Department of Culture, the ICCR and the Ministry of External Affairs work very closely. We are in continuous consultation in matters concerning international cultural exchange."

8.12 Explaining the position in this regard, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs stated:

"If one takes a clear cut view based on the printed word, it is evident that the ICCR is not set up as a nodal agency. One can read the implication that it was designed to be the principal agency but whether it was an exclusive agency is something on which I am afraid, I am not qualified to give an answer because there are other agencies that have been set up by the government which I would assume have an external function. We know, in the case of Festivals abroad, certain organisations that ultimately relate to the Department of Culture have a function in projecting our cultural activities abroad and organising manifestation of one sort or another. So I do not really see the ICCR looking for a role of exclusively of nodal agency."

8.13 On being asked whether the ICCR should be with the Ministry of Human Resource Development or should remain under the Ministry of External Affairs, the Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and former Secretary, Department of Culture deposed:

"If it is a part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, it would be much more conducive to the cultural freedom from the overriding diplomatic considerations or economic considerations on cultural matters. But, at the same time drifting away from the diplomatic field might be a detrimental thing in the long run because ultimately one has to work through our mission. One has to work through the Ministry of External Affairs and it needs to be put under that Ministry. In my view it can be put under any of these two ministries but the main thing is to see that it does not run short of funds and its autonomy should also be real."

8.14 During evidence, a representative of the Department of Culture strongly advocated the case that the ICCR should belong to Department of Culture. Explaining in this regard he stated :

"Under the Rules of Business, the subject of international cultural relations is allotted to the Department of Culture. One of the major international agencies for cultural relations is UNESCO, which is dealt with in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Education part is looked after by the Department of Culture. We have a Bureau in the Department of Culture, which is looking after international cultural relations, and there is a Joint Secretary who is in charge of that Bureau. I happen to be in-charge at present. Basically, it is our job to draw up CEPs, to get them implemented and to coordinate them with all the agencies. It is also the responsibility of the Department of Culture to formulate a national policy of culture—which is already before the Parliament—and to take steps to implement it. You cannot have one department to formulate a national cultural policy and another agency under another Ministry to take care of the international cultural relations."

8.15 On being asked about the version of the Ministry of External Affairs in this regard, the representative of the Ministry stated:

"The working of the ICCR is closely connected with the Ministry of External Affairs. The officers in the Foreign Service are all rounders.

In Foreign Service, you will find many officers who are extremely fit for representing India in cultural fields and who have a track record of their own. I see no reason why there is a need to disturb the present set up."

8.16 Explaining the position further in this regard, the Ministry of External Affairs have stated *inter-alia* in a note :

“The ICCR has certain built-in-advantages to a useful role in tandem with the Ministry of External Affairs in projecting our policies, concerns and perception abroad. For instance, its autonomic nature gives the Council the flexibility of dealing with a large number of individuals/institutions who would otherwise normally shy away from being involved directly with a Government Ministry/Department. Equally, it provides flexibility in dealing with individuals/organisations or even issues with which the Ministry of External Affairs would not like its association publicly acknowledged. An institution like the ICCR becomes more relevant to the needs of cultural interaction with foreign countries and its apparent arms length proximity to Ministry of External Affairs makes it an effective and credible instrument of cultural diplomacy.”

8.17 The Committee were repeatedly informed that though the ICCR is administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs yet it is an autonomous body. The autonomy of the organisation is stated to be maintained through the statutory authorities of the ICCR who direct and approve the activities of the Council. It has been contended that all activities of the ICCR are planned to meet the objectives of India's foreign policy through cultural diplomacy while maintaining its autonomous status as defined in its constitution. For this purpose, there is close coordination and ongoing consultations continue between the ICCR and the Ministry of External Affairs.

8.18 The Committee also note that divergent views have been expressed as to where the ICCR should actually belong. The Asoka Mehta Committee as well as the MEA have contended that since the role of the ICCR is basically to complement the activities of the MEA in projecting India's policies, concerns and perceptions abroad in keeping with our foreign policy objectives, the ICCR should rightly be administratively attached to the MEA. The Department of Culture has however contended that under the Rules of Business, the Subject of international cultural relations is allotted to the Department of Culture; thus there cannot be one Department to formulate a national cultural policy and other agency under another Ministry to take care of the international cultural relations. Therefore, the ICCR should be attached to the Department of Culture.

8.19 The Committee have carefully gone into the competing claims of the MEA and the Department of Culture. The Committee are of the view that there seems to be an apparent misunderstanding or confusion over the precise role of the ICCR. The ICCR was set up as a programme implementing agency with the specific aim of establishing, reviewing and strengthening cultural relations and

mutual understanding between India and other countries. It is axiomatic that this specific task has to be undertaken within the overall parameter of our foreign policy objectives. Therefore, the Committee feel that the ICCR has a very important role to play in the furtherance of our foreign policy objectives and more or so now in the context of new challenges inherent in the new international environment. The ICCR's future role must be seen as an instrumentality to better the environment of relations with other countries in all its aspects through cultural diplomacy on a people-to-people level outside formal governmental structures. In other words, its role is envisaged as playing a necessary complementarity along with the MEA in putting across our views, perceptions and concerns and also to correct any negative perceptions. Therefore, it must work in tandem with the MEA within the overall parameters of India's foreign objectives, both short and long term. In this connection, it may be pointed out that organisations abroad similar to the ICCR like the Japan Foundation, the British Council, the USIS and the Alliance Francaise are closely linked with and funded by their respective Foreign Offices; this only underscores the link between a country's foreign policy objectives and the role of cultural diplomacy.

8.20 In this context, the Committee also considered the question whether the ICCR should be the nodal agency for all international cultural exchanges. They felt that any such role would constrain the ICCR from pursuing effectively the objectives for which it was specifically set up. It must have adequate flexibility to deal with the dynamics of international relations rather than have a fixed role.

8.21 At the same time, the Committee are of the view that the ICCR must have real functional autonomy for good, obvious reasons. If the ICCR is really autonomous in its functioning, then its status may provide a great deal of flexibility in the pursuit of its objectives and at the same time confer on it greater credibility without being branded as propagandist.

8.22 The Committee also took a look at the Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP) which India has signed with about 65 countries. The Committee feel that it may be necessary to have a serious look at the CEPs which, it was informed, are today a long and detailed list of activities and regrettably with little, if any, implementation. The CEPs need to reflect our foreign policy, priorities and concerns. The cataclysmic changes the world over suggest that there should be a de-emphasis of cultural exchanges which reflects a bias towards traditional interpretations and stereotypes of culture. A linkage with foreign policy interests and concerns will give the cultural exchanges

the personality that distinguishes relations between countries. Today, the CEPs are not distinctive. The CEP with Germany is much the same as the CEP with Uganda. This makes the entire exercise mechanical and devoid of substance. Bilateral relations between nations need therefore to be reflected in the CEP. Furthermore, only those activities should be taken on board which can be implemented in the prescribed time frame. This can be done only if each CEP is drafted keeping in mind the current state of bilateral relations and further projections for the future.

CHAPTER IX

ROLE OF INDIAN MISSIONS ABROAD

9.1 The ICCR has a significant role to play in establishing and sustaining India's cultural relations with countries of the world. As mentioned in the preceding chapter of the Report, twelve cultural centres have been set up by the ICCR for this purpose in those countries where a substantial number of Indians reside. In other countries, cultural diplomacy is taken care of by the concerned Indian Missions. Their efforts include promoting greater awareness of India's cultural heritage, disseminating information and enhancing people to people contact. According to the Ministry, the Indian Foreign Service is a very small homogenous cadre and therefore it is not possible to deploy an officer to perform only cultural work. In most Missions an officer has been assigned work that includes cultural work. It was further added that 72 Missions and 11 Posts have officers performing other work assigned, including information and culture and 29 Missions and 5 Posts have officers doing only information and cultural work. Guidelines/instructions have been issued to all the heads of Mission/ Heads of Posts to designate an officer to look after cultural work.

9.2 At the instance of the Committee, the Ministry have furnished a note indicating the following prerequisite for any officer assigned to the task of looking after culture in our Missions abroad.

- (a) An awareness of India's geographic ethnic, linguistic, religious and culinary diversity.
- (b) A basic understanding of the various classical and traditional performing arts of India.
- (c) A basic understanding of Indian History.
- (d) A complete understanding of the activities of the ICCR.
- (e) An understanding of the roles of the various agencies/major cultural institutions in India.
- (f) A complete knowledge of the cultural exchange protocols wherever relevant and, a complete knowledge of terms and conditions contained in cultural exchange programmes as these are very essential in discussions relating to cultural exchanges within and without the framework of the Cultural Exchange protocols.

9.3 The Ministry have stated that above prerequisites are acquired and developed by the officer concerned to discharge his assigned responsibilities. When asked as to how these prerequisite are being acquired or developed, the Ministry have stated that the ICCR has an annual training programme for IFS probationers for a period of 2-3 weeks where the young officers are exposed to India's composite culture through the medium of audio-visuals, lectures and lecture-demonstrations of performing arts. An essential aspect of the training programme is cultural diplomacy and the understanding of other cultures.

