

2

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(1996-97)**

ELEVENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

*(Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the
9th Report of the Committee on Indian Council
for Cultural Relations)*

SECOND REPORT



C
18.3657R
N6'2

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

April, 1997/Chaitra, 1919 (Saka)

SECOND REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(1996-97)

(ELEVENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

*(Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the 9th Report
of the Committee on Indian Council for Cultural Relations)*

Presented to Lok Sabha on 22.4.1997

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 22.4.1997



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

April, 1997/Chaitra, 1919 (Saka)

C.O.E.A. No. 02

Price : Rs. 34.00

328.3657R
116.2

PARLIAMENT LIBRARY
Central Govt. Publications
Acc. No. RC 978420
Date 21-7-97

© 1997 By LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Eighth Edition) and Printed by Jainco Art India, 13/10, W.E.A., Saraswati Marg, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.

CONTENTS

CORRIGENDA TO THE SECOND REPORT OF STANDING
COMMITTEE ON ACTION TAKEN ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS
CONTAINED IN THE 9TH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

Page	Para	Line	For	Read
(iii)		14	Kuleste	Kulaste
(iii)		16	*11	*12
4	7	7	culural	cultural
5	8	3	exiting	existing
5	9	15	Merely	merely
9	19	3	Amademi	Akademi
9	19	9	in	to
10	22	9	set	sent
12	26	2	proved	provided
12	27	10	that	the
14		6	25.03.72	25.03.68
16		last	intractions	interactions
19		12	mesures	measures
28		12	Amademi	Akademi
29		23	Handicrafts	Handicrafts
31		5	Sl.No.34	Sl.No.39
31		16	libralisation	liberalisation
39		5	adequat	adequate
39		16	It	If
43		20	annul	annual

C.O.E.A. No. 02

© 1997 BY LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT

Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Eighth Edition) and Printed by Jainco Art India, 13/10, W.E.A., Saraswati Marg, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)
CHAPTER I Report.....	1
CHAPTER II Observations/Recommendations that have been accepted by the Government	13
CHAPTER III Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies	47
CHAPTER IV Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration	55
CHAPTER V Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited	62

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee on External Affairs (1996-97) held on 31.3.97	63
II. Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the 9th Report of Standing Committee on External Affairs (10th Lok Sabha)	65
III. Statement of Observations/Recommendations	66

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(1996-97)

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS
Lok Sabha

2. Shri Manabendra Shah
3. Col. Rao Ram Singh
4. Dr. Ramesh Chand Tomar
5. Shri Chandresh Patel
6. Dr. Gunawant Sarode
7. Shri D.B. Roy
8. Shri Vijay Mude
9. Shri Faggan Singh Kuleste
10. Smt. Rajnee Patil
- *11. Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao
12. Shri Ajit Singh
13. Shri Bijoy K. Handique
14. Smt. Meira Kumar
15. Shri A.C. Jose
16. Begum Noorbano
17. Dr. Hari Singh
18. Shri Pinaki Misra
19. Shri Anchal Das
20. Shri Anil Kumar Yadav
21. Shri Rupchand Pal
22. Shri S. Ajaya Kumar

* Ceased to be a member of the Committee consequent upon his resignation from Lok Sabha *w.e.f.* 10 September, 1996 and renominated to the Committee *w.e.f.* 26.2.97.

23. Shri Rajesh Ranjan
24. Shri P.N. Siva
25. Shri Hindurao Naik Nimbalkar
26. Shri George Fernandes
27. Shri Pramothesh Mukherjee
28. Shri Tilak Raj Singh
29. Shri G.G. Swell
30. Shri Arvind Kumar

Rajya Sabha

31. Smt. Margaret Alva
32. Smt. Chandresh Kumari
33. Smt. Vyjayantimala Bali
34. Shri V.N. Gadgil
35. Shri Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi
36. Shri Sikander Bakht
37. Shri Triloki Nath Chaturvedi
38. Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra
39. Smt. Kamla Sinha
40. Shri M.A. Baby
41. Dr. D. Masthan
- *42. Shri Wasim Ahmad

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. Ashok Kumar Pandey — *Additional Secretary*
2. Shri V.N. Gaur — *Director*
3. Shri Ashok Sarin — *Deputy Secretary*
4. Shri R.K. Saxena — *Under Secretary*

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present this Second Report on Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the Ninth Report (Tenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee on the "Indian Council for Cultural Relations".

2. The Ninth Report was presented to Lok Sabha on 19 December, 1995 and was laid in Rajya Sabha on 22 December, 1995. The Government furnished their replies indicating Action Taken on the Recommendations contained in the Report.

3. The Draft Report on the basis of Action Taken Notes was considered and adopted by the Standing Committee on External Affairs (1996-97) at their sitting held on 31 March, 1997, Minutes of the Sitting of the Committee have been reproduced as Appendix I to the Report.

4. An Analysis of Action Taken by Government on the Recommendations contained in the Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (Tenth Lok Sabha) is given in Appendix II.

5. For facility of reference and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in consolidated form in Appendix III.

NEW DELHI;
4 April, 1997

14 Chaitra, 1919 (Saka)

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

CHAPTER I

REPORT

The Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Ninth Report (10th Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on External Affairs on 'Indian Council for Cultural Relations'. Ninth Report of the Committee was presented to Lok Sabha on 19th December, 1995.

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

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by Government.

Sl. Nos. 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74

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

Sl. Nos. 11, 21, 24, 26, 30, 36, 40, 41, 51, 52, 61, 62

- (iii) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration.

Sl. No. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 28, 48, 50

- (iv) Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited.

NIL

3. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of their observations/recommendations.

*Autonomous Status of ICCR***(Sl. No. 1 & 2—Para No. 2.10 and 2.11)**

4. The Committee in paras 2.10 & 2.11 of their 9th Report had noted the stand of the Ministry that the ICCR was autonomous and was only administratively attached to it. However, the Committee was surprised to find that the Annual Report of the Ministry presented to Parliament includes a chapter on the work of the ICCR. They were equally surprised to note that the Director-General of the ICCR is designated as *ex-officio* Head of the Ministry's Cultural Division. Both seemed to be incongruous in the context of the Ministry's claim that the Council was autonomous. The Committee had expressed the view that there was urgent need to examine in depth how the ICCR could be reoriented and given real autonomy to enable it to function effectively in response to the changing needs and priorities of our national objectives. The Committee had recommended that it was essential that the ICCR should prepare its own Annual Report and the same be presented to the Parliament.

5. In their reply the Ministry of External Affairs have stated that the ICCR functions autonomously within the framework of its own organisational structure. Decisions with regard to ICCR's programme of activities and its budget allocations under different Heads are approved by the Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Governing body of the ICCR. The ICCR constantly undertakes to improve its working in order to enhance usefulness of its outlays. The Ministry have further stated that following the normal practice where Annual Reports of such autonomous organisations are presented to the Parliament as part of the Annual Report of the administrative Ministry concerned, the ICCR's Annual Report forms part of the Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs. The input for this is provided by the ICCR.

