

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2640
ANSWERED ON- 04/08/2023

SHORTAGE OF TALENT AND SKILLED PERSONNEL

2640. SHRI T.N. PRATHAPAN
SHRI KUMBAKUDI SUDHAKARAN
DR. AMAR SINGH
SHRI SAPTAGIRI SANKAR ULAKA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) the reasons for the lack of investment as well as a comprehensive statement by the Government about development of India's soft power strategies;
- (b) whether the Government is aware of the fact that there exists a lack of funding to fulfil Government's efforts on the soft power front and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to tackle the serious shortage of talent and personnel equipped in skills that are required to build cultural diplomacy; and
- (d) whether the Government intends to address the issue of the lack of coordination among government agencies, who have been conducting separate international outreach activities and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SMT. MEENAKSHI LEKHI)

(a & b) Many Ministries and agencies of Government of India including the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) are involved in projection of India's soft power. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes Indian culture worldwide through its Cultural Centres and Missions/Posts abroad. Activities conducted by them include inter-alia, teaching of Yoga, Dance, Music and Hindi, organising/supporting conferences/ seminars/ workshops in different fields of Indian culture, supporting Chairs of Indian Studies in the foreign universities; gifting of busts/statues of Mahatma Gandhi and other national heroes, exchanging visual art exhibitions, and celebration of International Day of Yoga at iconic venues. Under the guidance of the Ministry, the ICCR has taken various new initiatives as well to further develop cultural relations and create mutual understanding with other nations, including new forays in projecting India's democratic traditions, cuisines, arts & crafts, etc. Outreach has been enhanced across the globe also through various online activities.

ICCR has concluded MoUs with various State Governments to promote their culture abroad and to facilitate cultural exchanges with foreign countries. Requisite budgetary support is being provided to pursue the cultural diplomacy objectives.

(c) The Government continuously reviews the requirement of manpower at various levels in Missions and Posts abroad. Remedial reallocation of manpower is undertaken wherever required. The ICCR has been sending teachers of Yoga and Performing arts to the Missions/ Posts/ Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad to promote Indian Culture worldwide. The ICCR has also been deploying local resource persons to the Missions/ Posts/ ICCs to teach yoga, Hindi, dance, music etc. in order to popularize Indian culture. Online classes in Hindi and performing arts for foreign students are also an important resource.

(d) The government has coordination mechanisms among various departments and agencies involved in cultural diplomacy and outreach activities. The General Assembly and Governing Body of ICCR have members from Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Sangeet Natak Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi and Sahitya Akademi, among others.