9.4 The Sub-Committee pointed out that training imparted to IFS officers is common for all whether he goes abroad as an information officer or as a political officer and desired to know whether it would not be better if the officer was given a very specialised sort of refresher course if he/she was to go as a cultural officer. The representative of the Ministry of External Affairs, while replying to a specific query informed:

"In five of six Missions we have Cultural Attaches. But usually the Information Officer concerned would handle cultural matters. When I say five or six, I am referring to those officers who are dealing with the cultural affairs.....As far as cultural aspect is concerned, we are very conscious that people need to have an orientation. However, it is a good suggestion that we should have special courses."

9.5 A major part of the ICCR's working is its dependence on networking only through our Embassies and Missions abroad. Culture is one area in which India has a unique contribution to make to the world. Our missions abroad should therefore be more alert and sensitive to seeking such opportunities as would give them a foothold in this area. This would have a definite fallout for India in terms of greater goodwill and understanding of its problem.

9.6 The Committee are informed that 29 missions and 5 posts have officers doing only information and cultural work whereas 72 missions and 11 posts have officers performing other work assignments including information and culture. The Committee are constrained to note that there were only five or six Missions which have Cultural Attaches though the guidelines/instructions are stated to have been issued by the Ministry to all the Heads of Missions/ Posts to designate an officer to look after the cultural work. The Committee would like to be informed whether all the missions/ posts have designated one official specifically dealing with cultural matters.

9.7 Keeping in view the importance attached to cultural diplomacy, the officer dealing with cultural matters in the mission/post should have adequate knowledge and a knack for Indian history, art and culture. He should be in a position to truly convey India's cultural richness. To cultivate these essential prerequisites, the Committee feels that the training provided to the officers working as Cultural Attache is quite inadequate as it is only an orientation programme organised during the initial period when they join the Foreign Service. The Committee, therefore, considers it imperative that a specialised designed training course should be organised exclusively for these officers. At the start of his or her posting, each officer should be enabled to brush up on different subjects such as Indian philosophy, literature, dance, music and visual art.

9.8 The Committee feels that the ICCR should strive for a more cohesive and purposeful interaction among Indian artistes and foreign artistes which will prove beneficial in enriching and strengthening inter-cultural and intra-cultural appreciation, evolution and absorption of styles, themes and artforms, wherever found feasible/worthwhile. Besides, the ICCR should consider utilising the presence of local cultural associations formed by the persons of Indian origin and the Indian artistes on foreign soil to organise programmes through Indian Embassies and Missions so that there is more exposure of Indian art forms abroad. To facilitate interaction between the artistes, our Missions should initiate in organising get-togethers, talks and receptions for them and provide them adequate opportunities to interact with local artistes and impresarios.

9.9 The ICCR ought to work out a system where all the artistes—small or eminent—on their visits abroad, whether sponsored by the ICCR or on a private visit, are extended minimum courtesies by our Missions abroad so that they are not only shown respect by the local people but their presence is gainfully utilised. Similarly when foreign artistes visit India and programmes/receptions are arranged, suitable steps should be taken to ensure the presence of our senior eminent artistes in those programmes. Apart from extending due courtesies befitting their status, they should be properly introduced to the visiting artistes. This would reflect positively on the cultural organisations sponsoring the show and convey the right impression in the minds of the foreign artistes about the respect and regard shown to our artistes and culture in the country.

9.10 The Committee would like to mention that the visiting foreign artistes receive due attention and courtesy from us. But the same is not always true abroad. The ICCR should, therefore, ensure

together with the Missions/Posts abroad that there is a suitable reciprocity in the cultural exchange programmes from the host countries whenever our artistes and scholars visit them.

9.11 The Missions/Posts abroad should also be instructed to motivate the persons of Indian origin abroad to actively participate in the programmes of the ICCR and to promote Indian cultural activities. It is unfortunate that the ICCR/Missions/Posts have not exploited persons of Indian origin adequately for promoting India's best national interests.

9.12 The Committee also feel the need to redefine more clearly the object and role of the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs in promoting India's cultural image abroad. The Committee consider the External Publicity Division, to be the primary instrument in conjunction with the Information wing of our Missions/Posts abroad for projecting the official views of the Government of India on international affairs or on bilateral matters of direct concern to the country. This role is distinct from that of the ICCR which is intended to promote Indian culture in foreign countries. External Publicity has to be more issue-oriented, diplomatically precise and correct while cultural promotion may adopt a more generalised and broad approach and idiom. No doubt both in the field of information and culture, the same section and perhaps the same officer are involved, namely the Press Attache and Information Section. But at the base in Delhi, cultural work should be transferred to the ICCR, including publication of periodicals and non-periodical material of general interest, production and supply of films, video tapes and audio tapes as well as books of general interest for foreign audiences and targets. In brief, the External Publicity Division should concentrate on and specialise in Information, while the ICCR should take up Culture. Such clear bifurcation would have the merit of eliminating duplication and overlap as well as smoothen the flow of material from other Ministries and Departments involved, which are canalised through the ICCR. The Committee also suggest that the diplomatic officer in charge of Information should be redesignated as First Secretary or Second Secretary or Attache (Information & Culture), as the case may be, in most Missions/Posts which do not have a separate Cultural Wing or Section.

CHAPTER X

PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF MAULANA AZAD

10.1 Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of India was the founder President of the ICCR. The Council has instituted the annual Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Memorial Lecture Since 1958 to commemorate the founder President of the Council. Eminent scholars and personalities are invited to speak on a wide range of subjects on the occasion, for example, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prof. Arnold Toynbee, Lord Atlee, Sir C. V. Raman, President Robert Mugabe and UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali were some of the eminent people who were invited in the past to deliver the lecture.

10.2 To mark the Centenary of Maulana Azad, the Council instituted in 1989 an annual Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Eassy Competition. The competition is organised in three languages—Hindi, Urdu and English and is open to the citizens below 30 years of age from India and the SAARC countries.

10.3 In the personal collection of books of Maulana Azad, the most interesting feature is his personal notings on the margins of several important books. These notings of the Maulana reflect his views, vision and foresight and are, therefore, the most significant commentaries made on various subjects *viz.*, religion, philosophy, history, culture, art and politics.

10.4 On enquiry whether any effort was being made to edit and publish these marginal notes by Maulana Azad in various books, the Ministry stated that a bibliography of Maulana Azad's marginal notings was being prepared by the ICCR and its publication had been envisaged. The project was stated to have reached an advanced stage and the material was being readied for publication.

10.5 Further, according to the Ministry, the ICCR has been privileged to inherit the personal collection of the books of Maulana Azad. It has also been the endeavour of the ICCR to solicit cooperation from all sources for compiling and publishing the works of Maulana Azad. The ICCR has in particular brought out a Centenary volume entitled "*India's Maulana*" in four volumes—two in English, one in Urdu and one in Hindi.

10.6 The Committee are pleased to learn that a bibliography of Maulana Azad's marginal notings in his personal collection of books is being prepared by the ICCR and is proposed to be published.

These marginal notings, covering various fields of religion, history, art and culture, would be of tremendous importance. These notes together with the Centenary volume entitled "*India's Maulana*" should be sent to all important libraries, universities, interested individual journalists etc. of various countries of the world. Also, sufficient number of copies thereof should be made available to Missions/Posts abroad to enable them to distribute in their respective countries so as to make an everlasting impact on the people by the Maulana and his views, vision and foresight.

10.7 The Committee consider the organising of annual Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture, where eminent people speak on a wide range of subjects, a befitting tribute to the great Maulana Azad. They, however, feel that the standard of this programme should be maintained high by inviting famous and eminent writers, scholars and philosophers from India and abroad.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMING UP

11.1 The ICCR is at the crossroads today after being in existence for over four decades. Three factors necessarily demand that the Council's role and, consequently, its programmes need to be reoriented and restructured so that it can perform a useful role, as originally envisaged by Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, in furthering India's foreign policy objectives.

These are:

- (i) The momentous and dramatic transformation in regional and global alignments among nations which require effective and immediate responses;
- (ii) The imperative need to project a holistic image of a vibrant, dynamic India not only to assist in the better perception of India among a larger cross-section of people in the world but also, to correct concerted attempts at image distortion by certain vested interests and countries; and
- (iii) The budgetary constraints under which the Council performs has to operate because of the general constraints on resources necessitates that the Council identify and concentrate on activities most like to give it maximum mileage.

11.2 The Committee has made a number of specific recommendations in this regard. It is hoped that the Government, the MEA and the ICCR would have then examined on a priority basis and begin implementing them. The Committee are the firm view that the ICCR should henceforth work and develop on sound professional lines with greater transparency in its working and decisions. It should eschew adhocism. The element of patronage for the sake of patronage must be removed. A restructured ICCR with a focused agenda would be in a much better position to reflect India's concerns and priorities abroad and would contribute greatly towards winning friends for India.