6. The Ministry have claimed that the ICCR functions autonomously within the framework of its own organisational structure since its decisions are approved by its own Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Governing body of ICCR. However, the reply of the Ministry is not convincing enough to justify that ICCR enjoys real functional autonomy in view of the fact that its Director General is designated as *ex-officio* head of the Ministry's Cultural Division and secondly, it does not prepare and present its own Annual Report to the Parliament. The Committee

feel that ICCR must have real functional autonomy as its status then can provide a great deal of flexibility in pursuit of its objectives and at the same time confer on it greater credibility without being branded as propagandist. With its autonomous status, it can deal with, for instance, a large number of individuals/institutions who would otherwise shy away from being involved directly with a Government Ministry/Department. Further, in developed countries cultural inter-action with foreign countries is taking place more and more through autonomous institutional linkages. Thus, it is absolutely necessary that the ICCR is reoriented and given real autonomy. For this, apart from bringing about organisational changes (as discussed later in the Report), the ICCR ought to prepare a separate Annual Report of its activities and present the same to the Parliament.

The Committee have, however, been given the impression that the practice being followed by the ICCR in regard to preparation of its Annual Report does not require rethinking. The Ministry have stated that the ICCR follows the normal practice of providing inputs for inclusion in the Annual Report of the Ministry concerned *i.e.* the Ministry of External Affairs, since annual reports of autonomous organisations are presented to the Parliament as part of the annual report of the administrative Ministry concerned. The Committee are constrained to note that the Ministry of External Affairs have merely cited the existing practice of ICCR's Annual Report forming a part of their own Annual Report, a practice which the Committee would like to be dispensed with. In this connection, the Committee would like to refer to Para 1.12 of the Second Report of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table of the Sixth Lok Sabha, which mentioned :—

“...All Statutory/Autonomous organisations, Public Undertakings, Corporations, Joint Ventures, Societies etc., which are financed out of funds drawn from the Consolidated Fund of India, after being voted by the Parliament, in the form of shares, subsidies, grants-in-aid etc., either wholly or partly should lay their Annual Reports/Audit Reports (both English and Hindi versions).”

Para 1.14 of the same Report further mentioned as under :—

“The Committee further recommend that Government might consider the feasibility of amending, where necessary, the relevant statutes/Rules/Regulations of such organisations, to make it obligatory on the part of the administrative Ministry concerned

to lay the Annual Reports/Audit Reports of such organisations under their administrative control before Parliament within nine months of the close of accounting year so that Parliament is apprised of their activities."

Both these recommendations were circulated by the Department of Parliamentary Affairs to all Ministries and Departments of Government of India *vide* their O.M. No. F. 28 (B)/78-Leg., dated 8th November, 1978 for compliance. Evidently these recommendations have not been implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs so far. The Committee regret to observe the failure of the Ministry for not acting upon the recommendations of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table of the House for so long and again, in furnishing an evasive reply to this Committee's specific recommendation in this regard. The Committee hope that an early decision would now be taken to enable the ICCR to prepare its own Annual Report which would be presented to Parliament.

Changes in Organisational set up and Functioning of the ICCR

(Sl. No. 3, 6, 7, – Para Nos. 3.7, 3.10 & 3.11)

7. The Committee had observed that keeping in view the need for the reorientation of the ICCR's role in the changed international context, it was time to review the Council's existing organisational set up and functioning. The Committee had opined that ICCR might continue to be under administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs since Indian Missions/Posts abroad have to play a crucial role in continuously assisting the ICCR in conducting its cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the Committee strongly felt that the Council should be accorded real autonomy. In such a set up, the Director-General should continue to be from the Ministry of External Affairs but should be upgraded to the rank of Additional Secretary. There should be two Deputy Directors-General—one from Department of Culture (Ministry of HRD) and the other from Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, of the rank of Joint Secretaries to ensure functional coordination between the three Ministries.

8. The Ministry of External Affairs in their reply have stated that they have closely examined the existing organisational set up and functioning of ICCR and feel that this set up is the best available for

the ICCR and feel that this set up is the best available for the ICCR to discharge the objectives for which it was established. The Ministry have also stated that the existing set up and procedures of ICCR already provide for the desired autonomy necessary for ICCR to undertake its own programmes and fulfil its objectives. With regard to the rank of the Director-General, ICCR, the Ministry have stated that his rank being equivalent to Joint Secretary has been found appropriate and they do not feel the need to upgrade either the rank of Director-General or Deputy Director-General who are Director level officers from the Ministry of External Affairs. The Ministry have also stated that necessary coordination with the Ministries of Human Resource Development and Information and Broadcasting already exists since Secretary (Culture) and Secretary (I&B) are members of the General Assembly of the ICCR. Secretary (Culture) is also on the Planning Committee and Governing Body of ICCR. However, they do not perceive any advantage in inducting Deputy Director-General from other Ministries. The Ministry prefer the present system of having two Deputy Directors-General from the Ministry of External Affairs, as their work involves continuous interaction with our Missions abroad.

9. The Committee are distressed to find that the Ministry of External Affairs have not accepted the organisational changes proposed by them in ICCR which, in their opinion, was necessary to ensure real autonomy in the functioning of the Council and effective coordination between the concerned Ministries. The Committee had desired that instead of one Director-General and two Deputy Directors-General from the Ministry of External Affairs, ICCR should have one Director-General from the Ministry of External Affairs and a Deputy Director-General each from the Department of Culture and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Ministry have asserted that existing set up and procedure of ICCR already provide for the autonomy necessary for ICCR to undertake its own programme and fulfil its objectives. The Committee are not convinced by this reply of the Ministry which merely justifies the already existing situation. In the Committee's view, Merely having Secretaries from Department of Culture and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in General Assembly and Governing Body is not enough. The inclusion of two Deputy Director-Generals from other two Ministries would not only ensure greater coordination between ICCR and those Ministries but would also ensure greater participation and role for them in the working of ICCR. Further, this would make

the ICCR sufficiently broad-based and functionally autonomous. The contention of the Ministry that it is desirable to have two Deputy Directors-General from the Ministry of External Affairs as their work involves continuous interaction with our Missions abroad hardly carries any weight as the Director General of ICCR from the Ministry of External Affairs, could easily take care of such interaction. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the proposed changes in the organisation of ICCR should be brought about at the earliest.

(Sl. No. 8 — Para No. 3.12)

10. In Para No. 3.12 of their Ninth Report, the Committee had recommended certain changes in the organisational set up and functioning of the ICCR. For example, they had desired that the General Assembly should have 10 representatives from educational institutions and 5 from the print and electronic media instead of having all the 15 representatives from educational institutions. They had further suggested that worthwhile representation should also be given to the Private Sector to involve it meaningfully in the work of the Council. The Committee had also desired that clause 7 (vi) of the Constitution should be revised to provide that 9 members to be elected to the Governing Body by the General Assembly from amongst its members should belong to various categories of whom at least one should be from the media. The Committee had recommended that General Assembly should meet at least twice every year, not annually and Governing Body should meet at least once every quarter.

11. The Ministry in their reply have stated that Article (4) of the Constitution of ICCR lays down in details the composition of the General Assembly and that the General Assembly is constituted accordingly. The private sector and the media are already represented in the Governing Body and the General Assembly. At present, there are 4 representatives from media and 3 from the private sector on the General Assembly. Also on the Governing Body, there are 2 representatives from the print and electronic media and one representative from the private sector. The Ministry have stated that as per the Constitution of the Council (Art. 6) the General Assembly should meet at least once every year which has been found adequate. The Governing Body, which in itself is fairly large, meets at least twice every year and can meet more often, if necessary. The Ministry have, however, stated that the views of the Standing Committee will be placed before the Governing Body and General Assembly.

