

**23**

**COMMITTEE  
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
(2022-23)**

**SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations']

**TWENTY THIRD REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

***July, 2023 /Sravana, 1945 (Saka)***

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**(2022-23)**

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[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations']

*Presented to Lok Sabha on 28.07.2023*  
*Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 28.07.2023*



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT**  
**NEW DELHI**

***JULY, 2023 /Sravana, 1945 (Saka)***

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**COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2022-23)**  
**Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Chairperson**

**Lok Sabha**

2. Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal
3. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
4. Shri Kalyan Banerjee
5. Shri E. T. Mohammed Basheer
6. Shri Dileshwar Kamait
7. Smt. Preneet Kaur
8. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
9. Smt. Poonam Pramod Mahajan
10. Shri Srinivas Reddy Manne
11. Shri P. C. Mohan
12. Smt. Queen Oja
13. Shri Ritesh Pandey
14. Dr. K. C. Patel
15. Shri N.K. Premachandran
16. Smt. Navneet Ravi Rana
17. Shri Soyam Bapu Rao
18. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
19. Shri Rebaty Tripura
20. Dr. Harsh Vardhan
21. *Vacant*

**Rajya Sabha**

22. Smt. Jaya Bachchan
23. Smt. Misha Bharti
24. Shri Anil Desai
25. Shri Ranjan Gogoi
26. Shri Deepender Singh Hooda
27. Shri Prakash Javadekar
28. Dr. Wanweiroy Kharlukhi
29. Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal
30. Shri Kapil Sibal
31. Shri Abdul Wahab

**Secretariat**

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| 2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan | - | Director                    |
| 3. Ms. K. Muanniang Tunlut   | - | Deputy Secretary            |
| 4. Shri Anurag Sandil        | - | Assistant Committee Officer |

## **INTRODUCTION**

I, the Chairperson, Committee on External Affairs (2022-23) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty Third Report (17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha) on action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report of the Committee on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations'.

2. The Sixteenth Report was presented to the Hon'ble Speaker under Direction 71A of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha on 5 September 2022 and presented to Lok Sabha/laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 12 December, 2022. The Action Taken Replies of the Government on all the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Report were received on 15 June, 2023 (English Version) and 19 June, 2023 (Hindi Version).

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Action Taken Report at their Sitting held on 20 July, 2023. The Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee have been given at Appendix-I to the Report.

4. An analysis of the action taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report of the Committee on External Affairs is given at Appendix-II.

**NEW DELHI**  
**20 July, 2023**  
**29 Ashadha, 1945 (Saka)**

**P.P. CHAUDHARY,**  
***Chairperson,***  
***Committee on External Affairs***

## CHAPTER-I

This Report of the Committee on External Affairs deals with the action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report of the Committee on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects & Limitations'. The Sixteenth Report was presented to Hon'ble Speaker on 5 September, 2022 under Direction 71A of the Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha and presented to Lok Sabha/laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 12 December, 2022.

2. The Action Taken Notes have been received from the Ministry of External Affairs on all the 45 observations/recommendations contained in the Report. These have been categorized as follows: -

**(i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government: -**

Recommendation Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45.

**Total-35**

### **Chapter-II**

**(ii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:-**

Nil

**Total- Nil**

### **Chapter-III**

**(iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration: -**

Recommendation Nos. 1, 6, 15, 16 17, 37 and 38

**Total-7**

**Chapter-IV**

iv. **Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited: -**

Recommendation Nos. 7, 9 and 28

**Total-3**

**Chapter-V**

**3. The Committee desire that the final replies to the comments and observations/recommendations contained in Chapter-I of this Report and recommendations included in Chapter V may be furnished to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.**

4. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations that require reiteration or merit comments.

## **ASSESSMENT OF INDIA'S SOFT POWER POTENTIAL AND STRATEGY FOR ITS OPTIMUM UTILIZATION**

### **Recommendation No. 1**

5. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee are aware that India's soft power projection predates the usage of the term in popular parlance in 21st century. Soft power is broadly described as the ability to influence others through appeal and attraction using non-coercive means. In this sense, India possesses a vast repertoire of soft power resources with widespread global appeal. These include, its cultural heritage evident in arts, dances, literature, cuisine, yoga, traditional medicine, cinema and entertainment, sports, historical monuments, India's democratic traditions, Constitution, unity in diversity and contributions in resolving contemporary environmental issues, scientific/technological accomplishments and socio-economic innovations.

The Committee further note that 'Smart Power', which is reflected in judicious use of soft as well as hard power, is most representative of India's engagement with the world. India's extensive and diverse soft power capabilities represent a unique and sui generis case in study of soft power and cultural diplomacy. The Committee, however, are dismayed to note that despite the existence of a wide array of soft power resources and continued persuasion by the Committee, there have been deficiencies on part of MEA in projecting it effectively to achieve

foreign policy goals particularly due to lack of coordination, absence of national policy, inadequate budget and human resource. The Committee, therefore, recommend that MEA should conduct a thorough assessment of our soft power potential and devise strategies for optimum utilization of the same in achieving India's foreign policy objectives on priority basis and apprise the Committee accordingly. The Committee also recommend that the MEA should capitalize in multilateral diplomacy channels and abundantly incorporate Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy in India's foreign policy strategies.'

6. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply has stated as under:

"Government's efforts aiming at influencing foreign public opinion and attitudes who in turn may influence their government's actions towards another nation include 'nation-branding; diaspora outreach, digital engagement and Government sponsored activities focusing on communicating directly with foreign publics with a view to projecting soft power abroad. All such activities of the Government serve as an effective tool to build a positive image with public of other countries. Apart from Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) and Indian Council for Cultural Relations(ICCR) other Departments involved in projecting India's soft power abroad are (i) Ministry of Culture through Lalit Kala Akademi: Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama, (ii) Ministry of Textiles: through Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and Development Commissioner (Handlooms), (iii) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting via Directorate of Film Festivals, (iv) Ministry of AYUSH and (v) Ministry of Tourism. All these departments of the Government undertake different activities to achieve the desired goals.

ICCR, as part of well devised strategies for optimum utilization of soft power potential, contribute towards promotion of Indian culture abroad through its wide range of

activities which include inter-alia, teaching of Yoga, Dance, Music and Hindi, organizing/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 centres abroad. Under the guidance of the Ministry, ICCR has taken various new initiatives as well to develop cultural relations and create mutual understanding with other nations, including new forays in projecting India's democratic credentials, cuisines, arts & crafts etc. ICCR has enhanced its outreach across the globe through various online activities and started various initiatives related to Buddhism as part of ICCR's cultural diplomacy".

**7. Despite the existence of extensive and diverse soft power resources and capabilities the Committee, had felt that there have been deficiencies on the part of MEA in projecting it effectively to achieve foreign policy goals due to various reasons. The Committee had, therefore, recommended that MEA should conduct a thorough assessment of our soft power potential, devise strategies for optimum utilization of the same and capitalize it in multilateral diplomacy channels. In its Action Taken Reply, the MEA has apprised the Committee regarding the initiatives taken by ICCR and the Ministries/Departments involved in projecting India's soft power abroad. While acknowledging the efforts being made by all the relevant arms of the Government in soft power**



**projection, the Committee are constrained to point out that the Ministry has chosen to remain silent on the recommendation of the Committee with regard to assessment of India's soft power potential. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to take immediate steps for assessing India's soft power potential so that strategies for optimum utilization of the same in achieving India's foreign policy objectives are devised and pronounced. Efforts to capitalize it in multilateral diplomacy channels may also be initiated without delay and the progress achieved in this regard may be communicated to the Committee.**

## **STUDY ON INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES ON SOFT POWER PROJECTION**

### **Recommendation No. 3**

8. The Committee in their Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee note that the Ministry has only gathered inputs through analyzing the soft power activities of few countries and also not undertaken any formal study as yet on international best practices of the manner in which other countries have leveraged



soft power instruments. On the basis of such informal observations of the Ministry, the Committee note that the soft power organization of countries such as China, United Kingdom, Japan, USA, Russia and France focuses on language promotion, leadership programme, cultural activities, and promotion of art forms. Though the Committee are aware that ICCR performs most of these activities, they feel that there is immense scope for improvement and expansion of such activities. The Committee are, therefore, of the considered opinion that a formal study of international best practices of soft power projections should be done on priority basis and the learnings from such a study must be factored in while formulating India's soft power projection and strategy.'

9. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply has stated as under:

"Government is already performing plethora of activities which are essentially an important component of soft power activities undertaken to project India's soft power abroad. The strategically devised policies for promotion of soft power are of dynamic and evolving in nature. Nevertheless, the Government , given the immense scope for improvement and expansion of such activities note down the suggestion of Committee to undertake a formal study of international best practices of soft power projections on priority basis and to factoring in the leanings from such a study while formulating India's soft power projection and strategy."

**10. The Committee had opined that a formal study of international best practices of soft power projections should be done on priority basis and the learnings from such a study must be factored in while formulating India's soft power projection**

**and strategy. In its Action Taken Note furnished to the Committee, the Ministry has submitted a stereotype reply stating that the suggestion of the Committee has been noted down. However, the Committee were given to understand earlier that the Ministry has already gathered some inputs through the analysis of soft power activities of a few countries. Given the immense scope for improvement and expansion of soft power activities, the Committee urge the Ministry to undertake the said study without delay and utilize the inputs derived from the study in India's soft power projection and strategy. The Committee also desire that the progress and outcome achieved in this regard may be intimated to them.**

## **COORDINATION COMMITTEE ON SOFT POWER PROJECTION**

### **Recommendation No. 6**

11. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Ministry of External Affairs has highlighted four key factors inhibiting effective conduct of India's soft power and cultural diplomacy – inadequate budgetary allocation, lack of coordination among multiple institutions, shortage of skilled manpower and

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

12. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"MEA is working on strengthening Coordination among key departments looking after Culture, Education, Sports & Youth Affairs and AYUSH . Efforts to enhance cooperation with the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats to project democracy, constitutional values, electoral practices, good governance and other aspects of soft power, in a more sustained manner to foreign Parliamentarians, legislature staff and media are underway. ICCR closely works with the Ministry of Culture(MOC) in implementation of Cultural Exchange Programmes(CEPs) for which (MOC) is the nodal Ministry with active role of ICCR's Cultural Centres and Ministry's network of Missions . The Standing Committee for planning and coordinating Festivals of

India abroad is chaired by Secretary(Culture) where DG, ICCR is also a member. The Governing Body of ICCR includes members from Ministry of Culture as well as all major principle organizations working in the area of soft culture.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi is also Minister of State for Culture of India. Recommendation of the Hon'ble Parliamentary Committee to constitute the Coordination Committee has been noted."

**13. The Committee had noted that MEA itself had identified the lack of coordination among the multiple institutions as a key factor enabling effective conducts of India's soft power but nothing was being done to establish any coordination mechanism. In response to the recommendation of the Committee for constituting Coordination Committee on soft power projection and cultural diplomacy the Ministry has only replied that the recommendation has been noted. Since the Committee feel that only a coordinated mechanism between MEA and Other line Ministries/Departments would bring greater synergy and coordination, the Committee reiterate their earlier recommendation of constituting the Coordination Committee on soft power projection and cultural diplomacy and bringing it in action without further delay.**

### **ADEQUATE BUDGETARY RESOURCES FOR ICCR**

#### **Recommendation No. 7**

14. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

'Non-availability of adequate finances is one of the factors derailing the effective facilitation of India's soft power projection. Soft power capabilities require capital, both human as well as financial to be effective. A cursory glance at the budgetary allocation to India's ICCR and Confucius Institutes of China or UKS's British Council or Germany's Goethe Institute is testimony to the hurdles in our institutional efficacy. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should increase ICCR's budgetary allocation by at least 20 % than what is being provisioned as of now.'

15. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply has stated as under:

"The Ministry deeply appreciates views of the Hon'ble Committee, and work towards providing adequate budgetary resources to ICCR so as to effectively carry-out its mandate."

**16. Having felt that the non-availability of adequate finances is one of the factors derailing the effective facilitation of India's soft power projection and after comparing the budgetary allocation to ICCR vis-à-vis other foreign institutes, the Committee had recommended to increase ICCR's budgetary allocation by at least 20%. In its Action taken Reply, the Ministry has stated that it is working towards providing adequate budgetary resources to ICCR so as to effectively carry out its mandate. In view of the need for projection of India's soft power abroad and the role of ICCR in this regard, the**



**Committee look forward to the Ministry allocating adequate funds and providing extra budgetary resources, if required, so that the soft power capabilities of ICCR is enhanced and the organization is able to carry out its mandate effectively.**

## **SETTING UP OF STUDY GROUP ON WORKING OF ICCR**

### **Recommendation No. 9**

17. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

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

18. The Ministry in its Action Taken Reply has stated as under:

“Recommendation of the Hon’ble Committee to appoint a Study Group firstly to assess the working of ICCR in comparison to British Council, the American Centre and the Confucius Institute and later to suggest ways to further strengthen ICCR, has been noted. ICCR would put up the recommendation to its Governing Body seeking their guidance and the way forward on identifying

the scope and suitable partner to execute the proposed assessment of ICCR's functioning".

**19. The Committee in their original Report had desired the Ministry to appoint a Study Group, firstly to assess the working of ICCR in comparison to British Council, American Centre and Confucius Institute and later, to suggest ways to further strengthen ICCR. In its reply, the Ministry has stated that the ICCR would put up the recommendation to its Governing Body seeking their guidance in identifying a suitable partner to execute the proposed assessment of the functioning of ICCR. In the opinion of the Committee, precious loss of time should be avoided in such exercises and instead, finalize all the modalities to complete the assessment at the earliest and take measures for further strengthening of the ICCR in a time bound manner. The steps taken and progress achieved in this regard may be intimated to the Committee within three months of the presentation of this report.**

**FEEDBACK FOR EVOLVING COUNTRY-SPECIFIC APPROACH FOR  
TOURISM PROMOTION  
Recommendation No. 15**

20. The Committee in their 15<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

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

21. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"Ministry of External Affairs would work with relevant stakeholders and invite Missions/Posts to seek feedback from foreign tourists and travelers."



**22. The Committee had felt the need to increase the number of tourism offices abroad by adopting country-specific approach for promotional activities and hence, had urged the Government to come up with proposals incorporating feedback from all types of travelers starting from backpackers to high end tourists. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry has stated that it would work with relevant stakeholders and invite Missions/Posts to seek feedback from foreign tourists and travelers. The Committee find that no specific action has so far been taken by the Ministry and reiterate their earlier recommendation for evolving a country –specific approach for promotional activities related to tourism.**

## **CREATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TOURISM**

### **Recommendation No. 16**

23. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

'The Committee find that in our country the differential pricing exists for entry tickets to historical monuments in the country. While understanding that the earnings from foreign tourists is a major source of revenue for the Government, they are of the view that such differential pricing leads to a loss of large segment of foreign travelers. Moreover, in a globalized world the

differential pricing for citizens and foreigners is unnecessary and hence the Committee desire that the pricing system may be re-visited. The Committee also desire that adequate infrastructure and public transportation be created around tourist hubs and heritage sites and creation of a common tourist passes for entry to multiple heritage sites, as prevalent in most European countries, may be explored to streamline the process and avoid long queues at sites.'

24. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"Ministry deeply appreciates the observations of the Hon'ble Committee particularly on increasing and upgrading touristic infrastructure, and use of technology to streamline processes and procedures".

**25. Finding that differential pricing exists for entry tickets to historical monuments in the country, the Committee had desired that the pricing system may be re-visited. The Committee had also desired that creation of adequate infrastructure including public transportation around tourist hubs/heritage sites and common tourist passes for entry to multiple heritage sites as is prevalent in most European countries, may be explored. However, the Action Taken Reply is silent on the action taken or proposed to be taken to address the issues other than expressing its appreciation about the**

**recommendation. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to take follow-up action with the concerned Ministry and apprise them about the progress made in this regard.**

## **RELIGIOUS AND MEDICAL TOURISM**

### **Recommendation No. 17**

26. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

The Committee observe that religious tourism and medical tourism have emerged as areas with immense tourism potential. As an ancient civilization and a land of many religions, India has been cashing on this potential. The Committee have been informed that to create awareness about India's Buddhist Circuit/ Pilgrimage and attract foreign tourist to Buddhist sites in India, the International Buddhist Conclave (IBC) is being organized regularly by the Government. The Committee also note that under the Champion Sector Scheme, marketing & promotion for Buddhist circuits in overseas markets is also taken up through dedicated media campaign. The Committee are also pleased to observe that India is emerging as a preferred country for medical treatments due to its advanced quality healthcare, affordable costs, lesser waiting time & easy medical visa process. The Committee feel that there should be a consistent and comprehensive focus on these emerging and promising arenas of

tourism in India. They, therefore, recommend that Government should adopt a multi-pronged approach to capitalize on India's potential as a hub for religious and medical tourism by building requisite infrastructure and skilled expertise. The Ministry of Tourism may be directed to issue written and online material/brochures on medical tourism and religious tourism in all the Missions/Posts abroad for enhanced promotional activities in these areas.'

27. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"Attracting foreign tourists to avail medical facilities in India under "consumption of services abroad" is an important means of revenue generation. A whole of government approach is adopted in this regard. Tourism and Technology has been identified as a key element to be focussed upon by Missions/Posts".

**28. The Committee had recommended that the Government should adopt a multi-pronged approach to capitalize on India's potential as a hub for religious and medical tourism and the Ministry of Tourism may also be directed to issue written and online material/brochures in all the Missions/Posts abroad. The Ministry has replied that a whole of Government approach is adopted in this regard and Tourism and Technology has been identified as a key element to be focused upon by Missions/Posts, without mentioning any of the initiatives taken and efforts made in response to the Committee's recommendation. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to take concrete**

**steps in coordination with other concerned Ministries under intimation to the Committee.**

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL CULTURAL TROUPES**

### **Recommendation No. 37**

29. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

'ICCR is mandated to create a sound understanding of Indian culture abroad and towards this end, it routinely sends cultural troupes, including dance and musical performers. However, on various occasions cultural troupes from some border states or states with a huge population of tribal communities are provided inadequate opportunities to go abroad and present their art. This happens as Ambassador and High Commissioners of India abroad prefer certain group of artists and ICCR in a way remains constrained to send cultural troupes for which there is an expressed demand. The Committee, therefore, recommend that ICCR reformulates certain rules and regulations to ensure that artistes from all regions and States get an opportunity to showcase their talent abroad in an equitable manner.'

30. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"While ICCR always endeavors to maintain a regional balance while sending the cultural troupes abroad, as pointed by the Hon'ble Committee members, Missions abroad recommended particular form of dance group in consideration of the local aspirations from Musical groups from India. ICCR in the best interest of propagation of true culture, chose to send the groups suitable to the occasion and potential footfall for programme. The recommendation of the Committee to reformulates certain rules and regulations to ensure that artistes from all regions and States get an



opportunity to showcase their talent abroad in an equitable manner is kindly noted.”

**31. Having noted that adequate opportunities are not provided to cultural troupes from some border States or States having tribal population to go abroad and present their art, the Committee had recommended reformulation of certain rules and regulations by ICCR to ensure equal opportunity to all troupes. However, the reply of the Ministry stating that the recommendation of the Committee has been noted, is not satisfactory as efforts made in this regard have not been mentioned or the Ministry/ICCR seem to have taken no action at all. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry/ICCR to take follow-up action on its recommendation and reformulate the rules and regulations governing the same so as to ensure equitable opportunity to artistes from all regions and States particularly to the border states and states with significant tribal population to showcase their art and talent abroad. The Committee may also be apprised of the progress made in this regard.**

## **INDIAN CULTURAL CENTRES ABROAD**

### **Recommendation No. 38**

32. The Committee in their 16<sup>th</sup> Report had observed/recommended as under:

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

33. In their Action Taken Reply, the Ministry of External Affairs submitted as under:

"Setting up of Indian Cultural Centres abroad is part of ICCR's efforts to promote Indian culture all over the world, within the framework of India's foreign policy. Procedure for opening of Cultural Centres abroad include recommendation of the concerned Indian Mission abroad and bilateral relations between India and the host country, proposed activities to be undertaken, population with number of PIOs, completion local formalities and obtaining approvals and number of students from host country studied/studying under ICCR scholarship programme.

Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to open Indian Cultural Center in U.A.E, in view of presence of large diaspora and India's strong and sustained strategic and cultural ties with U.A.E, has been noted".

**34. Being surprised at the absence of Indian Cultural Centre in the entire Gulf region, the Committee had recommended for opening of a cultural centre in the region. The Committee had also recommended that the much delayed cultural centres in Washington, Paris and Tel Aviv should be opened by the end of the year. In its Action Taken Reply, the Ministry had cited procedural requirements and local formalities for opening of cultural centres in Washington, Paris and Tel Aviv while stating that the recommendation of the Committee for opening cultural centre in UAE has been noted. In the opinion of the Committee after noting the recommendation some concrete efforts should have been made by the Ministry in that direction and act sincerely to overcome all the procedural bottlenecks and complete all the required formalities. The Committee, therefore, reiterate their earlier recommendation and urge the Ministry to open Indian cultural centres in Washington, Paris and Tel Aviv without further delay. In view of the large Diaspora and India's strong and sustained strategic and cultural ties with the Gulf region, the process for opening a cultural centre there should also be prioritized for its early completion.**



## **CHAPTER II**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT**

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 2)**

The Committee are aware that soft power capabilities have great relevance and potential in augmenting positive perceptions about a country and its national interests. India with its wide ranging instrument of soft power has a definite advantage in comparison to many other countries. However, in absence of formulation of a clear cut policy on our soft power projection this may not have been possible. The Committee is constrained to note that despite making specific recommendation by the Committee in this regard in their 13th Report of 16th Lok Sabha the policy is still at consultation stage. The Committee, therefore, strongly desire that the Ministry should prepare a policy document on India's soft power projections, delineating India's soft power toolbox and manner in which it is being projected abroad along a vision statement for the future. The Committee also desire to be kept informed about the progress made in this regard within three months.

#### **Reply of the Government**

Government is taking all possible measures to avail the advantages of India's soft power capabilities. To give a

synchronized effect of Government's activities undertaken by other Departments, MEA as an Empowered execution agency of the Government in the lead, seek inputs from other organizations and tools of soft power to supplement its efforts to carry forward the mandate of soft power as per country specific soft power demand prepared in consultation with Indian Mission of that specific country. As one of the stakeholders in promoting India's soft power ICCR, under guidance of Ministry of External Affairs has undertaken necessary preparatory exercises including meetings with stake holders, seeking views from the Missions, taking inputs from HOMs in the specially organized session, taking valuable suggestions of experts on the subject by way of arranging lectures and conferences. A policy paper on ICCR's inputs on Soft Power has been prepared and submitted to members of Governing Body of ICCR for their further valuable suggestions. After due internal consultation, the inputs will be provided to MEA for taking over-all view on India's soft power projection in consultation with all other stake holders

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 3)**

The Committee note that the Ministry has only gathered inputs through analyzing the soft power activities of few countries and also not undertaken any formal study as yet on international best practices of the manner in which other countries have

leveraged soft power instruments. On the basis of such informal observations of the Ministry, the Committee note that the soft power organization of countries such as China, United Kingdom, Japan, USA, Russia and France focuses on language promotion, leadership programme, cultural activities, and promotion of art forms. Though the Committee are aware that ICCR performs most of these activities, they feel that there is immense scope for improvement and expansion of such activities. The Committee are therefore, of the considered opinion that a formal study of international best practices of soft power projections should be done on priority basis and the learnings from such a study must be factored in while formulating India's soft power projection and strategy.