11.3 The Committee has noted with interest some of the steps the two former Directors-General initiated during the past three years to restructure the ICCR's activities, introduce professionalism in its functioning and to make it more relevant to contemporary needs. It has also noted with considerable interest the various steps

the latter Director-General took to implement some of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee. Much more, however, remains to be done to revamp and reorient the Council's functioning in keeping with the changed and changing circumstances in world politics and the new role which India must progressively play in the new emerging world order.

NEW DELHI;
11 December, 1995
20 Agrahayana, 1917 (Saka)

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE,
Chairman,
Standing Committee on
External Affairs.

APPENDIX I

(Vide para 5.23)

MEMORANDUM:

Warsaw, 25 October, 1995

MR. INDER JIT
Member of Parliament

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Indology Department
Oriental Institute
Warsaw University
Krakowskie Przedmiescie 26/28,
00-927 Warsaw, POLAND
tel./fax. (4822) 26 36 83

Indology Department is the biggest department at the Oriental Institute and the biggest centre for Indian studies in Poland. Our Indology Deptt. offers five years' M.A. course of studies with the following languages as the main subject : Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Sanskrit. The best students are eligible to get one year scholarship in India. The best M.A. graduates can pursue their studies at a four-year Ph.D. course.

Head : Dr. Marek MEJOR (Sanskrit, Bhuddhism, Philosophy)

Former Head of the Indology Deptt., Professor M.K. BYRSKI (Sanskrit Drama, Literature, Hindi) is now Ambassador of Poland in India.

Staff-members : 15 Polish scholars plus two lecturers from India: Tamil and Hindi.

Number of students : over 50.

Languages taught : Sanskrit (compulsory for all students), Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Punjabi, Pali.

Main subjects of research: literature, religion and philosophy (Hindu and Buddhist), history, folklore, linguistics.

Our main problems currently are:

1. delayed arrival of a lecturer of Hindi language (NB. Hindi students' group is the largest in our Department);

2. assistance in organizing a Polish-Indian seminar on Indology in 1997, including 5-6 prominent scholars from India;
3. due to very high airfare ticket costs regular research visits of Indology scholars to India decreased dramatically.

APPENDIX II

(Vide para 5.37)

Views/opinions/suggestions made by various eminent artistes and art critics on the functioning of the ICCR

Views expressed by artistes

1. The management of the ICCR and the Director General should invite views of the top artistes in different fields to suggest and organise programmes and festivals abroad.

2. The ICCR should concentrate on high quality and well-thought-out timely presentations instead of mindless tours and activities.

3. The ICCR should evolve itself into an organisation with a will to identify and assemble artistes of proven merit.

4. Instead of artistes begging for programmes, the ICCR should invite them and give assignments which is a more dignified procedure.

5. There should be an openness in selection of artistes for their performances abroad and their merit and standing should be given weightage depending upon the programmes for which selection of artistes is being done.

6. The restriction of once in three years on sponsoring artistes for foreign tours should be waived in the cases of senior artistes because they endure a certain period of 'pinnacle of performing' as exponents of their art form.

6A. The Selection Committee of the ICCR should have a tenure of two or three years so that vested interests do not get entrenched.

7. The Indian Embassies and other Missions abroad seldom extend even bare minimum courtesies to eminent and well-known artistes visiting abroad under the aegis of the ICCR or otherwise. These Missions should, therefore, extend appropriate minimum courtesies and facilities to such artistes. The ICCR should normally inform Indian Missions abroad about such visits in countries proposed to be visited officially or privately by them in the course of their travel. Full advantage should be taken of these visits to project India's cultural image by arranging appropriate functions and get-together with leading artistes and art critics of the countries visited.

8. The ICCR should strive for a more cohesive and purposeful interaction amongst artistes and sponsor workshops or communion amongst artistes from other countries whether on governments sponsored visits or privately organised cultural tours.

9. It is the responsibility of the ICCR to ensure that audiences turn up in large number to appreciate/critically value the performances of Indian artistes. A hassle-free travel, hospitality and a reasonable remuneration should be offered to the artistes.

10. At the parties/receptions to visiting foreign artistes which are organised by the government agencies or the ICCR, some sort of protocol could be drawn up for the proper introduction and sitting arrangements for the Indian artistes.

Views expressed by art critics

1. The ICCR should act as a body to further our national interest abroad through the activities of our creative people in a cost effective manner.

2. In order to improve its working it is necessary to restructure the ICCR, beginning with having such a person at the helm of affairs who could be from outside the foreign service and who would have the requisite experience, the moral authority and the dynamic vision to give a proper direction to the organisation.

3. The ICCR personnel should be appointed full time for atleast ten years without transfers. These people should have not only mere interest in the Indian art but should have some experience also in its actual practice and study.

4. The ICCR should make the selection of artistes known publically and circulate such selections to the media in an open/unsolicited manner so as to deter irresponsible and weak choices.

5. The ICCR should pay special attention to India's neighbouring countries. Regretably, this has not been done.

6. The weakest part of the ICCR's working is its dependence on networking only through our Missions and Embassies. There should be certain significant orientation programmes on different subjects such as Indian philosophy, literature, dance, music and the visual arts for cultural attachees. Our Missions abroad should be more alert and sensitive towards cultural performances and other activities by the Indian artistes.

7. The ICCR should ensure that our Ambassadors/Heads of Missions are made aware of the Festivals and other programmes organised by the ICCR abroad beforehand to enable them to attend. This would avoid embarrassment at the last moment. In this connection an instance deserves to be mentioned. During a Festival of India held in Kenya, the President of Kenya graciously attended the inauguration. But the Indian Ambassador was conspicuous by his absence.

APPENDIX III

(Vide para 5.67)

MEMORANDUM:

Warsaw, 26 October, 1995

MR. INDER JIT
Member of Parliament

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Indology Department
Oriental Institute
Warsaw University
Krakowskie Przedmiescie 26/28,
00-927 Warsaw, POLAND
tel./fax. (4822) 26 36 83

Re. : International Polish-Indian Seminar on Indology, Indology Deptt., Oriental Institute, Warsaw University, 1997.

Participants:

- (a) 5-6 prominent scholars from India, who represent subjects which are taught and/or studied in Poland under the headings of respective languages, viz. Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi,
- Prof. Dr. Saroja Bhate, Poona University.
 - Prof. Dr. K.D. Tripathi, Banaras Hindu University.
 - Prof. Dr. Veena Das, Delhi School of Economics, Institute for Advanced Study in Sociology.
 - Prof. Dr. Shanmugam Pillai, Institute of Asian Studies, Madras.
 - Dr. Namvar Singh, literacy critic.
 - Prof. Dr. Kashinath Singh, Head of the Deptt. of Hindi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.
 - Prof. Dr. Pabitra Sarkar, Vice-Chancellor, Rabindra Bharati University, Calcutta.
- (b) Polish scholars (members of the staff of the Indology Deptt., Warsaw University, including scholars from the other Polish universities).

Form of the Seminar :

the Seminar is designed to be a workshop, and accordingly will consist of several topical panels, in which the Indian scholars would play a leading role as expositors of the Indian learning and scholarship; papers for discussion on specific topics should be prepared in advance.

Objectives :

to establish close scholarly contacts with the leading Indian scholars who represent those fields of Indian studies which are taught and researched in Poland; to undertake common projects in the area of Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, etc. studies; to prepare publications in these subjects.

Financing:

- (a) Warsaw University will cover the costs of the accommodation, meals and transportation for the quests from India;
- (b) Indian partner is expected to meet the airfare return ticket costs to Poland.

Sd/-

(MAREK MAJOR)

APPENDIX IV

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl.No.	Para No.	Ministry	Observations/Recommendations
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1.	2.10	External Affairs	The Committee note the stand of the Ministry of External Affairs that the ICCR is autonomous and is only administratively attached to it. Yet, it is surprised to find that the Annual Report of the Ministry presented to Parliament includes a chapter on the work of the ICCR. It is equally surprised to note that the Director General of the ICCR is designated <i>ex-officio</i> head of the Ministry's Cultural Division. Both seem to be incongruous in the context of the Ministry's claim that the Council is autonomous. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR should prepare its own Annual Report and that the same be presented to Parliament and appropriately considered by the Parliament's Standing Committee on External Affairs and the two Houses.
2.	2.11	—do—	The Committee therefore feel that there is urgent need to examine in depth how the ICCR could be reoriented and given real autonomy to enable it to function effectively in response to the changing needs and priorities of our national objectives. This essentially means that the ICCR's activities and mandate should adapt to the new demands in the conduct of our cultural diplomacy. Basically, the