12. After conducting due deliberations and detailed discussions, the Committee had come to the conclusion that the General Assembly and Governing Body of the ICCR should meet more frequently in order to have closer interaction amongst its members and for better control and monitoring of the developments in the cultural field and to take decisions accordingly. The Committee are not convinced by the reply tendered by the Ministry that the existing frequency of meetings of General Assembly and Governing Body have been found 'adequate'. No reasons have been advanced by the Ministry justifying the existing practice. It has not been explained as to why the recommendation of the Committee could not be accepted. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that General Assembly and Governing Body of ICCR should meet every six months and 3 months respectively. Further, only such representatives should be nominated to these bodies who have sufficient time and requisite willingness to contribute effectively to their deliberations. The Committee would like to be apprised of the action taken in this regard.

Cultural Centres Abroad

(Sl. No. 20 – Para No. 5.4)

13. In addition to the cultural work done by the Indian Missions abroad, the ICCR has established, as part of Missions' diplomatic functioning, twelve Cultural Centres in various countries to promote greater awareness and appreciation of India's cultural heritage abroad and to disseminate information about contemporary developments in India and enhance people-to-people contact. The Committee in the aforesaid paragraph had emphasised the need for a meaningful assessment of the working of the Cultural Centres set up by ICCR abroad. Such a review, according to them, was imperative if these centres were to achieve the Council's avowed objectives on their limited budgets.

14. The Ministry in their reply have stated that the Council continuously monitors and reviews the activities of the Cultural Centres abroad with a view to make the functioning of the Centres more effective. For this purpose, the Council has instituted a system of monthly reporting by the Centres on their activities. The Council is also undertaking a special review of the functioning of these Centres abroad in consultation with our Ambassadors in these countries.

15. The Committee are of the view that there is need for continuous reorientation of the activities of Cultural Centres abroad not only to meet the cultural thrust which ICCR is supposed to emphasize but also to improve India's image and further our foreign policy objectives. The Committee find that the ICCR has instituted a system of monthly reporting by the Cultural Centres set up by ICCR abroad on their activities. Also, the ICCR is undertaking a special review of the functioning of these Centres in consultation with our Ambassadors in the respective countries. The Committee would like to know whether the review has since been completed and if so, what were its findings. The Committee feel that such reviews should be conducted at regular intervals and shortcomings noticed as a result thereof removed expeditiously.

Use of Electronic Media for Presenting Indian Culture Abroad

(Sl. No. 28 – Para No. 5.36)

16. The Committee had recommended that effective steps should be taken to make maximum use of the means provided by the electronic media to present Indian Culture abroad. It was emphasised that the ICCR should enter into arrangements with the Doordarshan which had its foot-prints established in many neighbouring countries away from the borders of India. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should explore the possibility of entering into arrangements with electronic media abroad, including the INTERNET, for projecting India's cultural image to audiences in other countries. The ICCR should set up a Special Committee of people in the field of electronic communication as well as scholars and artistes to go into the matter. It should also produce floppies on different aspects of the Indian culture for projection abroad through the electronic media.

17. In their Action Taken note, the Ministry have stated that the ICCR support the promotion of Indian Culture abroad through the electronic media. However, the electronic media decide their own programmes independently. The Council has initiated discussions with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Doordarshan on the utilisation of the electronic media for promotion of Indian Culture abroad.

18. Although the ICCR is stated to have initiated discussions with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Doordarshan on the utilisation of the electronic media for promotion of Indian culture abroad, the Committee have not been informed about the details and out come thereof. The Ministry have also not responded to the specific recommendation of the Committee that the ICCR should set up a Special Committee of people in the field of electronic communication as well as scholars and artistes to go into the matter.

As with the emergence of satellite television and other forms of electronic media, powerful avenues are now available for projection of Indian Culture abroad, immediate steps need to be taken to make maximum use of the means provided by this media. A Special Committee as recommended by the Committee earlier would be of immense help to the ICCR in advising the precise use of the electronic media. The Committee further reiterate that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting/Doordarshan should cooperate with ICCR in their endeavour and explore the possibility of entering into arrangements for electronic media abroad for promoting India's Cultural image in other countries. The Committee would like to be apprised about the steps taken in this regard.

Representation of other Prominent Bodies in the Field of Art & Culture in the ICCR

(Sl. No. 35 – Para 5.51)

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

20. The Ministry in their reply have stated that this is being done. Representatives of the three Akademies are on the General Assembly and Governing Body of ICCR. They are also included in the Advisory Committees.

21. Despite the presence of the representatives of the Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama in the General Assembly, Governing Body and Advisory Committee of the ICCR, the complaints were voiced by the witnesses representing these bodies before the Committee that they were not being closely and meaningfully associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR. This implied that these bodies were in a position to contribute much more towards the activities of the ICCR, which the ICCR has failed to secure so far. Since ICCR has to draw its resources from various expert bodies also to present a composite cultural image of India abroad, it should endeavour to ensure closer and effective coordination at the highest level with such bodies. This would also help in avoiding overlapping of programmes/performances by ICCR and these National Bodies. For this, it is necessary that these institutions are taken into confidence while drawing up programmes, selection of artistes and other related activities. In fact, to begin with there should be a dialogue at the highest level between ICCR and these bodies so as to dispel their grievances and ensure as to how they could be actively associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR in real sense.

Travel Grants Programme

(Sl. No. 48 – Para No. 5.73)

22. The Committee had expressed the view that the Travel Grants Programme was administered by ICCR on an adhoc basis without relevance to the guidelines laid down by them. The Committee had observed that there was a great element of patronage in the programme. For instance, in one case, two travel grants were approved for two round-the-world tickets for a very vague programme of lectures in total violation of the guidelines approved. According to the Annual Report of the Ministry (April, 1994-March, 1995), one journalist representing a Calcutta Daily was sent to Egypt in November, 1994 to “attend” the Cairo International Film Festival and a freelance journalist of Bombay was sent to France in January, 1995 to “participate” in the 7th Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival at Paris. In another case, seven persons, including two journalists from New Delhi, a photo-journalist from Lucknow and a well-known artiste from New Delhi were sent to Thailand in December, 1994 to attend the 11th International Ramayana Conference in Bangkok. Reputed Ramayana scholars were overlooked and ignored. The Committee had, therefore,

recommended that Council should at the earliest re-assess the utility of its Travel Grants Scheme so that it is restricted to only those persons who are categorically identified in keeping with the Council's restructured basis.

23. The Ministry in their reply have stated that the Council has a programme of travel grants under which scholars, intellectuals, academics and artistes etc. are assisted to participate in seminars, symposia, study tours, lecture tours, performance tours and exhibitions abroad. The Council has framed guidelines to ensure that the travel grant programme is administered in an objective and institutionalised manner.