### **Reply of the Government**

Government is already performing plethora of activities which are essentially an important component of soft power activities undertaken to project India's soft power abroad. The strategically devised policies for promotion of soft power are of dynamic and evolving in nature. Nevertheless, the Government , given the immense scope for improvement and expansion of such activities note down the suggestion of Committee to undertake a formal study of international best practices of soft power projections on priority basis and to factoring in the leanings from such a study while formulating India's soft power projection and strategy.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 4)**

The Committee understand that Covid-19 pandemic has been a disruptive factor in conduct of foreign policy and diplomacy at

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

### **Reply of the Government**

ICCR has adapted itself to the new realities post Covid-19 and has adopted many technology driven methodologies to cater to the new challenges. These include enhancing its outreach across the globe through various online activities, updating the existing A2A portal and launch of new portal Ghyan-setu, signing of MOUs with educational institutes . Suggestion of the Committee to adopt innovative ICT technologies to make India's

soft power and cultural diplomacy more effective and relevant has been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 5)**

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

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

### **Reply of the Government**



Government has been in the process of developing the matrix to measure and quantify the effects of the Government's efforts in promotion of India's soft power. In this direction, ICCR after detailed discussions with the think tanks/ experts including MEA (PPR Div.) and taking into consideration the deliberations of the Conference on Soft Power held on 19-20 December 2018 organized in collaboration with Centre for Soft Power (India Foundation), appointed an expert to identify the initial inputs to develop an approach to soft power matrix to measure effectiveness of policies and provide a guide to the way forward. The findings were further examined by the RIS, a think tank with acknowledged expertise and knowledge in the area of soft power

The recommendations outline a mechanism for having synergy among the various stakeholders. As per RIS, Soft Power Matrix would differ from time to time for any country and hence, need include different constituents of soft power.

Soft Power is an evolving and dynamic concept and keeps on changing with priorities/policies of the Government and bilateral/international developments.

MEA/ICCR will continue to take forward the Government's strategy related to implementation of Soft Power Matrix in a holistic manner.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 8)**

India is uniquely positioned for its rich culture. As compared to other countries India's potential for developing International Relations on the count of culture is simply great. Therefore, in order to give further impetus to our efforts aimed at

strengthening aimed at strengthening India's cultural relations with major countries all over the world, it is necessary to strengthen our Cultural Relationship Development or soft power arm- Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), it is necessary to evolve and adopt a well thought out Cultural Relationship Policy of India at the earliest. In the absence of such a policy, our efforts to accomplish our Mission of development of cultural relationship re likely to remain half hearted and less result oriented. The Committee therefore recommend that the Ministry should take urgent steps firstly to evolve and later adopt National Policy on Cultural Relationship Development across the countries or National Soft Power Policy.

### **Reply of the Government**

Government is already working on the Cultural Relationship Policy of India. In this direction ICCR, C has prepared a policy paper on India's Soft Power and submitted to the members of its Governing Body for their further valuable suggestions. After due internal consultation, the Policy paper will be discussed with all the stake holders under the leadership of Ministry of External Affairs.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 10)**

The Committee note that the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of External Affairs are directly engaged in the task of promotion of India's cultural diplomacy. While on one hand the

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry of External Affairs has initiated action for framing a working Group constituting representatives from MEA, MOC and ICCR. The Working Group so constituted would chalk out coordinated and focussed approach on diplomatic activities and also prepare a consolidated database of information of cultural assets and resources . The fact that Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi is



Minister of State for External Affairs and Ministry of Culture will facilitate completion of the task in time given timelines.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 11)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

All the Cultural Exchange Programme/Memorandum of Understandings/Programme of Cooperations as well as Cultural Agreements signed by Ministry of Culture are put in public domain through official website of Ministry of External Affairs.

MEA through its XPD Division proactively communicates bilateral and multilateral cultural initiatives to the domestic as well as global audience through all media platforms including print, electronic and social media.

XPD Division remain in touch with the print media outlets whether it is foreign media, national or regional media and depending upon the amplification required due coverage is given to them in these outlets. XPD Division in recent years have worked extensively in widening the regional media outreach where news pieces on the abovementioned initiatives are disseminated/circulated in the local languages.

On the social media front MEA handles along with the Missions/Posts' social media platforms carry out publicity efforts. Language hubs are also identified within Missions/Posts' where the information, creatives, videos etc can be translated in major foreign languages and can be given in the Missions/Posts with predominant use of that language for wider amplification.

Several cultural initiatives on the sidelines of the multilateral events have been amplified proactively in the last year and XPD Division along with the Missions/posts' will continue doing so in the future as well.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 12)**

Assisting countries in our neighbourhood and in extended neighbourhood to restore, refurbish or re-built historical monuments that display an Indian influence is an important form of our cultural diplomacy. The Ministry of External Affairs along with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) have restored historical monuments in Angkor Wat Temple (Cambodia), Bagh E Babur (Afghanistan), Preah Vihar Temple), Vat Phou Temple

(Laos), Ananda Temple (Myanmar), Charm Monuments (Vietnam), Tashichho Dzong (Bhutan), Trikuteshwara Temple and Jaffna Cultural Centre (Sri Lanka) and so on. Currently, conservation work of Friday Mosque (Maldives), Wangdue Phodrang Dzong (Bhutan) and Guru Dev Tagore's ancestral home in Bangladesh are being executed by ASI.

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

### **Reply of the Government**

With a view to accord high priority to the implementation of various cultural, conservation and heritage development projects abroad for promotion of Indian cultural heritage linkages, a dedicated Division (DPA-IV Division) was created in January 2020, within the Development Partnership Administration (DPA). This Division has since been undertaking development partnerships mainly in Cambodia, Vietnam and Lao PDR for culture and heritage conservation projects; collaborate with international and national institutions for the purpose of temple restoration, manuscript preservation and intangible cultural

heritage preservation; and develop and disseminate a repository of information in this area.

**Budget Allocation:** A separate budget head titled "Aid for Cultural and Heritage Projects" was created in FY 2020-21. An amount of Rs 10 Cr was allotted in 2021-22 and 2022-23.

**Organizational Structure:** In view of the specialized nature of work that the new Division is expected to carry out, it was decided to equip the Division with one Director level officer, two Under Secretaries, and Two consultants apart from support staff.

**Outcome of Initiative:** Even before the formal creation of a separate Division, MEA has been positioning the execution of cultural projects, especially conservation and heritage site restoration projects as an important feature of our development partnership with countries across the world. This is because as an ancient civilization state, India's culture and civilization has impacted other cultures and civilizations in other geographies like East Asia, the middle East and Africa. The use of India's technical expertise in conservation, excavation and cultural management is seen positively and welcomed in the partner countries, and forms an important aspect of our development cooperation.

With the creation of a dedicated Division, there is greater diplomatic recognition for India's efforts and a renewed focus on undertaking such projects. India has received several new requests from our partner countries, like taking up additional blocks of Temples in the My Son Complex (Vietnam); restoration of monuments like Dong Duong Buddhist Monastery in the Quang Nam Province and Nhan Cham Tower (Vietnam); assistance in Digital documentation of heritage sites (Cambodia); assistance for Ramayana Mural conservation (Cambodia) and digitization of Indic manuscripts in various libraries abroad through the SamHiTA initiative.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]



### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 13)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Under the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM), work on 'Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar' is in progress, and data of more than 80,000 village dossiers have been prepared by the Common Service Centres (CSC) and the same have been uploaded on the MGMD Web-Portal. The web portal is fully operational and after the formal launching he web portal would provide the facility of crowd sourcing data on Indian villages and registration of artists and art practices leading to the preparation of National Registers of artists and art forms in India.

Ministry of External Affairs would utilize this database strategically to showcase India's multifaceted and diverse

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

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 14)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Our Missions and Posts abroad have established mechanism for engaging with the Indian Diaspora. In the larger Missions, there is a designated representational grade officer looking after



community affairs and welfare. In smaller Missions, the Head of the Mission and the number two officer in the Mission directly interact with the diaspora on various issues including aspects related to their welfare.

In countries where there is a substantial Indian diaspora, consular camps are conducted on a regular basis in different cities to bring the consular services at the doorstep for the community members and facilitate greater access to these services. Our Missions and Posts abroad regularly participate in multicultural and social events and various festivals organized by the Indian Diaspora. Such events, in fact, are organized at the level of HOM as well where healthy participation of diaspora members is seen. The Head of Missions from time to time also engage with Indian students and faculty at various foreign universities. Organizing of theme based quiz shows, essay writing competitions, cultural events are also done by our Missions and Posts for the community members. Wide publicity is also given to these events through social media.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 18)**

India's branding as the 'world's largest democracy' has immense global appeal. As a vibrant parliamentary democracy with multi-party-political system ensuring smooth transfer of power through regular peaceful elections, India has been held in great esteem across the globe. The Committee note that MEA is working closely with Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Secretariats and the Election Commission in the task of promoting democracy as India's strength. The Ministry also actively supports and facilitates regular goodwill exchange visits by Parliamentarians. ICCR's Next Generation Democracy Network Programme is another avenue

that helps young leaders to witness India's democratic system and its rich heritage. The Committee, however, feel that there is tremendous scope to further leverage our democratic credential as a soft power tool and hence, the Ministry should work closely with the Parliament Secretariat and Election Commission towards this end and make them an inclusive part of goodwill, exchange visits and interactions.

### **Reply of the Government**

The observations of the Hon'ble Committee, that there is tremendous scope to further leverage our democratic credential as a soft power tool is well appreciated . Ministry would work closely with the Parliament Secretariat and Election Commission towards this regard and make these Democratic institutions inclusive part of goodwill, exchange visits and interactions. As the Hon'ble Committee is aware, ICCR has already been promoting India's democratic tradition under its flagship programme Gen Next Democracy Network , which was started in November 2021. Till date, a total of 196 young leader from 51 democratic countries have already visited India in 8 groups under the programme. The goal of the programme to cover 75 democratic countries until 15th August, 2023.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 19)**

Yoga is the ancient Indian practice of physical and mental well being. The Committee are pleased to note that The United

Nations General Assembly declared 21st June as the International Day of Yoga (IDY). This global recognition underscores the immense popularity of Yoga and manifests its effectiveness as a soft power tool. The Ministry of AYUSH is the nodal Ministry for International Day of Yoga celebrations and has been celebrating IDY since last five years at national as well as at international level. The Committee note that in order to institutionalize the teaching of Yoga overseas, ICCR has established the Indo-Turkmenistan Centre for Yoga and Traditional Medicine in Ashgabat and the India-China Yoga College at Yunnan Minzu University, China. In view of the surge in yoga teaching and centres across the globe, the Committee would recommend that the Ministry of AYUSH in collaboration with MEA constitute a Yoga Certification Board for certifying Indian yogic practices and therapies. Collaboration with the Indian Diaspora should also be encouraged to disseminate yoga training abroad, in regions where it is not yet popular.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ayurveda and Yoga have been two major contributions of India to the world. In existence for more than millennia, these systems are a shared heritage of the Indian subcontinent including countries of the region such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Systems of Ayurveda and Yoga contribute to holistic health —therapeutic care while maintaining the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of people in a sustainable way. In recent decades, Ayurveda and Yoga have received lot of attention globally to the extent that many countries have engaged in Ayurveda and Yoga related activities. India, like other countries, has been employing cultural tools for

long in its international relations. Effective use of cultural and civilizational links (Sanskriti evam Sabhyata) is one of the five pillars of India's diplomacy.