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			<p>ICCR should function as a nodal agency to enable it to project more effectively an integrated and unified image of India's personality, perceptions and concerns abroad. That would, among other things, entail a subtle but meaningful shift in its methodology. The ICCR must gradually de-emphasise some of the very general cultural programmes which have generated over the years little else beyond passing goodwill.</p>
3.	3.7 External Affairs		<p>Keeping in view the need for a reorientation of the ICCR's role in the changed international context, the Committee feel it is time to review the Council's existing organisational set up and functioning, including the selection of its President, the choice and tenure of the Director-General and the composition of the General Assembly and other bodies.</p>
4	3.8	-do-	<p>The Vice-President of India was nominated by the President of India as the President of the ICCR for many years. This practice worked well without raising any controversy. The Vice-President of India added much-needed dignity and stature to the ICCR. In 1993, however, the practice was changed and a former Minister was appointed as a "full time" present and given the rank of a Cabinet Minister. The Sub-Committee of the ICCR went into the change affected and its impact on the effectiveness and functioning of the ICCR. It has come to the broad conclusion that the change has undermined the</p>

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			<p>ICCR's smooth functioning and effectiveness and involved it in controversy. In fact, this was reflected in the "shortened tenure" of the former Director-General, who was specially chosen for the assignment in the light of his experience and background. Complaints were also received about the huge expenditure incurred by the President on his travels at home and abroad and on his office.</p>
5.	3.9	External Affairs	<p>The Committee are of the view that the previous system of having the Vice-President as the President of the ICCR should be revived. The Vice-president may be enabled to take over <i>ex-officio</i> as the President of the ICCR and he need not necessarily be appointed each time by the President. It may be pointed out that projection of Indian Culture abroad today has become complicated and sophisticated involving the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, besides the Ministry of External Affairs. This calls for effective coordination and cooperation among these Ministries and other Government agencies. The Vice-president as <i>ex-officio</i> President of the ICCR is best suited to perform the required role. He would have the Status, authority and influence to get various Ministries and authorities to cooperate, apart from having access to official briefs, papers, and documents.</p>

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6.	3.10 External Affairs	<p>The Committee considered the question whether the ICCR should continue to be under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs or revert to the Ministry of Education and Culture, now called the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Culture) in the light of suggestions and comments made by witnesses. It is of the considered view that the ICCR may continue to be under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs since Indian Missions/Posts abroad have to play a crucial role in continuously assisting the ICCR in conducting its cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the Committee strongly feel that the Council should be accorded real autonomy, which should among other things entitle it to present its own report to the Parliament. In such a set-up, the Director-General should continue to be from the Ministry of External Affairs but should be upgraded to the rank of Additional Secretary. There should be two Deputy Directors General, one from the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the other from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure functional coordination between the three main Ministries actively involved. Both the Deputy Directors General should be of the rank of Joint Secretary. Simultaneously, the permanent staff should be provided much need motivation and</p>	

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			incentives to serve the ICCR and its mission to the best of their ability. Good work and welcome initiatives should be rewarded by ways of Promotions to Senior Administrative levels of the headquarters and postings abroad.
7.	3.11 External Affairs		The Constitution of the ICCR provides that the Director-General, who is the Principal Executive Officer of the Council, shall be appointed by the President of the Council with the approval of the Governing Body. The Committee felt that the Ministry of External Affairs should be required to submit a panel of three names to the President of the Council for the appointment of a new Director-General. Likewise, the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should submit a panel of three names each to the Director-General for the appointment of the two Deputy Directors-General proposed by the Committee with the approval of the President of the Council.
8.	3.12	do	The Committee also favour some changes in the organisational set up and functioning of the ICCR. The General Assembly should meet at least twice every year, not annually. Also, instead of 15 representatives from the educational institutions in its composition, it should have 10 representatives from the educational institutions and 5

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from the print and electronic media. Worthwhile representation should also be given to the Private Sector to involve it meaningfully in the work of the Council. On the basis of past experience, only such persons should be nominated as can spare sufficient time to contribute significantly to its deliberations. Further Clause 7 (vi) of the Constitution should be revised to provide that nine members to be elected to the Governing Body by the General Assembly from amongst its members should belong to various categories of whom at least one should be from the media. The Governing Body should meet at least once every quarter.

9. 3.13 External Affairs

Among the "authorities" of the Council as provided in Clause 3 of the present Constitution, a new Committee known as the Programme Committee should be set up. The Programme Committee may draw up an annual programme and plan of action for the ICCR and also ensure and monitor its effective implementation on a regular basis.

10. 3.14 -do-

The Committee desire that Clause 11 (ii) of the Constitution (Functions of the Finance Committee), should be changed to read as follows :—

"It shall consider and make recommendations on financial matters relating to the administration and programme of

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the Council which may be referred to it from time to time by the President or the Governing body or the General Assembly”.

11. 3.15 External Affairs The Committee observe that most of the officers posted as Director-General of the ICCR were unable to do full justice to their assignments because of inadequate tenures. In some case, they did not have enough time to fully understand the nature and scope of their work and bring about marked improvement in he working of the ICCR. Shri Niranjana Desai, for instance, was Director-General from 30.11.1992 to 1.7.1994 and Shri S.S. Mukherjee from 1.7.94 to 30.9.95 only. The Committee therefore, strongly feel that the post of Director-General of the ICCR should not be treated casually and should be given due importance in the scheme of things. Those appointed Director-General should be normally assured a minimum tenure of 3 years. In special cases, the tenure may even be extended to 5 or 6 years. Apart from affording the officer adequate opportunity to understand, plan and implement his plans and ideas, it would also enable him to function as a think tank and suggest ways and means to make the ICCR a more effective instrument of India’s cultural diplomacy. Likewise, the posts of the two Directors-General should be for normally assured tenures of at least 3 years.

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12.	4.6	External Affairs	<p>The Committee are constrained to observe that there was virtually no increase in the annual grant to the ICCR and it has remained static during 1992-93 and 1993-94 at the level of Rs. 15.00 crores, which implied that it had, in fact gone down in real terms. The grant for 1994-95 was raised to Rs. 21 crores, but the same for the Budget Estimates for 1995-96 was no more than Rs. 20 crores. The Committee are of the view that even without opening any new centres, the mere maintenance of the existing level of activities would justify an increase of the present grant by over 20%. There is need not only to maintain the work being done by the Cultural Centres abroad but also to step up substantially their activities in coordination with Indian Missions/Post abroad and also by opening more Centres. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry of External Affairs should present the case of the ICCR forcefully and effectively before the Finance Ministry so as to convince it of the need and desirability of more funds for cultural diplomacy in the light of the huge grants received by similar foreign institutions such as the British Council, USIS and Alliance Française.</p>
13.	4.7	—do—	<p>The Committee also feel that steps may be initiated to explore the possibility of supplementing the Government allocation of the ICCR by involving private industrial and business houses in the promotion</p>

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and financing of cultural activities abroad. After all, they also benefit from cultural exchanges as these pave the way for further business interactions and transactions. The possibility of giving meaningful tax exemption incentives to the private sector should also be examined to attract private sector involvement in the arts and in other cultural activities.

14. 5.7 External Affairs The Committee are of the firm view that the ICCR's programme of giving scholarships to foreign students is most important as it has generated considerable goodwill for India. Over 40 years ago, when the Council was created, it was part of the genius and vision of Nehru and Maulana Azad to envisage an institution to foster fraternal relations among nations. It is through the Council's foreign students programme that his vision has been principally realised. Indeed, the scholarship programmes are a demonstration of our commitment to South-South Cooperation. Today, several persons occupying important positions in Africa, South-East Asia and the Caribines studied in India. Some even became Heads of States and Heads of Governments. Myanmar' leader and Noble laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi for instance studied in India for many years. Such students may be viewed as good friends of India after having lived and studied here for at least three years and after getting first hand

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experience of India's cultural, economic, political and social ethos.

15. 5.8 External Affairs The Committee feel that with new global realignment and recent development in our economic and development strategy, the entire scholarship programme could be restructured to make it country specific and targetted to our foreign policy aims and objectives. This would give a more meaningful edge to the programme and would also earn us more dividends in terms of the resources expended. The Committee therefore recommend that an indepth study should be jointly carried out by the Ministry of External Affairs and the ICCR in this respect. The Committee would particularly like to recommend the following :

(i) Without affecting the total number of scholarships offered by the Council annually, an increasing number of scholarships should be earmarked for encouraging India studies. Meritorious students should be encourage to work on bilateral economic and political relations. This would help in building up a new generation of Indian scholars. In this context, the Council should explore the possibility of establishing exchange programmes with Centres of Indian Studies abroad.

(ii) Regular workshops should be organised for those students studying engineering and computer science in collaboration with Indian

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			private and public sector companies so as to give these students an exposure to Indian products. Visits to factories and industrial centres should be an integral part of the scholarship programmes.
16.	5.9	External Affairs	The Committee are also of the view that foreign students play an important role in projecting a holistic image of India when they return to their countries after their studies in India. Their experiences will naturally influence their perceptions. It is important, therefore, that the stay of the student here is made both comfortable and memorable.
17.	5.12	—do—	The Sub-Committee were informed that while it was the ICCR's endeavour to take all necessary measures within its resources to redress the problems mentioned in at (i) and (ii) above, the major sociological problem of lack of interaction with the local population was beyond its capabilities whatever small measure sit might take towards its amelioration. The ICCR, for instance, organises summer camps, study tours and social get-togethers; but these by themselves are not adequate. The problem is to get the local population to understand the need to make foreign students feel at home. The Committee appreciate the nature of the problem, and feel that it was necessary expose foreign students to a better appreciation of India's social and political culture so as to make their stay in India

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more useful and enjoyable. The Committee feel that organisations like the Rotary Club and Lions Clubs etc. may be motivated to organise get-togethers for foreign students to meet the local population, as was done in the past. Visits to the Parliament/State Assemblies, local, urban and village bodies and informal get-togethers with the Parliamentarians, State Legislators and members of the local bodies would be extremely useful in enabling the foreign students to appreciate and understand India better and would also help them in overcoming their feeling of isolation. Such measures would have a lasting impact on the students and could contribute in a substantial measure towards winning permanent friends for India.