24. The Committee had cited certain instances where the Travel Grants Programme was administered by ICCR on an adhoc basis without relevance to the guidelines laid down by them. The Committee had asked the Ministry to re-assess the utility of its Travel Grants Scheme so that it was restricted to only those persons who are categorically identified in keeping with Council's restructured basis. The Committee are surprised to find that instead of reacting positively to their specific recommendation and assuring them of the adherence to the laid down guidelines, the Ministry have merely informed that the Council has framed guidelines to ensure that the Travel Grants Programme is administered in an objective and institutionalised manner. The Ministry have not explained as to what prompted them to sanction travel grants in the cases cited by the Committee. They feel that there is need to ensure that ICCR is not dubbed as a travel agency which provides travel grants to various persons without even assessing their utility to the Council. The Committee are of the firm view that ICCR should ensure that this programme is implemented in an objective manner and as per the guidelines in this regard. The Council should also see to it that proper procedures are instituted to make this scheme as transparent as possible and leave no scope for controversy.

Festivals in India and Abroad

(Sl. No. 50 – Para No. 6.11)

25. The Committee had noticed that all the expenditure on Festivals in India and abroad was borne on the Festival Budget of the Department of Culture, However, the information regarding the total expenditure incurred on the festivals held so far by all the concerned

agencies together was not furnished to them. In the absence of figures for total expenditure on the festivals, the Committee could not have any idea about the total amount of money and resources that was put in to achieve the success of such endeavours as indicated by the Ministry. The Committee had, therefore, desired to be apprised about the details of such expenditure.

26. The Ministry in their reply have informed that the budget for Festivals of India abroad is proved by the Department of Culture to various implementing agencies and that the information on total expenditure on Festivals of India abroad can only be collected through the Department of Culture.

27. Festivals of India abroad are organised in different countries with a view to presenting India through Indian eyes and upgrading the perceptions about India. The nodal agency involved in organising the festivals is the Department of Culture whereas the ICCR is designated to present performing arts. Substantial amount is spent on these festivals and various agencies/departments are entrusted the different tasks. The Committee had desired to be apprised of the total expenditure incurred on each of the Festivals of India abroad held so far to have an idea about the extent of the resources that were put in to achieve that success as claimed by the Government on such endeavours. The Ministry have informed that this information can only be collected through the Department of Culture. The Committee feel that ICCR could have easily collected the information from the Department of Culture and furnished to them. The Committee hope that the requisite information in this regard would now be supplied to them expeditiously.

The Committee would also like the Ministry to assess in coordination with Department of Culture the impact created by each of these Festivals held so far and about the resultant benefits that have accrued to our country. This would help the Government while planning for the Festivals of India abroad in future in appropriately choosing the target country, specific theme and necessary funds for the same.

CHAPTER II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation

The Vice-President of India was nominated by the President of India as the President of the ICCR for many years. This practice worked well without raising any controversy. The Vice-President of India added much-needed dignity and stature to the ICCR. In 1993, however, the practice was changed and a former Minister was appointed as a "full time" President and given the rank of a Cabinet Minister. The Sub-Committee of the ICCR went into the change affected and its impact on the effectiveness and functioning of the ICCR. It has come to the broad conclusion that the change has undermined the ICCR's smooth functioning and effectiveness and involved it in controversy. In fact, this was reflected in the "shortened tenure" of the former Director-General, who was specially chosen for the assignment in the light of his experience and background. Complaints were also received about the huge expenditure incurred by the President on his travels at home and abroad and on his office. (Para No 3.8-Sl. No. 4)

Government's Reply

Article 13 (i) of the Constitution of the Council stipulates that "the President shall be appointed by the President of India and shall hold office for three years". The Vice-President of India has been President of ICCR from 11.9.84 to 25.7.92. The Presidentship of ICCR has also been held by the Education Minister and the External Affairs Minister for varying periods. There have also been 3 full time Presidents of the ICCR—Dr. J.N. Khosla (1968 to 1971), Shri T. N. Kaul (January 1977 to March 1977), Shri Vasant Sathe (February 93 till March 96). A full list of former Presidents of the ICCR is attached. (Annexure)

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

ANNEXURE

FORMER PRESIDENTS OF THE ICCR

1.	Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	09.04.1950 to 20.02.1958..
2.	Prof Humayun Kabir	09.05.1958 to 31.03.1964
3.	Shri M.C. Chagla	01.04.1964 to 06.09.1967
4.	Dr. J.N. Khosla	25.03.1972 to 15.12.1971
5.	Sardar Swaran Singh	08.03.1972 to 10.10.1974
6.	Shri Y.B. Chavan	10.10.1974 to 18.01.1977
7.	Shri T.N. Kaul	19.01.1977 to 30.03.1977
8.	Shri A.B. Vajpayee	30.03.1977 to 08.08.1979
9.	Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao	20.09.1980 to 31.08.1984
10.	Shri R. Venkatraman	11.09.1984 to 10.09.1987
11.	Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma	11.09.1987 to 25.07.1992
12.	Shri Vasant Sathe	05.02.1993 to 31.03.1996

Recommendation

The Committee are of the view that the previous system of having the Vice-President as the President of the ICCR should be revived. The Vice-President may be enabled to take over *ex-officio* as the President of the ICCR and he need not necessarily be appointed each time by the President. It may be pointed out that projection of Indian Culture abroad today has become complicated and sophisticated involving the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, besides the Ministry of External Affairs. This calls for effective coordination and cooperation among these Ministries and other Government agencies. The Vice-President as *ex-officio* President of the ICCR is best suited to perform the required role. He would have the status, authority and influence to get various Ministries and authorities to cooperate, apart from having access to official briefs, papers, and documents. (Para No. 3.9- Sl. No. 5).

Government's Reply

As pointed out earlier the Constitution of ICCR provides that the President of the Council shall be nominated by the President of India. It is the prerogative of the President to take a view on this issue. However the views expressed by the Committee will be duly placed before the President.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Among the "authorities" of the Council as provided in Clause 3 of the present Constitution, a new Committee known as the Programme Committee should be set up. The Programme Committee may draw up an annual programme and plan of action for the ICCR and also ensure and monitor its effective implementation on a regular basis. (Para No. 3.13 – Sl. No. 9)

Government's Reply

A Planning Committee has been set up recently. This committee functions as the Programme Committee, drawing up the annual programme and Plan of Action of ICCR.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

"It shall consider and make recommendations on financial matters relating to the administration and programme of the Council which may be referred to it from time to time by the President or the Governing body or the General Assembly." (Para No. 3.14-Sl. No. 10).

Government's Reply

The only change suggested is the insertion of the word "financial" before the word "matters" in this clause. This is already being followed in practice. The proposal for a specific amendment will be brought to the attention of the Governing Body and General Assembly of the Council.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

Government's Reply

At the persuasion of ICCR the Finance Ministry had increased the allocation for the ICCR to Rs. 25 crores in the RE for 95-96 and the budget estimates for 96-97. The additional allocation will enable ICCR to implement the decision of the Governing Body to raise the stipend and House Rent Allowance for foreign students and to meet expenditure on increased tuition and registration fees. The Ministry would impress upon the Finance Ministry the need for substantial enhancement of the budget grant for ICCR to enable it to expand its other activities.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also feel that steps may be initiated to explore the possibility of supplementing the Government allocation of the ICCR by involving private, industrial and business houses in the promotion and financing of cultural activities abroad. After all, they also benefit from cultural exchanges as these pave the way for further business intractions and transactions. The possibility of giving meaningful tax

exemption incentives to the private sector should also be examined to attract private sector involvement in the arts and in other cultural activities. (Para No. 4.7, Sl. No. 13).