Ministry of Ayush has taken the following initiatives/collaborations to disseminate yoga training abroad:

- Provided financial support to UNESCO for the appointing a Yoga Teacher to conduct regular Yoga classes for 6 months in the premises of UNESCO, Paris by Permanent Delegation of India(PDI), Paris.
- The Ministry of Ayush and the World Health Organization (WHO) jointly developed the m-Yoga mobile application, which was launched by the Honorable Prime Minister of India on 21st June, 2021 on the occasion of International Day of Yoga-2021.

The Ministry of Ayush is the nodal Ministry for observation of the International Day of Yoga (IDY) which is organized every year. IDY observation is focused on a Mass Yoga demonstration based on Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) which is made available to public including Indian diaspora through the Yoga Portal ([yoga.Ayush.gov.in](http://yoga.Ayush.gov.in)).

- One of the highlights of IDY-2022 was "Yoga: The Guardian Ring", which underlines "One Sun, One Earth" concept and showcased the unifying power of Yoga. It was a live yoga programme with the movement of the Sun. The yoga programmes from over 75 Plus countries in different time zones were telecast live on DD India channel.
- The Ministry of Ayush also organizes International Conference on Yoga every year which is attended by renowned personalities from various fields as well as International Delegates. Till date 05 International conferences on Yoga have been successfully organized by the Ministry of Ayush in different part of the country. Ministry also supports organizing International Yoga conferences in different countries.
- The Ministry of Ayush introduced 5-Minute Yoga protocol for people to promote break of 5-Minutes from work schedule to

practice yoga to refresh, de-stress and re-focus. The Ministry of Ayush also developed and launched the Y-Break mobile application for the same.

- The Ministry of Ayush has deputed Ayush Experts at the Ashgabat, Turkmenistan under the MoU signed between the Government of India and the Government of Turkmenistan on cooperation in Yoga and Traditional Medicines.
- Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Ayush, has signed MoUs with the following foreign organizations for the promotion of Yoga:
  - Divine Values School, Ecuador (DVSE).
  - India Yoga Center (IYC), Korea.
  - Leaders Development Institute, Ministry of Sports, Saudi Arabia

With the objective of promoting Yoga as a career skill and to bring standards & uniformity in the teaching and practice of Yoga in India and across the globe with a view of attaining holistic health and preserving human values, Yoga Certificate Board (YCB) in March, 2022. The Board functions under the Chairmanship of Secretary(Ayush) with the assistance of the following Committees;

- a. Steering Committee
- b. Technical Committee
- c. Assessment Committee
- d. Standing Finance Committee

The Board has achieved the following: -

- (i) Approved Master Level Certification in Yoga in addition to the already existing certification courses, namely, Yoga Protocol

Instructor, Yoga Wellness Instructor, Yoga Teacher & Evaluator, and Yoga Master.

(ii) Approved introduction of Yoga Therapy certification in three categories, namely, Assistant Yoga Therapist, Yoga Therapist, and Therapeutic Yoga Consultant.

(iii) Accredited 63 Yoga institutions in the categories of Leading Yoga Institutions (17), Yoga Institutions (5), Yoga Training Centers (39), and Yoga Therapy Centers (2) so far.

(iv) Accredited 17 Personnel Certification Bodies (including ICCR). ICCR for promoting and propagating Yoga in India and abroad.

(v) Taking initiatives to upscale the Yoga Certification Board at the global level.

(vi) Entered into collaboration with some foreign countries like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the promotion of Yoga and provided technical advice for setting up institutes for the accreditation like Foundation Hastinapur in Argentina.

Outreach effects- Ministry of Ayush has entered into an agreement in July 2019 with WHO for the implementation of the m-Yoga-an mHealth Program for Yoga by Moraji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) on behalf of the Ministry. The Project involved the following tasks to be done in a phased manner: -

- i. Common Yoga Protocol for General Wellness;
- ii. Yoga for Mental Health and Resilience;
- iii. Yoga for Adolescents; &
- iv. Yoga for Pre-Diabetic.

In the first phase, an M-Yoga App relating to Common Yoga Protocol for General Awareness was launched on the occasion of IDY-2021 by the Honorable Prime Minister. The work relating to the remaining three is in progress. The application contains learning & practice videos and audios based on Common Yoga



Protocol (CYP) which can be used by all - with the objective of promoting One World - One Health.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 20)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Ayurveda's individualized approach to treatment based on information drawn from Prakriti (innate nature of an individual's body and mind) includes not only physical characteristics but also psychological. Recent developments in modern medicine such as the concept of "precision medicine" i.e. customized patient care based on a person's genetic information has drawn similarities with Ayurveda. Capitalizing on these trends and developments, one of the national policy objectives is to promote Ayurveda and Yoga as India's soft power tools. Medical tourism is one such strategy which aims to make India a global medical value travel hub with Ayurveda and Yoga playing a crucial and large role in the vision of 'Heal in India'. Indian systems of medicine are envisioned to move beyond the borders of India and become an acceptable healthcare system globally. The Ministry of Ayush has undertaken following initiatives to achieve the global recognition of Ayurveda:

- Signed 24 Country to Country MoUs for Cooperation in field of Traditional Medicine and Homoeopathy with foreign nations.
- Signed 40 MoUs with international institutes for undertaking Collaborative Research / Aca-demic collaboration.
- Signed 15 MoUs with international institutes for setting up of Ayush Academic Chairs in foreign nations.
- Supported the establishment of 39 Ayush Information Cells in 35 foreign nations.
- Offers scholarships to foreign nationals for undertaking Ayush courses in recognized AYUSH institutions in India under International Ayush Fellowship/Scholarship Programme.

Given WHO-GMP (COPP) to 31 Ayurvedic Drug manufacturers to facilitate the export of Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani & Homoeopathy Drugs.

- Signed an agreement with WHO to establish WHO-GCTM in Jamnagar, Gujarat, the ground-breaking Ceremony of which was attended by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Director General of WHO and other esteemed dignitaries on 19.04.2022 in Jamnagar, Gujarat. This Centre aims to provide support to implement WHO's traditional medicine strategy (2014-23) and to support nations in developing policies & action plans to strengthen the role of traditional medicine as part of their journey to universal health coverage.
- Establishment of A Panchakarma Centre in Cuba by the Ministry of Public Health, Cuba with the technical support of the Ministry of Ayush in 2019. Under the Country-to-Country MoU signed with Cuba, the Ministry of Ayush deputed one Ayurveda Expert and two Ayurveda thera-pists to Havana, Cuba, for providing their services for the Panchakarma Centre at, Havana, Cuba in November, 2019.
- Ministry of Ayush and WHO launched four WHO benchmark documents developed by Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Unit, WHO as part of the collaboration agreement (PCA) between Ayush Ministry and WHO on 12 February 2022, has published four benchmarks documents pertaining to training and practice of Ayurveda & Unani System on its IRIS repository.
- Research: An MoU has been signed between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Sarita Vihar, New Delhi and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSH&TM), UK for conducting the study on "Ashwagandha for promoting recovery from Covid-19 in the UK" on 22 July 2021. The study is a Randomized, placebo controlled double blind trial. The study has been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and certified by

WHO-GMP. It is being conducted and monitored as per the internationally recognized GCP (Good Clinical Practices) guidelines.

- An MoU has been signed between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), Sarita Vihar, New Delhi and Frankfurter Innovation szentrum Biotechnologies GmbH (FIZ), Frankfurt Germany on 15.06.2021 for conducting Collaborative Research study entitled "Understanding the molecular mechanism of Guduchyadi tablets in combating COVID-19 infection- In-vitro & in-vivo study". This MoU signed under an umbrella MoU signed between AIIA and FIZ, Germany for research collaboration in 2019.
- Secondment: The Ministry of Ayush, Government of India and the World Health Organization South East Regional Office (WHO SEARO) signed a Letter of Exchange (LoE) for deputation secondment/deputation of an AYUSH expert to WHO's regional traditional medicine pro-gramme in New Delhi.
- Ministry has signed an agreement with WHO for the secondment of grade P4 at WHO SEAR office at New Delhi. Ministry has signed an agreement with WHO for the secondment at grade P5 to the World Health Organization (WHO), Traditional, Complementary and Integrated Medicine Unit within the Department of Integrated Health Services (IHS).
- ISO (Quality Standards of AYUSH Products): Ministry of AYUSH is developing Indian Standards as well as International (ISO) Standards in collaboration with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Development of such IS/ISO standards are poised to augment the domestic as well as cross-border trade of AYUSH products and services.

### **Initiatives with SCO Forum:**

- Virtual Conference of Experts and Practitioners of Traditional Medicine: Virtual Conference as a side event of the meeting of experts and practitioners of Traditional Medicine was held on February 3, 2023. The virtual conference was attended by experts and practitioners of Traditional Medicine from 25 SCO countries and partner countries.
- SCO Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine: The draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine developed and circulated by India were discussed to develop the consensus of SCO member states on February 9th to 10th, 2023 in New Delhi. The ToR is approved by the experts and is subjected to necessary approvals as per provisions in respective countries. The EWG will facilitate the opportunity for communication on various issues to increase trade and market access in the SCO Member States, Observers, and Dialogue Partners.
- B2B Conference & Expo on Traditional Medicine, Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO): B2B Conference & Expo on Traditional Medicine, Shanghai Co-operation Organization was held on March 2nd to 3rd, 2023

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 21)**

The Committee note that India exports AYUSH and herbal products worldwide to about 100 countries and majority of our exports are in the form of value-added extracts of medicinal plants (herbal products) and in the form of dietary supplements and nutraceuticals. However, Ayurvedic products are still not

recognized in foreign countries. The Ministry has informed that Ayurveda is recognized in eleven countries, namely, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka, UAE, Colombia, Malaysia, Switzerland, South Africa, Cuba, Tanzania. In five European Union countries- Romania, Hungary, Latvia, Serbia and Slovenia Ayurvedic treatment is regulated. The Committee have been apprised by the Ministry of External Affairs that Ayurveda does not have a recognized pharmacopeia and therefore it is being exported as dietary supplements and nutraceuticals, etc. The Committee strongly recommend that the Government should make concerted efforts to get recognition of Ayurveda as a system of medicine and adopting pharmacopeia of India so that it can be exported as medicine. The Committee would like to be kept informed about the progress made in this regard.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry of Ayush undertakes the following activities to get the recognition of Ayurveda as a system of medicine and adopting pharmacopeia of India so that it can be exported as medicine:

- Ministry of Ayush, Government of India in consultation with the Department of Commerce has supported to establish Ayush Export Promotion Council (AEPC) to promote the export of AYUSH products/ medicines as well as AYUSH services.



- Ministry of Ayush has also signed 24 Country to Country MoUs for Cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicine and Homoeopathy with foreign nations with the mandate to Exchange experience in the regulation of teaching, practice, drugs and drugless therapies etc.
- An India-EU Technical Working Group (TWG) on Ayurveda has been established. The Technical Working Group has the representation of technical experts from the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, the European Commission, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and its Committee on Herbal Medicinal Products (HMPC).
- United States Pharmacopeia (USP) Convention and Pharmacopeia Commission of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy (PCIM & H) signed an MoU for collaborative research activities on 24th August 2016.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 22)**

The Committee note that Sports and Youth Exchange is another dimension of soft power that requires focused attention. As informed, National Sports Federations and the International Sports Organizations organize sport events and the Government only provides financial support and diplomatic support in terms of linkages with our diplomatic Missions outside India. Further, the Ministry of External Affairs through Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has trained athletes from Afghanistan, Maldives and Bhutan. As regards, projection of soft power through the Youth Exchanges, the Committee have been informed that in

accordance with the National Youth Policy, 2014 the Department of Youth Affairs exchange of Youth Delegations with friendly countries is taken up on reciprocal basis for promoting exchange of ideas, values and culture amongst the youth of different countries.