18. 5.13 External Affairs

The Committee also feel that it was equally essential to ensure that contacts with foreign scholars should not be lost once they returned to their countries. Special contacts should be maintained with the more meritorious and those the Indian missions identify as occupying positions of influence. The Committee note with special satisfaction that the ICCR encourages this by providing special grants to selected Indian Missions to organise special get-togethers of the alumni of Indian universities on November 11, the birth anniversary of Maulana Azad, which is commemorated as "International Students' Day".

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Other similar forms aimed at maintaining contact should be identified to sustain the links.

19. 5.20 External Affairs

Since a significant part of the ICCR's annual budget is spent on maintaining these Centres abroad the Ministry as well as the then DG, ICCR proposed during the evidence that the members of the Sub-Committee or at least some of them should visit all or a few of the Centres for an on-the-spot evaluation of their working. This, it was urged, would also help the ICCR in its own exercise with regard to the functioning of the Cultural Centres. The Khosla Committee also underlined the need for such a review in its report of 1973 on the working of the three National Akademies. It observed :

"The Committee was unable to visit any of the foreign countries where the Council is endeavouring to project an image of Indian culture and Indian traditions. Our appraisal of this body had per force to be based on the recital of its performance by the Secretary of the Council and by the views expressed by a few witnesses who claimed knowledge of the Council's working. And since these views were by no means unanimous, and since we are unable to make an on-the-spot study of the Council's work in foreign countries, what we say on the subject will carry very little conviction. This is an unfortunate admission to make, but in the circumstances, it was not

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possible to conduct a more satisfying review or invest our recommendations with the same measure of conviction and confidence as have gone to shape our findings, conclusions and recommendations in respect of three National Akademies."

20. 5.21 External Affairs

The Sub-Committee agreed with the view of the Khosla Committee and found itself in no position to make any satisfactory or worthwhile observations and recommendations since it was unable to visit and conduct on-the-spot study of any of the twelve Centres abroad. However, the Sub-Committee was clear that such a study-visit, strongly emphasised by the Khosla Committee, should have been made. In the circumstances, the Sub-Committee felt that it could not overemphasise the need for a meaningful assessment of the working of the Cultural Centres abroad. Such a review is imperative if these Centres are to achieve the Council's avowed objectives on their limited budgets.

21. 5.22 —do—

The Sub-Committee were given to understand that presently the Indian Cultural Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, known as the Nepal Bharat Sanskritik Kendra, which is serving as a major instrument in India's public relations exercise in Nepal, does not have adequate infrastructure and facilities. It is located in the premises of the Royal Nepal Airline Corporation (RNAC) under a lease

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			<p>due to be over by January 1, 1997. The Sub-Committee feel that keeping in view the importance of India in Nepal and the necessity for an institutionalised and organised window for Indo-Nepalese cultural interaction, it is imperative to have a properly-equipped full-fledged Cultural Centre in Kathmandu. The Sub-Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR should take suitable steps in this regard. In fact, the Sub-Committee firmly feels that the ICCR should also consider the need for Cultural Centres in all the SAARC countries for closer cultural interaction in the region and strengthening mutual understanding.</p>
22.	5.25	External Affairs	<p>The Committee feel that the ICCR should review the various Chairman set up in different Universities abroad to assess their utility in the context of contemporary needs and complaints. It should also promote setting up of new chairs with emphasis on the study of contemporary India in selected target countries.</p>
23.	5.31	—do—	<p>The Committee are of the view that the programme of exchange of performing arts groups should be commensurate with the available resources of the ICCR. Over the last few years, the ICCR, in public perception has been unwittingly identified as a kind of impresario organisation whose sole function is to arrange the exchange of cultural</p>

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troupes with various countries. And in the ICCR also there has been an undue emphasis on this programme partly as a result of the various Festivals of India and partly because of the glamour aspects. Thus there is need to restore a relative balance as for the programme of exchange of performing arts. Over the last four decades or so, the ICCR has done a creditable and credible task of acting as an impresario group in familiarising the world with our classical and traditional performing arts. However, in the new situation which demands other priorities, the ICCR's role as an impresario group cannot be open-ended. It is therefore, time for private impresario groups to come forward and carry on this task on a commercial basis as in most parts of the world. This is, however, not to suggest that the promotion of Indian performing arts by the ICCR is to be discouraged.

24. 5.32 External Affairs In order to get the maximum mileage in terms of its expenditure, the ICCR should also consider interacting with cultural institutions and professional and commercial impresario organisations abroad. This would require planning for two to three years in advance. But such arrangements would ensure presentation in the right kind of auditoria in major cities which are associated with quality performance with a regular clientele of cognoscenti and proper publicity and coverage by leading critics in

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			the media. This would ensure that the impact of the performance was more serious in nature and one which would eventually bring the Indian performing arts into the mainstream network.
25.	5.33	External Affairs	The Committee are also of the view that all exchanges must be firmly based on the principle of reciprocity. The ICCR must emphasise on its partner institutions that exchanges where the ICCR is required to have direct participation could only take place on the principle of reciprocity. There is little scope for one way traffic as has been happening in various cases.
26.	5.34	-do-	With regard to the CEPs, the Sub-Committee further feels that India is hosting far too many performing art troupes from foreign countries without corresponding obligations on the part of those countries to host such troupes from India. The Committee also feel that while the ICCR spends considerable amount in organising foreign tours by India's best artistes of proven calibre it must be ensured that they are treated by the local organisers with dignity and courtesy. The ICCR must see that the quality of facilities and technical paraphernalia being provided to our artistes is upgraded to a satisfactory level. The Committee recommend that Cultural Exchange Programmes should provided for some sort of a diplomatic understanding within the Governments in terms of a

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27.	5.35	External Affairs	<p><i>quid pro quo</i> so that terms could be negotiated with regard to reciprocal facilities to be given to the artistes.</p> <p>The Committee also feel that to supplement the live performance of our artistes abroad, the ICCR should endeavour to make optimum use of the electronic media to promote our art and culture which would have a greater impact on a larger number of people and prove to be advantageous in the context of paucity of funds with the ICCR.</p>
28.	5.36	-do-	<p>With the emergence of satellite television and other forms of electronic media new and powerful avenues are now available for presenting Indian Culture abroad. Effective steps should, therefore, be taken to make maximum use of the means provided by the electronic media. For example the ICCR should enter into arrangements with the Doordarshan which today has its foot-prints in many neighbouring countries away from the borders of India. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should explore the possibility of entering into arrangements with electronic media abroad such as INTERNET for projecting India's cultural image to audiences in other countries. The ICCR should set up a special committee of people in the field of electronic communication as well as scholars and artistes to go into the matter. It should also produce floppies on different aspects of the Indian culture for projection abroad through the electronic media.</p>

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29.	5.45	External Affairs	The Committee find that various cultural troupes and delegations comprising artistes, scholars and academicians are sent by the ICCR abroad to foster better understanding and strengthen cultural relations with other countries. For this artistes are selected and empanelled by the Advisory Committees, which are constituted in respect of various art forms. For scholars and academicians a selection committee constituted by the ICCR scrutinises papers of the applicant. Only the artistes empanelled in the ICCR's reference list receive sponsorship and assistance.
30.	5.46	-do-	Although as per the rules an artiste is not sponsored/assisted on more than one occasion within a period of 3 years. Yet 38 artistes/groups were sponsored on more than one occasion within a period of 3 years during the last 5 years. Repeated violation of the rules in his regard only reconfirm the charges of unfair selection procedure voiced by some of the artistes who appeared before the Sub-Committee.
31.	5.47	—do—	Further, in order to ensure that eminent personalities are not left out while others manage to go abroad quite easily and frequently, it is important that Advisory and Selection Committees are headed by distinguished personalities in their respective fields. There should be an openness in perfection and the merit and the standing of the artistes should be given due weightage by

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			these Committees depending upon the programmes for which their selection is made. The best among the artistes, especially those who are charismatic and have capacity to communicate with the western audiences should generally be selected to represent India abroad.
32.	5.48	External Affairs	The Committee further feel that the main thrust of the cultural representation of India abroad should be to present India's composite culture. Yet, the procedure for selection of artistes followed so far has not projected a balance picture of our culture. For instance, West Bengal and other States of the North-East Region have so far received little representation. The council therefore needs to adopt appropriate means to ensure that all the regions of the country get due representation and projection abroad.
33.	5.49	-do-	Since merit and excellence in a particular field of art and communicative skills of the artiste matter a lot in the long run and pay dividends in promoting goodwill and admiration for the country only top eminent artistes or those close to the top may be considered by the ICCR to represent India abroad. It is not the legitimate task of the ICCR to groom younger artiste and help them achieve eminence.
34.	5.50	-do-	The ICCR should not content itself by sending prominent performing artistes abroad only. It should enure