Government's Reply

The Council already seeks support from private business by finding sponsors for some of its programmes. The question of giving tax incentives to encourage private sector involvement in cultural activities has been taken up with the Ministry of Finance.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are of the firm view that the ICCR's programme of giving scholarships to foreign students is most important as it has generated considerable goodwill for India. Over 40 years ago, when the Council was created, it was part of the genius and vision of Nehru and Maulana Azad to envisage an institution to foster fraternal relations among nations. It is through the Council's foreign students programme that this vision has been principally realised. Indeed, the scholarship programmes are a demonstration of our commitment to South-South Cooperation. Today, several persons occupying important positions in Africa, South-East Asia and the Carribeans studied in India. Some even became Heads of States and Heads of Governments. Myanmar' leader and Noble laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi, for instance studied in India for many years. Such students may be viewed as good friends of India after having lived and studied here for at least three years and after getting first hand experience of India's cultural, economic, political and social ethos. (Para No. 5.7, Sl. No. 14).

Government's Reply

The Ministry welcomes the observation of the Committee that the scholarship programme of the ICCR is very important. Indeed, one third of the Council budget goes towards the scholarships to foreign students and student welfare activities.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee feel that with new global realignment and recent development in our economic and development strategy, the entire

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

- (i) Without affecting the total number of scholarships offered by the Council annually, an increasing number of scholarships should be earmarked for encouraging India studies. Meritorious students should be encouraged to work on bilateral economic and political relations. This would help in building up a new generation of Indian scholars. In this context, the Council should explore the possibility of establishing exchange programmes with Centres of Indian Studies abroad.
- (ii) Regular workshops should be organised for those students studying engineering and computer science in collaboration with Indian private and public sector companies so as to give these students an exposure to Indian products. Visits to factories and industrial centres should be an integral part of the scholarship programmes. (Para No. 5.8, Sl. No. 15).

Government's Reply

The ICCR has already set up a joint committee with the Ministry of External Affairs to target the scholarship programme to better sub serve our foreign policy objectives. The allocation of scholarships to different countries for a three year period has been done in consultation with the 'Policy Planning Division' of the Ministry. Besides a short term annual review of the allocation of scholarships is also undertaken to take into account the needs of the changing situation.

A large number of scholarships are given for specialisation in various aspects of Indian Culture including history, language, philosophy, dance, music, etc. The Council also has a programme for facilitating short term assignments by Indian scholars at India study centres in well-known Universities abroad.

The regular course programmes of the engineering colleges include field visits and on the job practical training. Visits to public and private

sector industrial units are also included in the study tours organised for foreign students by ICCR.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are also of the view that foreign students play an important role in projecting a holistic image of India when they return to their countries after their studies in India. Their experiences will naturally influence their preceptions. It is important, therefore, that the stay of the students here is made both comfortable and memorable. (Para. No. 5.9, Sl. No. 16).

Government's Reply

The Council is conscious of this and undertakes a number of student welfare activities such as orientation courses, field visits, summer camps and study tours with a view to ensuring that the stay of the foreign students in India is comfortable and memorable. International Students Day is organised on 11th Nov. every year on the Birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Special functions and cultural programmes are arranged through international students advisors in different universities. The Council also organises a major All India Students Cultural Festival for Friendship as part of the International Students Day celebrations.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee were informed that while it was the ICCR's endeavour to take all necessary measures within its resources to redress the problems mentioned at (i) and (ii) above, the major sociological problem of lack of interaction with the local population was beyond its capabilities, whatever small measure it might take towards its amelioration. The ICCR, for instance, organises summer camps, study tours and social get-togethers; but these by themselves are not adequate. The problem is to get the local population to understand the need to make foreign students feel at home. The Committee appreciate the nature of the problem, and feel that it was necessary to expose foreign students to a better appreciation of India's social and political culture so as to make their stay in India more useful and enjoyable. The Committee feel that organisations like the Rotary Club and Lions Clubs

etc. may be motivated to organise get-togethers for foreign students to meet the local population, as was done in the past. Visits to the Parliamentary/State Assemblies, local, urban and village bodies and informal get-togethers with the Parliamentarians, State Legislators and members of local bodies would be extremely useful in enabling the foreign students to appreciate and understand India better and would also help them in overcoming their feeling of isolation. Such measures would have a lasting impact on the students and could contribute in a substantial measure towards winning permanent friends for India. (Para No. 5.12, Sl. No. 17).

Government's Reply

To enable the students to adjust in India the Council organises special orientation courses for all its foreign scholars. The Council has recently started a newsletter for foreign students to which the students themselves contribute. The Council has also started working with the Indian Association of Experiment in International living to develop a scheme of foster families in some of the towns where foreign students are located. Visits to Parliament/State Assemblies and industrial units are included as part of the study tours organised by ICCR to expose the foreign students to our democratic institutions and industrial and scientific achievements. An effort will be made to provide exposure to local bodies as well. Efforts are also being made to involve other local organisations, such as the Rotary or Lion's club, to invite foreign scholars to their functions.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also feel that it was equally essential to ensure that contacts with foreign scholars should not be lost once they returned to their countries. Special contacts should be maintained with the more meritorious and those the Indian missions identify as occupying positions of influence. The Committee note with special satisfaction that the ICCR encourages this by providing special grants to selected Indian Missions to organise special get-togethers of the alumni of Indian universities on November 11, the birth anniversary of Maulana Azad, which is commemorated as "International Students Day". Other similar forms aimed at maintaining contact should be identified to sustain the links. (Para No. 5.13, Sl. No. 18)

Government's Reply

Efforts are made, through our missions abroad, to ensure continued contacts with foreign scholars who have studied in India under various scholarship programmes. On the occasion of the International Students Day our Missions organise special functions in which persons who have studied in India under various schemes are invited to participate.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

"The Committee was unable to visit any of the foreign countries where the Council is endeavouring to project an image of Indian culture and Indian traditions. Our appraisal of this body had per force to be based on the recital of its performance by the Secretary of the Council and by the views expressed by a few witnesses who claimed knowledge of the Council's working. And since these views were by no means unanimous, and since we are unable to make an on-the-spot study of the Council's work in foreign countries, what we say on the subject will carry very little conviction. This is an unfortunate admission to make but in the circumstances, it was not possible to conduct a more satisfying review or invest our recommendations with the same measure of conviction and confidence as have gone to shape our findings, conclusions and recommendations in respect of three National Akademies." (Para No. 5.20, Sl. No. 19).

Government's Reply

Members of the Standing Committee are always welcome to visit and study the working of the various Indian Cultural Centres abroad.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee agreed with the view of the Khosla Committee and found itself in no position to make any satisfactory or worthwhile observations and recommendations since it was unable to visit and conduct on-the-spot study of any of the twelve Centres abroad. However, the Sub-Committee was clear that such a study-visit, strongly emphasised by the Khosla Committee, should have been made. In the circumstance, the Sub-Committee felt that it could not over emphasise the need for a meaningful assessment of the working of the Cultural Centres abroad. Such a review is imperative if these Centres are to achieve the Council's avowed objectives on their limited budgets. (Para No. 5.21, Sl. No. 20).