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

### **Reply of the Government**

#### **Afghanistan:**

Prior to the political developments in Afghanistan, Government of India was strongly pursuing 'Cricket Diplomacy' in Afghanistan and the same was also very popular amongst the common Afghans. In this endeavour, BCCI/relevant agencies signed hosting agreements with the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) to allow them to use Cricket grounds at Noida, Lucknow and Dehradun. Moreover, Government also provided assistance to build Cricket grounds in Balkh and Kandhar province in Afghanistan.

Government have continued special people-to-people ties and facilitated the participation of Afghan Cricket players to participate in IPL series. Furthermore, Government have also facilitated the participation of Afghan players in other sporting events like Chess Olympiad 2022, AFC Asian Cup Qualifiers 2023 etc.

### **Bangladesh:**

With respect to Bangladesh, Government has been engaging with the youth of Bangladesh through programs such as visit of Youth Delegation to India since 2012, a joint initiative of MEA and Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. A 99 member delegation visited India in October 2022 as part of this program. In line with the recommendation of the committee, sporting talent from across Bangladesh could be invited to train in India's elite training sports academies spread across all fields. The Ministry has informed Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports regarding the proposal for further action at their end.

### **Maldives:**

The activities undertaken to promote youth cooperation include with Maldives include

- i) Visit of 14 member Maldivian youth delegation comprising representative from National Youth Council and Students Unions both National Universities had visited India from 10-17 Nov, 2021.
- ii) Government gifted Cricket Sports equipments to the Maldives in May 2022 and also arranged training for Maldivian cricket coaches and umpires in two separate training modules in Nov 2019.

iii) Arranged a 6-month Athletic Training Camp at Netaji Subhash Southern Centre Bengaluru.

iv) Hosted a 13 member Maldives' athletic team of Maldivian Athletes for 2023 Indian Ocean Island Games.

v) Arranged training camps in recent past for various Maldivian Sports Associations and also provided Indian coaches to train Maldivian youth in various sports like TT, Badminton, etc.

### **Myanmar:**

"With a view to promote youth exchanges, participants from Myanmar have been invited to take part in India-ASEAN Youth Summits. Myanmar sportspersons have also travelled to India to take part in international sport events. In 2019, 28 sportspersons from Myanmar received training in the discipline of badminton, shooting and hockey in India. While cricket is not popular in Myanmar, training of Myanmar sportsperson in other disciplines can be an avenue of capacity building. A draft MoU between Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and Myanmar's Ministry of Education is also under discussion between the two countries."

### **Bhutan:**

GoI attaches high importance to enhancing youth exchanges between India and Bhutan with a special focus on areas such as sports, technology, culture, and entrepreneurship development.

India is offering more than 1000 scholarships to Bhutanese Youth annually. Bhutan is allotted 325 in-person training slots for upgrading administrative and technical skills of government officials and private sector employees. A special customised ITEC programme for training 100 Bhutanese young entrepreneurs at the prestigious Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad started in September 2022.

In the field of sports, India has been providing support to Bhutan through development of sports infrastructure, as part of the overall development assistance programme to Bhutan. Some of the potential areas include- developing institutional arrangements between sports bodies of the two countries for training of youth and professional athletes, training of trainers, visits of prominent Indian athletes to Bhutan, partnership with the educational institutions in sports, archery in Bhutan, hosting sporting events, collaboration in indigenous Sports etc."

### **Nepal:**

Options of pursuing training athletes and sportspersons from Nepal in India and more such institutional programme can be explored in consultation with various sports federations/bodies.

The Government, as a component of its Neighborhood First Policy, has been exploring and undertaking many capacity building measures to training athletes and sports persons of neighboring countries and will continue to enhance more and more such activities.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 23)**

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

Public Relations strategy to tell the Indian story in an effective and powerful manner.

### **Reply of the Government**

The Film Facilitation Office regularly advertises in trade media regarding the initiatives taken by the Government to promote India as preferred filming destination as well as to further ease of doing business while filming in India. The advertisements also highlight the Champion Sector scheme for incentives for foreign films shot in India and for official co-productions. The FFO also regularly participates in the film markets associated with major international film festivals like European Film Market in Berlin, Cannes Film Market in France and the Toronto International Film Festival in Canada to popularize the initiatives of the government. The FFO is also considering conducting roadshows and other outreach activities in select international target markets with the active guidance and support of the Ministry of External Affairs as part of its international outreach programme. The recommendation of the committee is noted and the FFO will actively support the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as well as the Ministry of External Affairs in formulating and implementing a Public Relations strategy to further convey the initiatives of the government in an effective and powerful manner.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 24)**

The Committee note that Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster, in the process of developing a global outreach to increase the footprint of its International Services has re-oriented 'DD India' channel as the English news channel and signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with foreign broadcasters



of other countries. The Committee feel that there is an urgent need of reorienting DD India further so as to make it globally relevant and influential. The Government is urged to come up with a plan for revamping the focus, structure and functioning of DD India to further enhance its global outreach and inform the Committee about the follow up action.

### **Reply of the Government**

With a view to expand the global Prasar Bharati has signed an MOU with "Yupp TV", an over-the-top (OTT) platform, which is a gateway for television viewers across the glob. With this, DD India is now available on the OTT platform of Yupp TV in USA, UK, Europe, Middle East, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand. It also has its presence worldwide through collaboration with various international broadcasters like BTV of Bangladesh and KTV of South Korea.

DD India is part of Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and inputs related to India including initiatives of Hon'ble Prime Minister and Government, special achievements and milestones as well as MEA briefings are consistently uploaded on AVN website which are then accessed by Public Broadcasters of Asia-Pacific nations. Further DD News and DD India are available on various platforms such as Satellite, DTH, Mobile app, Social Media platforms-YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and DD News website-<http://ddnews.gov.in>

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

## **Recommendation (Sl. No. 25)**

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

## **Reply of the Government**

The web portal of the Film Facilitation Office [www.ffo.gov.in](http://www.ffo.gov.in) lists various locations in India including historical sites and monuments as well as other scenic locations which are attractive to filmmakers. The FFO has made a short audio visual on India's scenic locations and the various films that have highlighted such locations. This audio visual is regularly screened at various for a and is also promoted through digital media. The FFO regularly engages with the nodal officers at 124 Indian Missions abroad to give wide publicity to the single window facilitation for international filmmakers and also filming incentive scheme.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 26)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Government has released National Education Policy 2020. The NEP 2020 recommends "path-breaking reforms that aim at paradigm shift by equipping our students, teachers and educational institutions with the right competencies and capabilities and creating an enabling and reinvigorated education eco-system for a vibrant new India" (NEP 2020). Consequent upon release of NEP 2020, University Grants Commission (UGC)

has issued guidelines for Internationalization of Higher Education. The Guidelines enumerate various strategies and initiatives for internationalization through a wide range of activities such as internationally relevant curricula, brand building of Indian Higher Education institutions abroad, academic and research collaboration with foreign universities, credit recognition under twinning arrangements, global citizenship approach and engaging with foreign alumni. Some of the salient points proposed by UGC include the following:

- i. **Internationalisation at Home:** The most important of all strategies related to internationalisation is "Internationalisation at Home", which means integrating the dimensions of international learning environment within our higher education institutions. HEIs are encouraged to put necessary effort towards 'internationalisation at home' as discussed in these Guidelines without compromising the requirements of the Indian context.
- ii. **Credit Recognition under Twinning Arrangement:** Under a Twinning arrangement, Indian students are enrolled with a higher education institution in India but complete part of their programme at a partnering institution from another country complying with relevant national regulations. However, the degree under Twinning arrangement shall be given solely by the Indian Higher Educational Institution. The idea behind Twinning programme is holistic development of the learners with the help of cultural exchanges and social cohesion. Mobility under Twinning programme will equip the learners with best practices, approaches and methods of teaching and learning in international institutions. This will aid in capacity building of our institutions and help our students in career choices. Indian Higher Educational Institutions are encouraged to offer degree programme under twinning Arrangement.

- iii. **Global Citizenship Approach: Global** awareness and interconnectedness are increasingly sought after in today's global knowledge society. International dimension to curriculum, international offering in educational activities, international competencies in our faculty and students etc. will propel our institutions towards internationalisation of higher education. Internationalisation is not an end in itself but a driver of qualitative change in higher education. One of the foremost qualitative changes is fostering global ethos within our universities and making our learners 'Global Citizen'. Global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands the wider world and actively works towards making our planet more equal, fair and sustainable. Higher Educational Institutions may take a Global citizen approach at their institution.
- iv. **ICT based Internationalisation:** Digital revolution and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have ushered in new possibilities in process and delivery of higher education. With the expansion of ICT, it has touched virtually all dimensions of higher education and it has a major role to play in internationalisation of higher education. ICT brings with it new educational opportunities along with flexibilities in approach. ICT can overcome traditional barriers to internationalisation. The borderless nature of ICT has the potential to transform the internationalisation process. Transformation with the help of ICT in itself is a motivation for Higher Educational Institutions to undertake several measures to revitalize the higher education system.
- v. **Academic & Research Collaboration:** Academics and research in Higher Education Institutions around the world faces a number of wide ranging and interlinked global challenges such as food security, energy security, infectious disease etc. Collaboration among the top universities is essential to identify causes,



addressing concerns and dealing with the impacts. This will also accelerate the progress of our institutions and enhance the quality of our education. Higher Educational Institutions are encouraged to enter into collaborating activities, complying the relevant norms and Regulations.

- vi. Brand Building Abroad:** A systematic brand building campaign by the Higher Educational Institutions is very essential for global standing of the Higher Educational Institutions and also for attracting students from abroad. This will include using all forms of communication and outreach, including social media. Higher Educational Institutions are encouraged to undertake brand building exercise to make India and their institutions attractive study destinations.
- vii. Alumni Connect:** The Alumni are a strong support to any Higher Educational Institution. An active Alumni Association can contribute in academic matters, student support as well as mobilization of resources – both financial and non-financial. Connecting with Alumni will enable the institutions to utilise the services of the alumni as brand ambassadors to showcase the strengths of Indian Higher Education system. Alumni of foreign origin as well as Indian alumni living abroad can play a crucial role in brand building of the Indian Higher Education Institutions abroad and making India a global study destination. Higher education institutions in India need to create a culture for alumni to reconnect, devise suitable vehicles for brand building and give due recognition to their contributions. The “Alumni Connect” encourages Indian HEIs to engage with Alumni (of foreign origin and Indians living abroad).
- viii. Office for International Affairs:** Establishment of an Office for International Affairs at institutions level will facilitate and operationalize effective approaches as discussed in all the previous strategies/initiatives



earmarked in these Guidelines. This Office for International Affairs in each University will be a single point contact and an integral part of internationalisation of higher education in India.

With the above efforts, the Government is hopeful to improve the standards of higher educational institutes/centre of high learning and therefore, to make India a global destination in providing premium education at affordable price.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 27)**

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

Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should ensure that the process of restructuring of ICCR is finalized and the blueprint of the same may be submitted to them within three months.

### **Reply of the Government**

Keeping in view the changing world scenario and consequent challenges for the mankind in the present world, ICCR has prepared a Vision & Mission document in the following manner:

Vision : Promoting understanding of India-as a nation as well as civilization, Indians, Indian culture; globally projecting India's cultural and civilization attributes and the relevance of these attributes in promoting good relations with all.