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			that prominent scholars, academicians and people from other pursuits of excellence are also depute to project Indian culture, traditions and values to foreign audiences.
35.	5.51	External Affairs	Complaints were received from witnesses representing national bodies such as Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama that they were not being closely and meaningfully associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR. This feeling should be removed forthwith and representatives of these eminent bodies should be invited to participate actively in the programme/activities in the ICCR and thereby enable India to put across its best cultural heritage.
36.	5.54	-do-	The Committee are of the clear view that the ICCR's main task is to project India's rich cultural heritage abroad. It should, therefore not be spending its time, money and energy in organising Indian performing arts events within India. Any such exercise would be only duplicating what other institutions are legitimately required to do.
37.	5.58	-do-	The Committee feel that the publication programme of the ICCR should strive to act in the direction as detailed below so as to achieve their best results with limited available resources:

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(i) The publication programme of the ICCR should principally have 3 target groups in mind; these are first, academics, intellectuals and opinion makers, second University Students and third, School children (and through them the family).

(ii) The publications should be learned, objective, accurate and at the same time, should be readily understood by the general reader and should consciously avoid the language and jargon of any particular discipline. The guiding principle should be that the publications should be "academically inspired but meant for general audiences."

(iii) The Council should bring out a set of publications reasonably priced on different aspects of India, incline our ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. The target of such publications should be high school and university students, and this would enable a better understanding of India at an early stage and take the perception of India to the family. Indian Scholars may be usefully associated in such a project for their involvement may contribute to the introduction of such publications in the curricula of school/universities abroad.

(iv) The Council should consider bringing out a set of publications for school children. This needs to be carefully designed and should include work kits. Kits could be of interest to the entire family, and if

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prepared well, they could be a source of enjoyment and learning for the entire family.

(v) The Council should attempt periodic readership surveys of all its journals through Missions abroad so as to assess their utility readability and popularity. This would also help in setting up distribution goals.

(vi) The ICCR may take suitable steps to devise a distribution mechanism with the help of Indian Missions/Posts abroad so that the publications produced with lot of efforts reach the target groups easily on time.

38. 5.61 External Affairs

There is an imperative need for drawing up an annual coordinated programme specifically targetted towards inviting eminent scholars, opinion makers and persons in public life, keeping in mind our central focus and thrust areas. Therefore, the ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme must be suitably expanded in close consultation with the MEA. Such a programme of concentrated visits combined with talks, meetings and briefings would not only help in building suitable friendships but would create greater awareness. Certainly, the cumulative effect of such a programme would be a lot more at a fraction of the cost than what might be achieved through expensive public relation agencies. This is also timely in a way. It is a sad but regrettable fact that the

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ranks of influential India lovers, scholars and friends in many of the key countries are gradually thinning. Consequently the inputs in State policies in these countries lack the insight and perceptions of such individuals of eminence. The ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme can provide a very useful mechanism outside formal structures to build up a powerful coalition of friends. The Programme allows the MEA considerable flexibility as a result of the Council's autonomous status. In short, the Council could provide a very useful conduit to conduct quiet diplomacy through people-to-people contacts thus winning influential friends whose perceptions and insights could provide helpful inputs in the policies of their respective countries.

39. 5.62 External Affairs

The Committee feel that in order to make the Distinguished Visitors Programme more meaningful and useful for overall image projection, it is necessary to identify some of the main themes in which a negative image of India can be harmful to overall interests. Perceptions of India can be changed in our favour only when the negative images and their details are identified. Further there is a need to broaden the Distinguished Visitor's Programme. Besides scholars and academicians, the programme may also bring into its fold specialists, intellectuals and mediapersons.

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40.	5.63 External Affairs	<p>It is therefore essential that the MEA identified the main themes where an effective projection of India is required those where there has been an orchestrated negative portrayal (and hence, requires correction). Similarly, it is important to identify those countries/regions where such distortions have received widespread publicity, and hence, possible acceptance. It would also be useful to identify key persons who have been influenced by this negative campaigning. Even bitter critics should be identified in this regard to enable a pragmatic assessment of how deep-rooted and widespread the negative image of India is. Similarly, it would be equally important to identify influential persons who are inclined to be supportive of India generally. Such an exercise would have to be carried out jointly between the MEA and the ICCR. Once this is done, the ICCR would be in a position to re-orient its Distinguished Visitors Programme and target persons and through them groups and institutions through quiet diplomacy aimed at improving perceptions, removing distortions and knowing India better. Only then will the image of India abroad undergo a radical transformation and receptivity to India and Indian things increase. In other words, we can effectively assist opinion makers, academics, and such identified target groups in "Knowing India" better only when we ourselves can identify in the first instance areas where image</p>	

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41. 5.64 External Affairs

perceptions need to be corrected and improved.

Additionally, it is important to identify those who can turn out to be an investment in the long term. This latter category includes children and young persons who have some links with India. There are, for instance, a very large number of Indian children who have been adopted by European and American families. Studies have demonstrated that such children are keen to retrace and maintain their roots and, more importantly, that they tend to adopt strong anti-root attitude in case their overtures are not met with a warm response. Some adopted children are known to have saved money for years to pay for a ticket to India.

The majority of foster parents in Europe and America and known to encourage links of their adopted children with their mother country. The Council can, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, organise package know-India programmes for such families. If the programme is for the entire family, the correcting of misperceptions of India is likely to be sustainable. Such programmes should, as far as possible, associate the tourism industry and the media, and package a glimpse of India in its totality. Such experiences will not be short-lived and would contribute towards the creation of a lobby for India, not only among these children but also their parents.

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42.	5.65	External Affairs	<p>The other group of people the Council should target are those who are potential political allies. The Council should extend this programme in consultation with the MEA and other Ministries and go beyond simple political relations into international economic relations, especially in the context of our current measures for economic liberalisation. Issues such as child labour in the carpet industry, the Narmada Valley Project and environmental issues, education and population control related programmes, AIDS awareness etc. can also be included. There is a tendency among critics of India to focus on a selected set of themes without fully comprehending the scale of issues involved. The principal objective behind such programmes should be not only to correct misconceptions, but also to focus on the magnitude of the issue confronting the Government and people of India. It would therefore, be extremely useful to include visits by journalists. A favourable report in a leading newspaper powerfully influences perceptions.</p>
43.	5.66	-do-	<p>Bilateral contacts and exchanges are presently made at various levels. These are mostly at the official, diplomatic or ministerial levels. Once in a way, these are also held at the Parliamentary level through the exchange of Parliamentary delegations. These contacts are useful in improving mutual understanding and strengthening</p>

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friendly ties. But as experience shows, these by themselves are not enough. Most of these exchanges are in accordance with official briefs and guidelines which limit the scope of a free and frank people-to-people contact. Some countries have, therefore, chosen to constitute informal Parliamentary Groups on a bilateral basis for candid exchange of ideas on matters of mutual interest. The Sub-Committee feels that the ICCR should examine the feasibility of inviting the leaders/members of such informal groups to India so that the scope for people-to-people contact could be given a new and worthwhile dimension.

44. 5.67 External Affairs **Institutional Linkages, Seminars & Symposia**

The ICCR also needs to concentrate on one other area: establishing linkages with important think tanks in key countries and educational institutions and universities in various countries and to jointly sponsor seminars and symposia on matters/concerns vital to us. Such institutional linkages provide excellent opportunities for interaction at various levels. A case in point is an International Polish-Indian Seminar on Indology planned by the Indology Department of the Warsaw University in 1997. The participants would be 5-6 prominent scholars from India and Polish Scholars. The objectives are to establish close scholarly contact with leading

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45.	5.68 External Affairs	<p>Indian Scholars who represent those fields of Indian study which are taught and researched in Poland, to undertake common projects in the area of Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil etc. studies and to prepare publications in these subjects.</p>	<p>The core premise is that India has powerful friends in India scholars. Eminent and renowned academics have close links with the political hierarchy in different countries like the USA, UK, Germany and elsewhere. It is necessary to build carefully on these contacts. They are our friends and their words can sometimes reach certain quarters more effectively and much quicker than ours. It is critical therefore of the Council to establish collaborative arrangements with India scholars and with different think-tanks. It is well established that in the US, the Asia Society, Brookings Institution, the American Enterprise Institution, the Carnegie Endowment, the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, the Heritage Foundation and a whole host of other institutions watch 'India' and report on India. Their perceptions play a crucial role in influencing official US perceptions of India. Linkages with such institutions are likely to prevent misconceptions and distortions from gaining ground. An organisation like the ICCR, by virtue of its autonomous character is in a much better position to do this than any Government department. These different</p>

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institutions have over the years contributed towards an understanding of those societies and regions, where Americans have a strategic or business interest. These institutions have also built on their reputations and today command considerable respect and support, not only in the USA but also elsewhere. Active exchanges with such institutions are therefore important, as indeed is the sustaining of relationships with India scholars. Enlightened linkages should therefore be established with similar institutions in key countries.