Government's Reply

The Council continuously monitors and reviews the activities of the Indian Cultural Centres abroad with a view to make the functioning of the Centres more effective. For this purpose the Council has instituted a system of monthly reporting by the Centres on their activities. The Council is also undertaking a special review of the functioning of these Centres abroad in consultation with our Ambassadors in these countries.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee feel that the ICCR should review the various Chairs set up in different Universities abroad to assess their utility in the context of contemporary needs and complaints. It should also promote setting up of new chairs with emphasis on the study of contemporary India in selected target countries. (Para No. 5.25, Sl. No. 22).

Government's Reply

The Council has instituted a system of feed back through our missions abroad to assess the utility of the various Chairs set up in different universities abroad. The Council will gladly look into the question of setting up new Chairs, subject to availability of funds.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are of the view that the programme of exchange of performing arts groups should be commensurate with the available resources of the ICCR. Over the last few years, the ICCR, in public perception has been unwittingly identified as a kind of impresario organisation whose sole function is to arrange the exchange of cultural troupes with various countries. And in the ICCR also there has been an undue emphasis on this programme partly as a result of the various Festivals of India and partly because of the glamour aspects. Thus there is need to restore a relative balance as for the programme of exchange of performing arts. Over the last four decades or so, the ICCR has done a creditable and credible tasks of acting as an impresario group in familiarising the world with our classical and traditional performing arts. However, in the new situation which demands other priorities, the ICCR's role as an impresario group cannot be open-ended. It is therefore, time for private impresario groups to come forward and carry on this task on a commercial basis as in most parts of the world. This is, however, not to suggest that the promotion of Indian performing arts by the ICCR is to be discouraged. (Para No. 5.31, Sl. No. 23).

Government's Reply

Exchange of performing Arts groups is only a relatively small part of ICCR's work. Total expenditure on incoming and outgoing performing arts groups constitutes only about 12% of ICCR's budget. A number of private impresarios particularly in the developed countries are presenting Indian cultural programmes and artistes in these countries without financial support from the ICCR and their efforts are encouraged through our missions in these countries.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are also of the view that all exchanges must be firmly based on the principle of reciprocity. The ICCR must emphasise on its partner institutions that exchanges where the ICCR is required to have direct participation could only take place on the principle of reciprocity. There is little scope for one way traffic as has been happening in various cases. (Para No. 5.33, Sl. No. 25).

Government's Reply

In exchange of performing arts groups, to the extent possible, the principle of reciprocity is being observed.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also feel that to supplement the live performance of our artistes abroad, the ICCR should endeavour to make optimum use of the electronic media to promote our art and culture which would have a greater impact on a larger number of people and prove to be advantageous in the context of paucity of funds with the ICCR. (Para No. 5.35, Sl. No. 27)

Government's Reply

The suggestion of the Committee has been noted for guidance.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee find that various cultural troupes and delegations comprising artistes, scholars and academicians are sent by the ICCR abroad to foster better understanding and strengthen cultural relations with other countries. For this, artistes are selected and empanelled by the Advisory Committees, which are constituted in respect of various art forms. For scholars and academicians a selection committee constituted by the ICCR scrutinises papers of the applicant. Only the artistes empanelled in the ICCR's reference list receive sponsorship and assistance. (Para No. 5.45— Sl. No. 29)

Government's Reply

The observation in this paragraph accurately reflects the procedures followed by ICCR.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Further, in order to ensure that eminent personalities are not left out while others manage to go abroad quite easily and frequently, it is important that Advisory and Selection Committee are headed by

distinguished personalities in their respective fields. There should be an openness in perfection and the merit and the standing of the artistes should be given due weightage by these Committees depending upon the programme for which their selection is made. The best among the artistes, especially those who are charismatic and have capacity to communicate with the western audiences should generally be selected to represent India abroad. (Para No. 5.47, Sl. No. 31).

Government's Reply

Important personalities in the field of culture have been included in the Advisory Committee for selecting artistes/groups for sending abroad. A list of the Committee members is attached. (Annexure)

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

ANNEXURE

LIST OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR SELECTION OF ARTISTES/GROUPS GOING ABROAD

1. Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan
Vice-President, I.C.C.R.
Academic Director, IGNSA
Janpath New Delhi
2. Dr. (Smt.) Sumati Mutatkar
98, Asiad Village
Pakhtawar Singh Block
New Delhi
3. Pt. Birju Maharaj
Principal
Kathak Kendra, Mandi House
New Delhi
4. Sh. Bal Murli Krishnan
No. 2, Kanaka Sari Nagar
Cathedral Road
Madras 600 086
5. Sh. Erahim Alkazi
S-286, G.K. Part-II
New Delhi - 110 048

6. Ms. Anita Singh
Indian Music Society
H-27, Jangpura Extension
New Delhi - 110 040
7. Ms. Sai Paranjpe
204, Amber Apartments,
Gandhi Gram Road, Juhu
Bombay
8. Sh. Debu Choudhary
J-1852, Chittranjan Park
New Delhi - 110 019
9. Sh. Surinder Mathur
Secretary
Sahitya Kala Parishad
4/6B, Asaf Ali Road
New Delhi
10. Smt. Aruna Vasudev Roy
Editor
Cinemaya
B-90, Defence Colony
New Delhi
11. Sh. P.V. Subramanian
C-104, Pushpanjali
Opp. Anand Vihar
Vikas Marg
Delhi - 110 092.

Recommendation

The Committee further feel that the main thrust of the cultural representation of India abroad should be to present India's composite culture. Yet, the procedure for selection of artistes followed so far has not projected a balanced picture of our culture. For instance, West Bengal and other States of the North-East Region have so far received little representation. The Council therefore needs to adopt appropriate means to ensure that all the regions of the country get due representation and projection abroad. (Para No. 5.48, Sl. No. 32)

Government's Reply

All efforts are made to see that the cultural presentation of India abroad reflects India's composite culture and due care is taken to include groups from different parts of India. A number of groups from West Bengal and the North-East have been sponsored over the years. In the recent Festival of India in Thailand held in 1995/1996, for example, there were groups from Manipur, West Bengal and Sikkim.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Since merit and excellence in a particular field of art and communicative skills of the artiste matter a lot in the long run and pay dividends in promoting goodwill and admiration for the country only top eminent artistes or those close to the top may be considered by the ICCR to represent India abroad. It is not the legitimate task of the ICCR to groom younger artistes and help them achieve eminence. (Para No. 5.49, Sl. No. 33).

Government's Reply

For prestigious events like the Festivals of India abroad, only eminent artistes are sponsored. For other occasions ICCR sponsors artistes, representing different art forms and regions of India, from its approved reference panel drawn up by an expert group.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The ICCR should not content itself by sending prominent performing artistes abroad only. It should ensure that prominent scholars, academicians and people from other pursuits of excellence are also deputed to project Indian culture, traditions and values to foreign audiences. (Para No. 5.50, Sl. No. 34).