#### **Mission Redefined:**

- i) To promote an enlightened understanding of Indian Civilization and Culture internation-ally, with special focus on intellectual and academic as well as cultural and creative communities.
- ii) To organize music, dance, theatre and other art and fine art performances and exhibitions with the intention of creating understanding about Indian culture internationally.
- iii) To create knowledge resources and pedagogical material for structured academic courses on Indian Culture and Civilization and to conduct courses, seminars, conferences, etc.
- iv) To talented students, teachers, academics, subject experts and eminent persons, to India through visits and other means in order to expose them to Indian culture and the idea of India experientially.

The above Vision & Mission documents is under active consideration of Governing Body/General Assembly of ICCR.

Once approved, the commensurate restructuring of ICCR would be undertaken.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 29)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

While ICCR will continue to explore projects on PPP (Public Private Partnership) model, ultimately the adequate budgetary allocations for soft power projection will have to come from the Government.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 30)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

As some of Indian Missions in addition to the core country are also accredited to other small countries, ICCs follow the same practice to expand their jurisdiction to the accredited countries. Recommendations of the Hon'ble Committee are noted for implementation where ever feasible. Directors of ICCs are deployed taking into consideration their qualification, experience and suitability for the assignment by following the due selection process through an open advertisement, nomination by President and selection of ICCR officials.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 31)**

In view of the fact that ICCR has a considerably high number of employees employed on either ad hoc or temporary basis, the

Committee recommend that ICCR should evolve a fresh Human Resource Policy to have better result orientation. ICCR should also think of sizing its Regional Offices at various places in the country and utilize the saved resources on a more productive cause.

### **Reply of the Government**

In the re-organisation of ICCR's work and to ensure efficiency and economy in its operations, and taking all aspects into consideration, the Statutory Bodies of ICCR had decided to merge seven Regional Offices namely, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Goa, Hyderabad, Trivandrum and Varanasi with the Zonal Offices which became operational w.e.f. 1st July, 2022. Consequent upon this restructuring, ICCR has brought down its offices from 18 to 11 on 1st July, 2022.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 32)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

ICCR has been organizing capacity building training programmes specially tailored to meet the requirements of ICCR for the employees of ICCR. Observation of the Committee that persons passionate about the cause of cultural relationship promotion only can provide right kind of relationship and the

need to have right kind of institutional leadership for ICCR has been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 33)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Keeping in view the changing world scenario and consequent challenges for the mankind in the present world, ICCR has prepared a Vision & Mission document in the following manner:

Vision : Promoting understanding of India-as a nation as well as civilization, Indians, Indian culture; globally projecting Indis's cultural and civilization attributes and the relevance of these attributes in promoting good relations with all.

Mission Redefined:

- i) To promote an enlightened understanding of Indian Civilization and Culture internation-ally, with special focus on intellectual and academic as well as cultural and creative communities.
- ii) To organize music, dance, theatre and other art and fine art performances and exhibitions with the intention of creating understanding about Indian culture internationally.



- iii) To create knowledge resources and pedagogical material for structured academic courses on Indian Culture and Civilization and to conduct courses, seminars, conferences, etc.
- iv) To talented students, teachers, academics, subject experts and eminent persons, to India through visits and other means in order to expose them to Indian culture and the idea of India experientially.

The above Vision & Mission documents is under active consideration of Governing Body/General Assembly of ICCR.

Once approved, the commensurate restructuring of ICCR would be undertaken.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 34)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

ICCR has taken many new initiatives including deputing Hindi teachers abroad, exploring, engaging local resource persons for teaching and popularizing Hindi in foreign countries, instituting World Sanskrit and Distinguished Indologist Awards to recognize the contribution of foreign scholars towards promotion of Indian philosophy, history, art, culture, India languages, literature and civilization etc. ICCR has signed MOUs with Antra Rashtriya Hindi Vishav Vidhyalay, Warda, Cental Hindi Directorate, Chandigarh and IGNU for conducting on line Hindi learning classes for foreign nationals. Similar action is underway to promote other classical languages including Sanskrit and Tamil. ICCR has also established 17 Hindi chairs at various universities/institutions abroad.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 35)**

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

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Missions are already using different means of dissemination of information including electronics, print and social media in addition to the public inter face with the students and general public.

Regular interface activities between international students and ICCR include field visits by team from ICCR headquarters to Zonal/Sub-Zonal offices to interact with maximum number of students, organizing international students cultural festival "Friendship through Culture", summer/winter study tours and day to day interactions with ICCR officials. Interaction through social media platforms and 24x7 online grievances redressal system are other forms of improving interface with students. With a view to connecting all foreign scholars who have studies in India

including ICCR scholars, ICCR has developed India Alumni portal ([www.iccr.almaconnect.com](http://www.iccr.almaconnect.com)). The aim of the India Alumni portal is in line with Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to build an India alumni network to engage them and keep them connected/updated on a dynamic India so they can be the bridges of friendship and India's unofficial cultural Ambassadors in their own unique ways. It is a single platform for all past and present foreign scholars to register, interact, maintain their Indian linkages and remain anchored to the India "they carry".

ICCR would continue to improve these efforts with the new evolving changes.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 36)**

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



on the official website of ICCR. ICCR is also directed to ensure that adequate regional representation is provided to artists while sending them abroad.

### **Reply of the Government**

As kindly noted by the Hon'ble Committee members that there exists a panel of artistes in various art forms such as theatre & puppetry, Carnatic, Hindustani, dance including folk and modern experimental and that the empanelment of artist takes place on the basis of recommendation of the Expert Sub Committee constituted by ICCR. With respect to the observation of Hon'bel Committee members that while the lists of empanelled artists are available on ICCR website, the names of members of the Expert Committees are not available in the public domain, ICCR in compliance with the instructions of Hon'ble Committee members have shared the list of experts with the Lok Sabha Secretariat (Committee on MEA). Further, ICCR is in the process of updating/reviewing the panel of artists. Once done the list of empanelled artists the Empanelment Expert Committee members would be put in the public domain.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 39)**

The Ministry has enlisted lack of finances, difficulty in identification of space and policies of host countries as constraining factors in opening of new Cultural Centres abroad. The Committee note that in 2016, ICCR had constituted a Committee under Ambassador Veena Sikri to conduct performance audit of Indian Cultural Centres. It has been informed that the said Committee has submitted its Report and

the recommendations are being considered for implementation. In this backdrop, the Parliamentary Committee desire to have a detailed status note on the implementation status of the recommendations and implementation schedule made within three months.

### **Reply of the Government**

In 2016 ICCR set up a Committee under Ambassador Veena Sikri, to conduct performance audit of Indian Cultural Centres. The recommendations of the Committee include

- (i) Enhanced Coordination between ICC and Embassy
- (ii) The task of soft power projection assigned to the ICCs need to be supplemented with more coordination between the Mission and ICCR.
- (iii) The entire sector of education, where ICCR plays the leading role, should be covered by the ICCs.
- (iv) Selection process of Directors should ensure selection of capable, efficient and culturally rich individuals to head the ICC.
- (v) Re-devising of the soft power projection process in such a manner that it has flexibility to accommodate the interests of host country and the special interests in Indian education and culture expressed by credible institutions across the world,
- (vi) Reorganizing of ICC to increase Coordination among all the stakeholders (MEA, Embassies and ICCs),
- (vii) Transfer of Education work which is being carried by many of the Missions to the ICCs. and
- (viii). incorporating soft power projection among the goals and objectives of India's foreign policy.

Most of the recommendations of Ambassador Veena Sikri such as coordination between Mission, ICC and MEA, incorporating suggestions of Mission/ICC in the POA of ICCR, reforms in selection process of Directors of ICCs, better



coordination amongst the stake holders revisiting the vision and Mission of ICCR have been implemented. Soft power has always been and will continue to be the integral part of India's foreign policy goals. Other recommendations of the Committee are under consideration of the Government/ICCR.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 40)**

The Committee note that ICCR has 19 Regional Offices across different States of India that undertake outreach activities at the State level for both cultural and academic work. The three major responsibilities of the Regional Offices are looking after foreign students of ICCR scholarships, hosting incoming cultural troupes, and engaging local artists. Over the issue of overlapping mandate between ICCR Regional Centre and Ministry of Culture's Regional Zonal Centres, the Committee have been apprised that the process of putting in place a series of Videsh Bhavans in all the States to coordinate the foreign policy aspects of each State with the Ministry is underway and the role of Regional Offices is proposed to be subsumed under the Regional Videsh Bhawans. Welcoming the decision of the Ministry on establishment of Videsh Bhawans, the Committee recommend that such Bhawans should be opened in each State capital for better coordination with State Governments. The Ministry should submit a roadmap for setting up the Videsh Bhawans along with timeline and budgetary

requirements to this Committee within three months of the presentation of this Report.

### **Reply of the Government**

In 2016, MEA had initiated the process of establishing Videsh Bhawans as Integrated Office Complexes in all State Capitals with a view to bringing all subordinate offices of MEA such as RPO, ICCR Centre, Branch Secretariat and Protector of Emigrants under one roof to enhance the efficiency of services to be provided to the public and also for better coordination among the State/UT administration and the Ministry.

Towards the objective, Ministry has assessed the feasibility of construction of new building and /or converting existing RPO Properties into Integrated Office Complexes as RPO Projects only. The present status of RPO Projects in the respective State Capitals as follows:

- a) RPO building in Mumbai was renovated as the Integrated Complex of MEA offices in Maharashtra and inaugurated in August, 2017.
- b) Land has been acquired to construct Integrated Office Complexes in Hyderabad, Chennai and Amravati.
- c) Construction has already commenced in RPO, Ranchi.
- d) In Bhopal, the construction commenced in February 2019 and is nearing completion.
- e) RPO, Kolkata Construction project is in the design stage.
- f) Renovation of the existing RPO buildings in Lucknow, Bhabaneswar and Bengaluru.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 41)**

The Committee note that in order to impart greater synergy in media outreach activities and public diplomacy initiatives within MEA, the External Publicity (XP) Division was merged with the Public Diplomacy (PD) Division to create the External Publicity & Diplomacy (XPD) Division. The XPD Division provides publicity material and other inputs to the different Divisions of the Ministry and the Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad to facilitate their engagement, partnership and dialogue with the relevant stakeholders for India's soft power promotion. The Committee observe that the role of the XPD Division includes commissioning of short films, documentaries, audio-visual clips for social media promotion, publishing e-books, coffee table books, procuring books for supplying to Indian Embassies and Consulates abroad and organizing Distinguished Lecture Series. The Committee are pleased to know that the XPD Division has played an instrumental role in worldwide celebrations of 125th Birth Anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar, 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

As a key facilitator in India's soft power and cultural diplomacy within the Ministry of External Affairs, the Committee urge that the XPD Division should expand India's public diplomacy footprint and resort to active usage of print and social media to maximize the tangible outcomes. The Committee also desire that

with the active involvement of Indian Missions/Posts abroad, the Division should continue to make focused and persistent efforts towards popularization of Indian personalities and historical events on a regular basis.

### **Reply of the Government**

External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division (XPD Division) continues with its efforts to effectively articulate India's position on key foreign policy issues in accordance with its mandate and has expanded India's public diplomacy footprint with the active usage of print & electronic media and the new-age social media to maximize the tangible outcomes and to project the 'India Story' and other notable achievements of the country to an international audience.

The disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic presented its own set of challenges and the XPD Division adapted accordingly to successfully function during that time. It was of critical importance to keep domestic and global audience informed about the developments during the pandemic and the various initiatives taken by the government to tackle related challenges, thus publicity and outreach became a crucial aspect during the pandemic.