46. 5.69 External Affairs

It is a known fact that there has been a marked decline in interest in Indian studies in North America and Europe. This is an area where considerable work needs to be done and where economic and commercial aspects impinge on cultural interaction, each promoting the other. An important aspect would be for an organisation like the ICCR in India and similar groups in these countries to interact. As it happens, the ICCR had taken a major initiative in this regard through its "International Symposium on India Studies" in November/December, 1994. During this Symposium, 30 scholars from India interacted with 30 scholars from the UK, USA, France, Italy, German, Mexico, Russia, Iran, Israel, Australia, Japan, China and Austria. The Symposium was aimed at (a) taking a critical review of the achievements and current work in studies relating to India in all its

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			<p>aspects, (b) encouraging discovery of new dimensions of Indian life and thought, and (c) attempting to suggest new directions for such studies, so that they become more comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and relevant for understanding the actualities that constitute present-day India.</p>
47.	5.70	External Affairs	<p>Similarly, in consultation with the MEA, carefully planned lecture series, conferences and seminars on various India-related issues, particularly where there is a negative perception, could be organised in key countries targeting not only the media and opinion makers but a much wider spectrum in the universities, educational institutions and academia. The credentials of the ICCR as a cultural organisation of long standing provides it the flexibility of dealing with politically sensitive topics, without being branded as propagandist.</p>
48.	5.73	-do-	<p>On the basis of evidence available, the Committee are of the view that the travel grants programme is administered on an ad hoc basis without relevance to the above guidelines. There is also a great element of patronage in the programme. For instance, in one case the Committee found that 2 travel grants were approved for two round-the-world tickets for very vague programme of lectures in total violation of the guidelines approved. According to the latest annual report of the ICCR</p>

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(April 1994—March 1995), one journalist representing a Calcutta daily was sent to Egypt in November 1994 to “attend” the Cairo International Film Festival and a freelance journalist of Bombay was sent to France in January 1995 to participate in the 7th Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival at Paris. In another case, seven persons, including two journalists from New Delhi, a photo journalist from Lucknow and a well-known artiste from New Delhi, were sent to Thailand in December 1994 to attend the 11th International Ramayana Conference in Bangkok. Reputed Ramayana scholars were overlooked and ignored. In another case, a well-connected publisher was sent to Kazakhstan for a week in February 1995 for collecting “material to publish biographies of the Presidents of these countries.” No wonder, therefore, that the ICCR is sometimes dubbed as a travel agency since over the years it has provided travel grants to various persons without even assessing their utility to the Council. The Committee therefore recommend that the Council should at the earliest reassess the utility of its travel grants scheme so that it is restricted to only those persons who are categorically identified in keeping with the Council’s restructured basis. Moreover, the Council must institute proper procedures to make the scheme as transparent as possible and leave no scope for controversy and condemnation.

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49.	6.10	External Affairs	<p>The Committee note that the Government of India organises Festivals of India abroad in different countries with a view to presenting India through Indian eyes and upgrading the perceptions about India away from established stereotypes. Such festivals have been organised in 11 countries so far. The nodal agency involved in organising the festivals is the Department of Culture. The ICCR is designated to present performing arts at the festivals. These festivals are stated to be acknowledged as an outstanding success in the field of cultural instances. It has also been contended that the interest in India has noticeably gone up in countries where Festivals of India were organised.</p>
50.	6.11	-do-	<p>All expenditure on festivals in India and abroad is borne on the Festival Budget of the Department of Culture. The information regarding the total expenditure incurred on the festivals held so far by all the concerned agencies together has not been furnished to the Sub-Committee. Only the figures of expenditure incurred by the Department of Culture and the ICCR for events assigned to the ICCR has been given. According to these figures the expenditure on outgoing Festivals/days of Indian culture was Rs. 8.58 crores and on incoming Festivals/Days of culture it was Rs. 7.26 crores. In the absence of figures for total expenditure on the festivals, it is difficult to come to any conclusion</p>

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			about the total amount of money and resources put in to achieve the success of such endeavours as indicated by the Ministry.
51.	6.12	External Affairs	In view of substantial expenditure being incurred on these festivals and the views expressed by some eminent artistes/critics regarding their effectiveness, the Committee feel that there is need to constantly monitor/assess the impact created by these festivals in enhancing mutual understanding and good relations with these countries.
52.	6.13	-do-	The Committee feel there is also need to take a fresh look at the organising of the festivals. For each festival, there should be a National Organising Committee set up by the Governing Body of the ICCR, over which the Vice-President of India presides. The National Organising Committee — should have representatives from various Ministries, institutions and States. There should also be a Specialised Working Committee under the National Organising Committee to ensure effective and meaningful implementation. Every festival should normally have a specific theme and a specific targetted audience in accordance with the changing perceptions of the country in which the festival is held. Of late the festivals have tended to be organised somewhat mechanically and, according to one expert, have become "glorified versions of the Cultural Exchange Programmes." The Committee feel that efforts

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			<p>should be made to involve local endowments, foundations and corporate sponsorship in the financing of such festivals, since this would ensure greater success of the exercise in projecting India abroad.</p>
53.	6.15	External Affairs	<p>Apart from holding such Festivals abroad in different countries, the Government of India may also examine the feasibility of organising some sort of serially organised programmes of shorter duration and less expensive in different countries so as to arouse and sustain the interest of these countries in India's composite culture and its age-old traditions. Much also depends upon the initiatives of Ambassadors as reflected in a successful week-long Festival of Indian Culture organised in Poland early in September, 1995. A visit by some Kathak dancers was thoughtfully developed into a festival providing both the best of Indian cuisine and films.</p>
54.	7.7	-do-	<p>The Committee feel that the ICCR must undertake an urgent review of its Regional Offices so as to assess how their overall functioning could be improved. The Council should also consider whether some of the functions like disbursement of scholarships etc. could be delegated to the Regional Offices. The Committee desire that the Regional Centres need to be activated. They should not only seek the cooperation but also consult the Cultural Departments</p>

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			of the State Governments concerned with a view to identifying and promoting local talent.
55.	7.8	External Affairs	The ICCR may also examine the feasibility of getting the Heads of all the Regional Centres to meet once or twice a year to monitor and take stock to their working; periodically call for reports about their performance and seek their suggestions for improvements. The ICCR should use this exercise to remove such constraints as are faced by these Centres.
56.	8.17	-do-	The Committee were repeatedly informed that though the ICCR is administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs yet it is an autonomous body. The autonomy of the organisation is stated to be maintained through the statutory authorities of the ICCR who direct and approve the activities of the Council. It has been contended that all activities of the ICCR are planned to meet the objectives of India's foreign policy through cultural diplomacy while maintaining its autonomous status as defined in its constitution. For this purpose, there is close coordination and ongoing consultations continue between the ICCR and the Ministry of External Affairs.
57.	8.18	-do-	The Committee also note that divergent views have been expressed as to where the ICCR should actually belong. The Asoka Mehta Committee as well as the

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MEA have contended that since the role of the ICCR is basically to complement the activities of the MEA in projecting India's policies, concerns and perceptions abroad in keeping with our foreign policy objectives, the ICCR should rightly be administratively attached to the MEA. The Department of Culture has however contended that under the Rules of Business, the subject of international cultural relations is allotted to the Department of Culture; thus there cannot be one Department to formulate a national cultural policy and other agency under another Ministry to take care of the International Cultural Relations. Therefore, the ICCR should be attached to the Department of Culture.

58. 8.19 External Affairs

The Committee have carefully gone into the competing claims of the MEA and the Department of Culture. The Committee are of the view that there seems to be an apparent misunderstanding or confusion over the precise role of the ICCR. The ICCR was set up as a programme implementing agency with the specific aim of establishing, reviewing and strengthening cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. It is axiomatic that this specific task has to be undertaken within the overall parameters of our foreign policy objectives. Therefore, the Committee feel that the ICCR has a very important role to play in the furtherance of our foreign policy

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objectives and more or so now in the context of new challenges inherent in the new international environment. The ICCR's future role must be seen as an instrumentality to better the environment of relations with other countries in all its aspects through cultural diplomacy on a people-to-people level outside formal governmental structures. In other words, its role is envisaged as playing a necessary complimentary alongwith the MEA in putting across our views, perceptions and concern and also to correct any negative perceptions. Therefore, it must work in tandem with the MEA within the overall parameters of India's foreign objectives, both short and long term. In this connection, it may be pointed out that organisations abroad similar to the ICCR like the Japan Foundation, the British Council, the USIS and the Alliance Francaise are closely linked with and funded by their respective Foreign Offices; this only underscores the link between a country's foreign policy objectives and the role of cultural diplomacy. In this context, the Committee also considered the question whether the ICCR should be the nodal agency for all international cultural exchanges. They felt that any such role would constrain the ICCR from pursuing effectively the objectives for which it was specifically set up. It must have adequate flexibility to deal with the dynamics of international relations rather than have a fixed role.