Government's Reply

A large number of scholars, academics and writers have been deputed or participation in conferences and for delivering lectures under the Council's outgoing visitors programme.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Complaints were received from witnesses representing national bodies such as Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama that they were not being closely and meaningfully associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR. This feeling should be removed forthwith and representatives of these eminent bodies should be invited to participate actively in the programme/activities in the ICCR and thereby enable India to put across its best cultural heritage. (Para No. 5.51, Sl No. 35)

Government's Reply

This is being done. Representatives of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Sahitya Akademi and the Lalit Kala Akademi are on the General Assembly and Governing Body of ICCR. They are also included in the Advisory Committees.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

- (i) The publication programme of the ICCR should principally have 3 target groups in mind; these are first, academics, intellectuals and opinion makers, second University Students and third, School children (and through them the family).
- (ii) The publications should be learned, objective, accurate and at the same time, should be readily understood by the general reader and should consciously avoid the language and jargon of any particular discipline. The guiding principle should be that the publications should be "acadmically inspired but meant for general audiences."
- (iii) The Council should bring out a set of publications reasonably priced on different aspects of India, including our ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. The target of such publications should be high school and university students, and this would enable a better understanding of India at an early stage and take the perception of India to

the family. Indian Scholars may be usefully associated in such a project for their involvement may contribute to the introduction of such publications in the curricula of school/universities abroad.

- (iv) The Council should consider bringing out a set of publications for school children. This needs to be carefully designed and should include work kits. Kits could be of interest to the entire family and if prepared well, they could be a source of enjoyment and learning for the entire family.
- (v) The Council should attempt periodic readership surveys of all its journals through Missions abroad so as to assess their utility readability and popularity. This would also help in setting up distribution goals.
- (vi) The ICCR may take suitable steps to devise a distribution mechanism with the help of Indian Missions/Posts abroad so that the publications produced with a lot of effort reach the target groups easily on time. (Para No. 5.58, Sl. No. 37)

Government's Reply

The comments are well conceived and have been noted for guidance.

As part of its publications programme the Council has been bringing out works on various aspects of Indian culture. This includes such classics as Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya's Handicrafts of India, BC. Deva's Music of India, Vision of India etc. This year the Council has brought out a special publication on Sanskrit literature and a book on India's Classical Dances in Spanish. It is also publishing a handy guide to books on India and a Directory of Cultural Organisations in India.

The Childrens' Book Trust and the National Book Trust bring out very good quality books for use of children at the school level. These books are being utilised by the Council for distribution abroad. The Council also has brought out a book on children's Literature in India entitled : Telling Tales.

Periodic readership surveys are being conducted. The ICCR also seeks the help of our Missions abroad in distributing the journals.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

There is an imperative need for drawing up an annual coordinated programme specifically targetted towards inviting eminent scholars, opinion makers and persons in public life, keeping in mind our central focus and thrust areas. Therefore the ICCR's Distinguished Visitor's Programme must be suitably expanded in close consultation with the MEA. Such a programme of concentrated visits combined with talks, meetings and briefings would not only help in building suitable friendships but would create greater awareness. Certainly, the cumulative effect of such a programme would be a lot more at a fraction of the cost than what might be achieved through expensive public relation agencies. This is also timely in a way. It is a sad but regrettable fact that the rank of influential India lovers, scholars and friends in many of the key countries are gradually thinning. Consequently the inputs in State policies in these countries lack the insight and perceptions of such individuals of eminence. The ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme can provide a very useful mechanism outside formal structures to build up a powerful coalition of friends. The programme allows the MEA considerable flexibility as a result of the Council's autonomous status. In short, the Council could provide a very useful conduit to conduct quiet diplomacy through people-to-people contact thus winning influential friends whose perceptions and insights could provide helpful inputs in the policies of their respective countries. (Para No. 5.61 Sl. No. 38).

Government's Reply

The Distinguished Visitors programme constitutes an important element of ICCR's activities as it enables the development of lasting contacts with key personalities and opinion makers. The number of people who can be invited, however, has to be limited because of budgetary constraints. ICCR would like to expand its Distinguished Visitors Programme substantially subject to availability of resources.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee feel that in order to make the Distinguished Visitors Programme more meaningful and useful for overall image projection, it is necessary to identify some of the main themes in which a negative image of India can be harmful to overall interests. Perceptions of India

can be changed in our favour only when the negative images and their details are identified. Further there is a need to broaden the Distinguished Visitor's Programme. besides scholars and academicians, the programme may also bring into its fold specialists, intellectuals and mediapersons. (Para No. 5.62 Sl. No. 34).

Government's Reply

The comments have been noted and this is being given due attention while implementing the Distinguished Visitors Programme.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The other group of people the Council should target are those who are potential political allies. The Council should extend this programme in consultation with the MEA and other Ministries and go beyond simple political relations into international economic relation, especially in the context of our current measures for economic liberalisation. Issues such as child labour in the carpet industry, the Narmada Valley Project and environmental issues, education and population control related programmes, AIDS awareness etc. can also be included. There is a tendency among critics of India to focus on a selected set of themes without fully comprehending the scale of issues involved. The principal objective behind such programmes should be not only to correct misconceptions, but also to focus on the magnitude of the issue confronting the Government and people of India. It would therefore, be extremely useful to include visits by journalists. A favourable report in a leading newspaper powerfully influence perceptions. (Para. No. 5.65, Sl. No. 42).

Government's Reply

Visits of foreign journalists are normally arranged by the XP Division of the Ministry. However ICCR invites a wide range of opinion makers including some journalists in order to develop a better understanding of India.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Bilateral contacts and exchanges are presently made at various levels. These are mostly at the official, diplomatic or ministerial levels.

Once in a way, these are also held at the Parliamentary level through the exchange of Parliamentary delegations. These contacts are useful in improving mutual understanding and strengthening friendly ties. But as experience shows, these by themselves are not enough. Most of these exchanges are in accordance with official briefs and guidelines which limit the scope of a free and frank people-to-people contact. Some countries have, therefore, chosen to constitute informal Parliamentary Groups on a bilateral basis for candid exchange of ideas on matters of mutual interest. The Sub-Committee feels that the ICCR should examine the feasibility of inviting the leaders/members of such informal groups to India so that the scope for people-to-people contact could be given a new and worthwhile dimension. (Para No. 5.66 Sl. No. 43).

Government's Reply

The Council's Distinguished Visitor's Programme is implemented in close coordination with our missions abroad. Opinion makers and dignitaries from different walks of public life are invited under this programme. The leaders of informal Parliamentary groups are included in this. Recent visitors have included Navin Ramgoolam, Member of the Mauritius Parliament, H E Mr. F. Kh. Mukhametshin, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan and Prof. Ilya Prigogine, Belgian Nobel prize winner.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Institutional Linkages, Seminars & Symposia

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

Sanskrit, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil etc. studies and to prepare publications in these subjects. (Para. No. 5.67 Sl. No. 44).