XPD Division fully utilized its presence on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to give authentic and real time information. Ministry, Indian Embassies and Consulates' social media handles became a crucial source for sharing details of repatriation, vaccines and aid along with visuals. Apart from these, specific activities were also undertaken related to specific campaigns and events including Vande Bharat Mission, Vaccine Maitri and Aid from Abroad during second wave.

As the situation has improved the Division has amalgamated its experiences and skills learnt in those challenging times to further its effective functioning at present in print, electronic and social media domain.

### **Digital outreach**

MEA has been a pioneer in GOI to embrace a robust social media presence and digital identity with a consistently growing number of followers across platforms.

MEA has over 3.84 million followers on Twitter with @ MEA India having 2.29 million followers and @Indian Diplomacy having 1.5 million followers, adding approximately 110,000 followers since last year. Missions and Posts have also continued to increase engagement with the diaspora and the local population in the host country through social media platforms. Today around 194 Indian Missions/Posts have a presence on Twitter; 191 Missions/Posts have presence on Facebook; and around 132 Missions have a presence on Instagram, with more being encouraged to join the platform. This all-round digital outreach by the Ministry has enabled faster, direct and accurate dissemination of information on Ministry and Mission/Posts' activities to an audience not just in India but all across the world.

Missions/Posts' through their social media platforms highlight the important activities/events undertaken by them in their local languages, which form a narrative giving shape to India story in the host countries. This is also amplified by MEA handles which take the achievements of the Missions/Posts to the domestic as well as larger international audience.

Further MEA social media platforms in tandem with Missions/Posts' social media platforms also amplify various



domestic campaigns which find resonance abroad. Prime Minister's Mann ki Baat programme is one such initiative where Missions/Posts contribute to the crowd sourcing of ideas and further carry forward and amplify Hon'ble Prime Ministers Messages in their host countries.

MEA's YouTube channels – The Division manages two YouTube channels for the Ministry; MEA India channel has a total of over 191,000 subscribers, Indian Diplomacy channel has over 148,000 subscribers as of December 2022.

MEA Flickr account (MEA photogallery) continues to serve as a repository of photos for all of MEA's major events, in India and abroad, with a photo bank of 44,420 HD photos as of December 2022.

MEA's Sound Cloud account (MEA India) is a useful audio clip database for accessing audio clips of all media briefings. Video Clips of all media briefings are also uploaded on YouTube.

Last year, XP Division in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush and ICCR organised the Guardian Yoga Ring event to celebrate 8th International Day of Yoga 2022. As part of Guardian Yoga Ring event, Indian Embassies and Consulates, located across continents and several time zones, organized IDY activities which were telecast live on Doordarshan as a relay from 3 am to 10 pm (IST) on 21 June 2022. Around 80 Indian Missions/Posts abroad participated in this initiative.

The popularity and success of MEA's efforts in expanding digital outreach and branding itself as a 'digitally forward' Ministry is demonstrated by the continuous growth of its followers across social media platforms.



## **Visual Outreach – Films and Documentaries**

The XPD Division commissions' documentaries aimed at positive projection of India's image abroad. FTP links of the documentaries commissioned by this division are shared with Indian Missions/Posts abroad for presentation and screening purposes. These documentaries are also uploaded on MEA YouTube channel "Indian Diplomacy" for ease of reference and use. Non commercial screening rights of popular Bollywood and Regional feature films are procured and shared with Indian Missions/Posts abroad through FTP links/DCPs for screening by them as well as for participation in local film festivals.

Other publicity material such as Customized sets of popular Indian Classical/Bollywood Music Cards, videos & photographs of Eminent leaders shared with Missions/Posts abroad for organizing publicity campaigns, photographic exhibitions etc. & photographs on Parakram Diwas and India@ 75 also uploaded on Intranet. Customized sets of popular Indian Classical/Bollywood music cards also used as gifts/presents purposes by MEA and our Missions/Posts abroad.

During last year, the Division commissioned many short films and videos in an effort to popularise Indian personalities and historical events. These include: (i) Lotus Trail - India's Buddhist Linkages with South-East Asia and East Asia countries. (ii) Film on Passport Seva (iii) India@75: A Journey of Transformation (iv) 8th International Day of Yoga with AKAM theme. (v) 26/11 Mumbai Terror Attacks (vi) Film on Indian Diaspora (vii) Series of short videos to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav etc. in India & abroad.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

## **1. Government's Achievements in the field of Foreign Policy**

The Division brought out a hardbound book titled 'Citizen - Centric Foreign Policy' showcasing the achievements of the government in the field of foreign policy covering the period of last 8 years. To affect a greater outreach, an e-book version as well as a Hindi translated version of the same were also brought out and were hosted on the Ministry's website.

## **2. Commissioning of e-books**

The Division regularly brings out e-books with a view to showcase significant events/VVIP visits etc. Last year the following e-books were commissioned: a) Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Uzbekistan b) India's Engagement with Global Partners c) Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Germany & UAE d) Path to Nirvana e) Citizen-Centric Foreign Policy f) Jan Kendrit Videsh Neeti (Citizen-Centric Foreign Policy – Hindi version) g) Furthering the Force for Global Good h) On a Pious Note i) Making it easy to travel, Making it secure to travel j) Highlights of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to Germany, Denmark & France k) India's Arctic Policy

### **Books and Periodicals**

#### **1. Book Committee**

A Book Committee was established in 2003 as a public diplomacy tool to select books from several categories namely Indian Classics, Foreign Policy and Strategic Affairs, Technology and Popular Science, Hindi & Sanskrit, Art & Culture, Religion & Spirituality, Children Books and Politics & Economy for the Missions/post abroad library as well as for presentation purposes. The 43rd Book Committee meeting which was held in July 2022,

total 408 titles were selected. Demand of approximately 33000 Copies was received from 89 Missions/Posts for different titles.

## **2. India Perspectives**

The bimonthly flagship magazine of the Ministry is now available in a digital format in 16 languages. The web version of the magazine allows customization of the content and option to download and electronically disseminate it through social media by the Missions and Posts. The magazine covers selective themes such as partnership, life & style, innovation & institutions, economy and sports, tour & travel etc. It can be read online at [www.indiaperspectives.gov.in](http://www.indiaperspectives.gov.in) and [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in) .

XPD Division will continue its efforts in a renewed pace to expand India's public diplomacy footprint.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 42)**

The Committee note that the Policy Planning and Research (PP&R) Division is involved in medium and long-term planning and organizing public diplomacy initiatives with the strategic and academic community. Since 2016, the Division has been organizing three annual flagship events - Raisina Dialogue, the Indian Ocean Conference and the Global Technology Summit to underscore various facets of India's soft power. The Committee recommend that the Division should engage more vigorously and constructively with foreign think tanks, Universities and academic communities to widen the net of India's global outreach. The Division should also devise mechanisms to formulate annual policy and plan for enhanced cultural engagement with different

countries and circulate it to the concerned Missions/Posts abroad for timely execution.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry through its PPR Division has taken a number of initiatives on planning and organizing public diplomacy. Besides these initiatives, another important element of cultural diplomacy is India's increasing focus on assisting countries in neighborhood and in the extended Indo-Pacific to restore, rebuild or refurbish their historical monuments that display Indian influence. Restoring of temples in Cambodia(Preah Vihar Temple), Laos(Wat Phou Temple), Myanmar(Ananda Temple in Bagan) and Vietnam(Cham monuments in My Son) are few examples.

Ministry has intensified coordination with other Ministries and Departments. The success of new projects such as Gandhi @ 150, Guru Nanak Devji@550, Constitution Day@70 are the result of support received from other Departments. Ministry has involved foreign think tanks, Universities and academic communities to widen the net of India's global outreach and to devise mechanisms to formulate annual policy and plan for enhanced cultural engagement with different countries.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 43)**

The Committee are aware that Indian Missions/Posts abroad have been playing a critical role in advancing India's soft power

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

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Each and every Mission/Post of India abroad has a Press, Information and Culture (PIC) wing. The officer in-charge of the PIC wing performs the task of liaison with local media (print, electronic, management of social media), besides organizing events to promote various aspects of Indian culture (art, music, dance, Indian films, Yoga, Ayush etc). Missions/Posts prepare



annual publicity plan charting out the activities to be carried out for media and cultural outreach in the forthcoming year and share it with the Ministry. PIC wing plans outreach programs and events for different segments of the local community and local associations like Friends of India clubs etc. PIC wing also reaches out to Indian Diaspora, members of local Indian and student community, think tanks and academia etc.

Ministry updates Missions/Posts on policy stands of Government of India on the issues of national and international importance. XPD Division prepares publicity material like creatives, infographics, booklets, information brochures, short videos, digital content, as well as commission articles for the use of Indian Missions/posts abroad for their local publicity purpose, as also to counter disinformation on case-to-case basis. Missions/Posts are asked to disseminate the publicity material to foreign interlocutors and members of Indian community and share it through popular social media platforms for wider local outreach.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 44)**

The Committee note that Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) is an autonomous body within MEA and is entrusted with the task of conducting research on international economic issues. Role of RIS in soft power projection involves South-South cooperation, sharing India's development experience with partner countries, propagating Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programmes,



hosting India Brazil South Africa (IBSA) scholars, promotion of traditional medicine system, etc. The Committee also note that RIS has set up a Global Development Centre to serve as a single window depository of India's developmental experience, expertise and capabilities. While noting that RIS has been playing a pioneering role in promoting India as an economic power, the Committee find that its mandate is still rooted in Cold War lexicon. The Committee, therefore, urge that the MEA should reformulate the objectives, functions and structure of RIS to make it more contemporary and relevant.

### **Reply of the Government**

The dynamic and evolutionary character of RIS as a credible institution having an ever increasing national, regional and global reach has become possible due to the dynamic character of its aims and objectives enshrined in its Memorandum of Association which have given it the required flexibility not only to move with the times but also to be futuristic in its functioning as far as evidence based policy research studies and programmes are concerned. Over the years, its foundational principles, robust governance structure and strong band of domain specific subject experts in its Faculty have enabled it to emerge as a policy research institution. RIS is pleased to note that the Committee has rightly acknowledged the above position. Therefore, the widening spectrum and dynamism character of RIS is well established. The following activities are well reflective of the dynamic character of RIS.

- The work programmes of RIS is consciously charted out by the eminent members of its Governing Council consisting of Foreign Secretary and Secretary (Economic Relations) from the MEA; Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance; Secretary, Department of Science and Technology; and Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, apart from a number of highly eminent persons with specialization in the field of Social Sciences, Science and technology. They are also assisted by its Research Advisory Committee, which consists of a band of highly eminent subject scholars and academicians from across the country.
  
- The broad framework of the RIS work programme is based on four pillars:
  - Global Economic Governance and Cooperation
  - Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation
  - Trade Facilitation, Connectivity and Regional Cooperation
  - New Technologies and Development Issues
  
- The cross-sectoral pioneering policy research being done at RIS in frontier areas is of far-reaching importance to the country for its accelerated economic growth and attainment of Atamnirbhta in the field of fintech, FTAs, Blue Economy, SDGs, Health and Wellness, including Traditional Medicines, e-commerce, Science Diplomacy, closer regional connectivity.