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59.	8.20	External Affairs	At the same time, the Committee are of the view that the ICCR must have real functional autonomy for good, obvious reasons. If the ICCR is really autonomous in its functioning, then its status may provide a great deal of flexibility in the pursuit of its objectives and at the same time confer on it greater credibility without being branded as propagandist.
60.	8.21	-do-	The Committee also took a look at the Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP) which India has signed with about 65 countries. The Committee feel that it may be necessary to have a serious look at the CEPs which, it was informed, are today a long and detailed list of activities and regrettably with little, if any, implementation. The CEPs need to reflect our foreign policy, priorities and concerns. The cataclysmic changes the world over suggest that there should be a de-emphasis of cultural exchanges which reflects a bias towards traditional interpretations and stereotypes of culture. A linkage with foreign policy interests and concerns will give the cultural exchanges the personality that distinguishes relations between countries. Today, the CEPs are not distinctive. The CEP with Germany is much the same as the CEP with Uganda. This makes the entire exercise mechanical and devoid of substance. Bilateral relations between nations need therefore to be reflected in the CEP. Furthermore, only those activities

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			<p>should be taken on board which can be implemented in the prescribed time-frame. This can be done only if each CEP is drafted keeping in mind the current state of bilateral relations and further projections for the future.</p>
61.	9.5	External Affairs	<p>A major part of the ICCR's working is its dependence on networking only through out Embassies and Missions abroad. Culture is one area in which India has a unique contribution to make to the world. Our Missions abroad should therefore be more alert and sensitive to seeking such opportunities as would give them a foothold in this area. This would have a definite fallout for India in terms of greater goodwill and understanding of its problems.</p>
62.	9.6	-do-	<p>The Committee are informed that 29 missions and 5 posts have officers doing only information and cultural work whereas 72 missions and 11 posts have officers performing other work assignments including information and culture. The Committee are constrained to note that there were only five or six Missions which have Cultural Attaches though the guidelines/ instructions are stated to have been issued by the Ministry to all the Heads of Missions/Posts to designate an officer to look after the cultural work. The Committee would like to be informed whether all the missions/posts have designated one official specifically dealing with cultural matters.</p>

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63.	9.7	External Affairs	<p>Keeping in view the importance attached to cultural diplomacy, the officer dealing with cultural matters in the mission/post should have adequate knowledge and a knack for Indian history, art and culture. He should be in a position to truly convey India's cultural richness. To cultivate these essential prerequisites, the Committee feel that the training provided to the officers working as Cultural Attache is quite inadequate as it is only an orientation programme organised during the initial period when they join the Foreign Service. The Committee, therefore, consider it imperative that a specialised designed training course should be organised exclusively for these officers. At the start of his or her posting, each officer should be enabled to brush up on different subjects such as Indian philosophy literature, dance, music and visual art.</p>
64.	9.8	-do-	<p>The Committee feel that the ICCR should strive for a more cohesive and purposeful interaction among Indian artistes and foreign artistes which will prove beneficial in enriching and strengthening inter-cultural and intra-cultural appreciation, evolution and absorption of styles, themes and artforms, wherever found feasible/worthwhile. Besides, the ICCR should consider utilising the presence of local cultural associations formed by the persons of Indian origin and the Indian artistes on foreign soil to organise</p>

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			<p>programmes through Indian Embassies and Missions so that there is more exposure of Indian artforms abroad. To facilitate interaction between the artistes, our Missions should initiate in organising get-togethers, talks and receptions for them and provide them adequate opportunities to interact with local artistes and impresarios.</p>
65.	9.9	External Affairs	<p>The ICCR ought to work out a system where all the artistes—small or eminent—on their visits abroad, whether sponsored by the ICCR or on a private visit, are extended minimum courtesies by our Missions abroad so that they are not only shown respect by the local people but their presence is gainfully utilised. Similarly when foreign artistes visit India and programmes/receptions are arranged, suitable steps ought to be taken to ensure the presence of our senior eminent artistes in those programmes. Apart from extending due courtesies befitting their status, they should be properly introduced to the visiting artistes. This would reflect positively on the cultural organisations sponsoring the show and convey the right impression in the minds of the foreign artistes about the respect and regard shown to our artistes and culture in the country.</p>
66.	9.10	-do-	<p>The Committee would like to mention that the visiting foreign artistes receive due attention and courtesy from us. But the same is</p>

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			not always true abroad. The ICCR should, therefore, ensure together with the Missions/Posts abroad that there is a suitable reciprocity in the cultural exchange programmes from the host countries whenever our artistes and scholars visit them.
67.	9.11 External Affairs		The Missions/Posts abroad should also be instructed to motivate the persons of Indian origin abroad to actively participate in the programmes of the ICCR and to promote Indian cultural activities. It is unfortunate that the ICCR/Missions/Posts have not exploited persons of Indian origin adequately for promoting India's best national interests.
68.	10.6	-do-	The Committee are pleased to learn that a bibliography of Maulana Azad's marginal notings in his personal collection of books is being prepared by the ICCR and is proposed to be published. These marginal notings, covering various fields of religion, history, art and culture, would be of tremendous importance. These notes together with the Centenary volume entitled "India's Maulana" should be sent to all important libraries, universities, interested individuals, journalists etc. of various countries of the world. Also, sufficient number of copies thereof should be made available to Missions/Posts abroad to enable them to distribute in their respective countries so as to make an everlasting impact on the people

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			by the Maulana and his views, vision and foresight.
69.	10.7	External Affairs	The Committee consider the organising of annual Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture, where eminent people speak on a wide range of subjects, a befitting tribute to the great Maulana Azad. They, however, feel that the standard of this programme should be maintained high by inviting famous and eminent writers, scholars and philosophers from India and abroad.
70.	9.12	-do-	The Committee also feel the need to redefine more clearly the object and role of the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs in promoting India's cultural image abroad. The Committee consider the External Publicity Division, to be the primary instrument in conjunction with the Information wing of our Missions/ Posts abroad for projecting the official views of the Government of India on international affairs or on bilateral matters of direct concern to the country. This role is distinct from that of the ICCR which is intended to promote Indian culture in foreign countries. External Publicity has to be more issue-oriented, diplomatically precise and correct while cultural promotion may adopt a more generalised and broad approach and idiom. No doubt both in the field of information and culture, the same section and perhaps the same officer are involved, namely

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the Press Attache and Information Section. But at the base in Delhi, cultural work should be transferred to the ICCR, including publication of periodicals and non-periodical material of general interest, production and supply of films, video tapes and audio tapes as well as books of general interest for foreign audiences and targets. In brief, the External Publicity Division should concentrate on and specialise in Information, while the ICCR should take up Culture. Such clear bifurcation would have the merit of eliminating duplication and overlap as well as smoothen the flow of material from other Ministries and Departments involved, which are canalised through the ICCR. The Committee also suggest that the diplomatic officer in charge of information should be redesignated as First Secretary or Second Secretary or Attache (Information & Culture), as the case may be, in most Missions/ Posts which do not have a separate Cultural Wing or Section.

71. 11.1 External Affairs The ICCR is at the crossroads today after being in existence for over four decades. Three factors necessarily demand that the Council's role and, consequently, its programmes need to be reoriented and restructured so that it can perform a useful role, as originally envisaged by Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, in furthering India's foreign policy objectives.

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These are :

(i) The momentous and dramatic transformation in regional and global alignments among nations which require effective and immediate responses;

(ii) The imperative need to project a holistic image of a vibrant, dynamic India not only to assist in the better perception of India among a larger cross-section of people in the world but also, to correct concerted attempts at image distortion by certain vested interests and countries; and

(iii) The budgetary constraints under which the Council perforce has to operate because of the general constraints on resources necessitates that the Council identify and concentrate on activities most likely to give it maximum mileage.

72. 11.2 External Affairs

The Committee has made a number of specific recommendations in this regard. It is hoped that the Government, the MEA and the ICCR would have them examined on a priority basis and begin implementing them. The Committee are the firm view that the ICCR should henceforth work and develop on sound professional lines with greater transparency in its working and decisions. It should eschew adhocism. The element of patronage for the sake of patronage must be removed. A restructured ICCR with a focussed agenda would be in a much better position

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73.	11.3 External Affairs	to reflect India's concerns and priorities abroad and would contribute greatly towards winning friends for India.	The Committee has noted with interest some of the steps the two former Directors-General initiated during the past three years to restructure the ICCR's activities, introduce professionalism in its functioning and to make it more relevant to contemporary needs. It has also noted with considerable interest the various steps the latter Director-General took to implement some of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee. Much more, however, remains to be done to revamp and reorient the Council's functioning in keeping with the changed and changing circumstances in world politics and the new role which India must progressively play in the new emerging world order.