- Over the years, RIS has established a number of institutional platforms for specialized research in these areas. These platforms include ASEAN-India Centre (AIC), Global Development Centre (GDC), Blue Economy Forum (BEF), Forum on Indian Traditional Medicine (FITM), Forum for Indian Science Diplomacy (FISD), Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) Forum, IPA-RIS BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence

RIS work programme has substantially diversified in terms of policy relevant research to meet the current and emerging challenges in the field of international trade, investment, finance, agriculture, Science, Technology and Innovation, health and wellness and digital technology, including digital health and payment mechanisms, paving the way for accelerated economic development within the country and abroad.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 45)**

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), as an attached office under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation. As part of its cultural diplomacy, ASI and MEA have been actively involved in restoration of historical sites and monuments in our immediate as well as extended neighbourhood. ASI has crossed national boundaries and undertaken conservations works in Bhutan, Vietnam, Nepal,

Maldives, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos and so on. The Committee feel that such endeavours have opened up new avenues for international diplomatic and economic cooperation. The Committee suggest that the Ministry of External Affairs should cooperate with ASI and tap these new avenues for promoting India's cultural diplomacy by forging collaboration with international and national institutions.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry of External Affairs and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are actively involved in restoration of historical sites in other countries. Over the years, ASI has undertaken conservations works in Bhutan, Vietnam, Nepal, Maldives, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Laos.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

## **CHAPTER III**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLY**

**NIL**

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND REQUIRE REITERATION**

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 1)**

The Committee are aware that India's soft power projection predates the usage of the term in popular parlance in 21st century. Soft power is broadly described as the ability to influence others through appeal and attraction using non-coercive means. In this sense, India possesses a vast repertoire of soft power resources with widespread global appeal. These include, its cultural heritage evident in arts, dances, literature, cuisine, yoga, traditional medicine, cinema and entertainment, sports, historical monuments, India's democratic traditions, Constitution, unity in diversity and contributions in resolving contemporary environmental issues, scientific/technological accomplishments and socio-economic innovations.

The Committee further note that 'Smart Power', which is reflected in judicious use of soft as well as hard power, is most representative of India's engagement with the world. India's extensive and diverse soft power capabilities represent a unique and sui generis case in study of soft power and cultural diplomacy. The Committee, however, are dismayed to note that despite the existence of a wide array of soft power resources and



continued persuasion by the Committee, there have been deficiencies on part of MEA in projecting it effectively to achieve foreign policy goals particularly due to lack of coordination, absence of national policy, inadequate budget and human resource. The Committee, therefore, recommend that MEA should conduct a thorough assessment of our soft power potential and devise strategies for optimum utilization of the same in achieving India's foreign policy objectives on priority basis and apprise the Committee accordingly. The Committee also recommend that the MEA should capitalize in multilateral diplomacy channels and abundantly incorporate Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy in India's foreign policy strategies.

### **Reply of the Government**

Government's efforts aiming at influencing foreign public opinion and attitudes who in turn may influence their government's actions towards another nation include 'nation-branding; diaspora outreach, digital engagement and Government sponsored activities focusing on communicating directly with foreign publics with a view to projecting soft power abroad. All such activities of the Government serve as an effective tool to build a positive image with public of other countries. Apart from Ministry of External Affairs(MEA) and Indian Council for Cultural Relations(ICCR) other Departments involved in projecting India's soft power abroad are (i) Ministry of Culture

through Lalit Kala Akademi: Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama, (ii) Ministry of Textiles: through Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and Development Commissioner (Handlooms), (iii) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting via Directorate of Film Festivals, (iv) Ministry of AYUSH and (v) Ministry of Tourism. All these departments of the Government undertake different activities to achieve the desired goals.

ICCR, as part of well devised strategies for optimum utilization of soft power potential, contribute towards promotion of Indian culture abroad through its wide range of activities which include inter-alia, teaching of Yoga, Dance, Music and Hindi, organizing/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 centres abroad. Under the guidance of the Ministry, ICCR has taken various new initiatives as well to develop cultural relations and create mutual understanding with other nations, including new forays in projecting India's democratic credentials, cuisines, arts & crafts etc. ICCR has enhanced its outreach across the globe through various online activities and started various initiatives related to Buddhism's part of ICCR's cultural diplomacy.

## **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 7 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 6)**

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

urgent need for greater synergy and coordination among the various Ministries/ Departments /agencies involved in India's soft power and cultural diplomacy, the Committee recommend that the Coordination Committee may be constituted at the earliest.

### **Reply of the Government**

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

Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi is also Minister of State for Culture of India. Recommendation of

the Hon'ble Parliamentary Committee to constitute the Coordination Committee has been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 13 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 15)**

The Committee are aware that tourism is a key indicator of a country's soft power capital. They are given to understand that the Ministry of Tourism with eight offices worldwide has been collaborating with MEA and other Line Ministries for showcasing tourist destination and products of the country. To promote tourism, various efforts have also been made viz, launching of the 'Incredible India' campaign, participation in tourism fairs/exhibitions/expos/road shows, signing of Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with countries, identifying wellness and medical tourism areas, spreading awareness about Buddhist Circuit/Pilgrimage, and so on. India's age old Indian philosophy of 'Atithidevo Bhava' clubbed with immense potential in tourism sector, the Committee are confident that India's global outreach is bound to escalate.

The Committee are also elated to note that the Incredible India campaign has been effective in promoting Brand India and there have been regular informative posts and updates on the official social media platforms. The Committee feel that there is still a need to increase the number of tourism offices abroad and adopt country-specific approach for promotional activities. The Committee therefore urge the Government to come up with proposals incorporating feedback from all types of travelers starting from backpackers to high end tourists in evolving country specific approach.

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry of External Affairs would work with relevant stakeholders and invite Missions/Posts to seek feedback from foreign tourists and travelers.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 22 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 16)**



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

### **Reply of the Government**

Ministry deeply appreciates the observations of the Hon'ble Committee particularly on increasing and upgrading touristic infrastructure, and use of technology to streamline processes and procedures.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/61/2022 dated 03/11/2022]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 25 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

**Recommendation (Sl. No. 17)**

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

material/brochures on medical tourism and religious tourism in all the Missions/Posts abroad for enhanced promotional activities in these areas.

### **Reply of the Government**

Attracting foreign tourists to avail medical facilities in India under “consumption of services abroad” is an important means of revenue generation. A whole of government approach is adopted in this regard. Tourism and Technology has been identified as a key element to be focussed upon by Missions/Posts.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 28 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 37)**

ICCR is mandated to create a sound understanding of Indian culture abroad and towards this end, it routinely sends cultural troupes, including dance and musical performers. However, on

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

### **Reply of the Government**

While ICCR always endeavors to maintain a regional balance while sending the cultural troupes abroad, as pointed by the Hon'ble Committee members, Missions abroad recommended particular form of dance group in consideration of the local aspirations from Musical groups from India. ICCR in the best interest of propogation of true culture, chose to send the groups suitable to the occasion and potential footfall for programme. The recommendation of the Committee to reformulates certain rules and regulations to ensure that artistes from all regions and States get an opportunity to showcase their talent abroad in an equitable manner is kindly noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 31 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 38)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Setting up of Indian Cultural Centres abroad is part of ICCR's efforts to promote Indian culture all over the world, within the framework of India's foreign policy. Procedure for opening of Cultural Centres abroad include recommendation of the concerned Indian Mission abroad and bilateral relations between

India and the host country, proposed activities to be undertaken, population with number of PIOs, completion local formalities and obtaining approvals and number of students from host country studied/studying under ICCR scholarship programme.

Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committed to open Indian Cultural Center in U.A.E, in view of presence of large diaspora and India's strong and sustained strategic and cultural ties with U.A.E, has been noted.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 34 of the Chapter– I of the Report)



## **CHAPTER V**

### **OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ARE STILL AWAITED**

#### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 7)**

Non-availability of adequate finances is one of the factors derailing the effective facilitation of India's soft power projection. Soft power capabilities require capital, both human as well as financial to be effective. A cursory glance at the budgetary allocation to India's ICCR and Confucius Institutes of China or UKS's British Council or Germany's Goethe Institute is testimony to the hurdles in our institutional efficacy. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Government should increase ICCR's budgetary allocation by at least 20 % than what is being provisioned as of now.

#### **Reply of the Government**

The Ministry deeply appreciates views of the Hon'ble Committee, and work towards providing adequate budgetary resources to ICCR so as to effectively carry-out its mandate.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

#### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 16 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 9)**

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

### **Reply of the Government**

Recommendation of the Hon'ble Committee to appoint a Study Group firstly to assess the working of ICCR in comparison to British Council, the American Centre and the Confucius Institute and later to suggest ways to further strengthen ICCR, has been noted. ICCR would put up the recommendation to its Governing Body seeking their guidance and the way forward on identifying the scope and suitable partner to execute the proposed assessment of ICCR's functioning.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

### **Comments of the Committee**

(Please see para No. 19 of the Chapter– I of the Report)

### **Recommendation (Sl. No. 28)**

Over the years, the Committee have been flagging the issue of inadequate budgetary and manpower resources within ICCR as key factors impeding the effective realization of India's soft power diplomacy. The Committee observe that MEA has one of the smallest soft power budgets in the world, which is incommensurate with the expanding mandate and activities of ICCR. MEA on several occasions have admitted to the Committee about the adverse impact of budgetary allocation on its overall functioning. While analyzing the budgetary allocation made to ICCR during the past five years, the Committee discerned that while on one hand the ICCR has been pointing out to the shortage of funds, the projected budgetary allocation by MEA is itself small. The Committee therefore recommend that ICCR should make an objective assessment of its financial requirements and accordingly seek higher budget in the next financial year. The Committee also desire that ICCR compile data of financial resources and outreach activities of soft power organizations of other countries to make a compelling case for increased budgetary allocation. The Committee would strongly recommend that the Government should provision enhanced budgetary allocation of Rs. 500 crore to ICCR for conducting India's soft power and cultural diplomacy in a robust and extensive manner.

## **Reply of the Government**

Ministry deeply appreciates views of Hon'ble Committee. Adequate budgetary support would be provided to ICCR based on it's program and activities.

[File No. AA/Parl/125/104/2022 dated 24/05/2023]

**NEW DELHI**  
20 July, 2023  
29 Ashadha, 1945 (Saka)

**P.P. CHAUDHARY,**  
*Chairperson,*  
*Committee on External Affairs*

**MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2022-23) HELD ON 20 JULY, 2023**

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 from 1600 hrs. to 1640 hrs. in Committee Room No. '3', Extension Building, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

**Present**

**Shri P.P. Chaudhary – Chairperson**

**MEMBERS**

**LOK SABHA**

2. Shri. Dileshwar Kamait
3. Smt. Preneet Kaur
4. Smt. Goddeti Madhavi
5. Smt. Poonam Mahajan
6. Shri P. C. Mohan
7. Smt. Queen Oja
8. Shri Ritesh Pandey
9. Dr. K. C. Patel
10. Shri N. K. Premachandran
11. Smt. Navneet Ravi Rana
12. Shri Manne Srinivas Reddy
13. Dr. Harsh Vardhan

**RAJYA SABHA**

14. Shri Anil Desai
15. Shri Abdul Wahab
16. Dr. Ashok Kumar Mittal

## **SECRETARIAT**

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Joint Secretary
2. Smt. Reena Gopalakrishnan - Director
3. Ms. K Muanniang Tunglut - Deputy Secretary

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

3. The Committee took up for consideration the following draft Reports:-

(i) XXX XXX XXX XXX

(ii) Draft Report on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report of the Committee on the subject 'India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations'.

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

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

*The Committee then adjourned*



## Appendix-II

*(Vide Para 4 of Introduction of Report)*

### ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE OBSERVATIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE SIXTEENTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (17<sup>TH</sup> LOK SABHA)

**(i) Total Number of Recommendations 45**

**(ii) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government.**

Recommendation Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45.

**Total-35  
Percentage: 77.78%**

**(iii) Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies.**

NIL

**Total- Nil  
Percentage: 0 %**

**(iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee and require reiteration.**

Recommendation Nos. 1, 6, 15, 16, 17, 37 and 38

**Total-07  
Percentage: 15.55%**

**(v) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited.**

Recommendation Nos. 7, 9 and 28

**Total- 03**  
**Percentage: 6.67%**