Government's Reply

This is being done and a number of seminars and joint colloquiums have been organized by the Council. The Council has sponsored speakers to seminars and workshops, on subject matters of interest to us organised by universities and institutes in many countries. The Council has also organised seminars in India on areas of interest to us. Recently the Council organised a major seminar on Central Asia in New Delhi and supported a seminar on Central Asian geopolitics organised by Punjab University. The Council also hosted an Indo-Thai and Indo-British colloquium this year.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

therefor be established with similar institutions in key countries. (Para No. 5.68 Sl. No. 45)

Government's Reply

This is being done. As noted by the Committee the Council had organized a major International Symposium on Indian Studies in Nov./ Dec. '94 in which leading scholars of India Studies from abroad had interacted with Indian Scholars. The proceedings of this symposium have now been brought out in the form of a special ICCR publication: The Divine Peacock and the Perennial Tree.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

It is a known fact that there has been a marked decline in interest in Indian studies in North America and Europe. This is an area where considerable work needs to be done and where economic and commercial aspects impinge on cultural interaction, each promoting the other. An important aspect would be for an organisation like the ICCR in India and similar groups in these countries to interact. As it happens, the ICCR had taken a major initiative in this regard through its "International Symposium on India Studies" in November/December 1994. During this Symposium, 30 scholars from India interacted with 30 scholars from the UK, USA, France, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Russia, Iran, Israel, Australia, Japan, China and Austria. The Symposium was aimed at (a) taking a critical review of the achievements and current work in studies relating to India in all its aspects, (b) encouraging discovery of new dimensions of Indian life and thought, and (c) attempting to suggest new directions for such studies, so that they become more comprehensive, multi-disciplinary and relevant for understanding the actualities that constitute present-day India. (Para No. 5.69 Sl. No. 46)

Government's Reply

The suggestions have been noted for guidance.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Similarly, in consultation with the MEA, carefully planned lecture series, conferences and seminars on various India-related issues,

particularly where there is a negative perception, could be organised in key countries targetting not only the media and opinion makers but a much wider spectrum in the universities, educational institutions and academia. The credentials of the ICCR as a cultural organisation of long standing provides it the flexibility of dealing with politically sensitive topics, without being branded as propagandist. (Para No. 5.70 Sl. No. 47)

Government's Reply

Such activities are already being undertaken by the Council as a part of its programme. The Ministry agrees that these activities should be expanded.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee note that the Government of India organises Festivals of India abroad in different countries with a view to presenting India through Indian eyes and upgrading the perceptions about India away from establishing stereotypes. Such festivals have been organised in 11 countries so far. The nodal agency involved in organising the festivals is the Department of Culture. The ICCR is designated to present performing arts at the festivals. These festivals are stated to be acknowledged as an outstanding success in the field of cultural instances. It has also been contended that the interest in India has noticeably gone up in countries where Festivals of India were organised. (Para No. 6.10. Sl. No. 49).

Government's Reply

The observation does not contain any recommendations and therefore, no action is required.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Apart from holding such Festivals abroad in different countries, the Government of India may also examine the feasibility of organising some sort of serially organised programmes of shorter duration and less expensive in different countries so as to arouse and sustain the interest of these countries in India's composite culture and its age-old

traditions. Much also depends upon the initiatives of Ambassadors as reflected in the successful week-long Festival of Indian Culture organised in Poland early in September, 1995. A visit by some Kathak dancers was thoughtfully developed into a festival providing both the best of Indian cuisine and films. (Para No. 6.15 Sl. No. 53)

Government's Reply

This is being done by organizing days of Indian Culture in selected countries under the bilateral cultural exchange programmes.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee feel that the ICCR must undertake an urgent review of its Regional Offices so as to assess how their overall functioning could be improved. The Council should also consider whether some of the functions like disbursement of scholarships etc. could be delegated to the Regional Offices. The Committee desire that the Regional Centres need to be activated. They should not only seek the cooperation but also consult the Cultural Departments of the State Governments concerned with a view to identifying and promoting local talent. (Para No. 7.7 Sl. No. 54)

Government's Reply

A review of the Regional Offices of ICCR with a view to further improve their functioning is being undertaken. There is already a system of periodic meetings with Regional Directors. Regional Offices already work closely with the cultural departments of the State Governments for organising cultural activities.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95—IX, Dated 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The ICCR may also examine the feasibility of setting the Heads of all the Regional Centres to meet once or twice a year to monitor and take stock of their working; periodically call for reports about their performance and seek their suggestions for improvements. The ICCR should use this exercise to remove such constraints as are faced by these Centres. (Para No. 7.8 Sl. No. 55)

Government's Reply

This is being done. The Directors of ICCR's Regional Offices are called periodically to headquarters for review meetings. Two such meetings have already been held so far this year.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee were repeatedly informed that though the ICCR is administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs yet it is an autonomous body. The autonomy of the organisation is stated to be maintained through the statutory authorities of the ICCR who direct and approve the activities of the Council. It has been contended that all activities of the ICCR are planned to meet the objectives of India's foreign policy through cultural diplomacy while maintaining its autonomous status as defined in its constitution. For this purpose, there is close coordination and ongoing consultations continue between the ICCR and the Ministry of External Affairs. (Para No. 8.17 Sl. No. 56).

Government's Reply

This observation does not contain any recommendations and, therefore, no action is required.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also note that divergent views have been expressed as to where the ICCR should actually belong. The Ashoka Mehta Committee as well as the MEA have contended that since the role of the ICCR is basically to complement the activities of the MEA in projecting India's policies, concerns and perceptions abroad in keeping with our foreign policy objectives, the ICCR should rightly be administratively attached to the MEA. The Department of Culture has however contended that under the Rules of Business, the subject of international cultural relations is allotted to the Department of Culture; thus there cannot be one Department to formulate a national cultural policy and another agency under another Ministry to take care of International Cultural Relations. Therefore, the ICCR should be attached to the Department of Culture. (Para No. 8.18 Sl. No. 57).

Government's Reply

The observation does not contain any recommendations and, therefore, no action is required.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

(Para No. 8.19 Sl. No. 58).

Government's Reply

The Ministry agrees with the Committee's observations on the role that the Council is expected to play in furtherance of our foreign policy objectives and need for it to work in tandem with the Ministry of External Affairs.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

In this context, the Committee also considered the question whether the ICCR should be the nodal agency for all international cultural exchanges. They felt that any such role would constrain the ICCR from pursuing effectively the objective for which it was specifically setup. It must have adequate flexibility to deal with the dynamics of international relations rather than have fixed role. (Para No. 8.20 Sl. No. 59).

Government's Reply

The present structure and role of ICCR give it the necessary flexibility to deal with the dynamics of international relations. However, the Ministry feels that there may also be advantages in having ICCR as the nodal agency for all cultural exchanges with other countries as this may ensure more effective coordination and implementation.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

At the same time, the Committee are of the view that the ICCR must have real functional autonomy for good, obvious reasons. If the ICCR is really autonomous in its functioning, then its status may provide a great deal of flexibility in the pursuit of its objectives and at the same time confer on it greater credibility without being branded as propagandist. (Para No. 8.21 Sl. No. 60).

Government's Reply

As stated earlier the ICCR functions autonomously within the framework of its own organizational structure.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are informed that 29 missions and 5 posts have officers doing only information and cultural work whereas 72 missions and 11 posts have officers performing other work assignments including information and culture. The Committee are constrained to note that there were only five or six Missions which have Cultural Attaches though the guidelines/instructions are stated to have been issued by the Ministry to all the Heads of Missions/Posts to designate an officer

to look after cultural work. The Committee would like to be informed whether all the missions/posts have designated one official specifically dealing with cultural matters. (Para No. 9.6 Sl. No. 63).

Government's Reply

The Ministry attaches high importance to cultural work and has, from time to time, emphasised the need for our missions to give due importance to cultural work. However on account of resource constraints, for the foreseeable future, it may not possible to have separate cultural attaches in each of our Missions. In most of the Missions the persons assigned to look after cultural work will also have to look after Press and Information and other work as the need arises.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Keeping in view the importance attached to cultural diplomacy, the officer dealing with cultural matters in the mission/post should have adequate knowledge and a knack for Indian history, art and culture. He should be in a position to truly convey India's cultural richness. To cultivate these essential pre-requisites, the Committee feel that the training provided to the officers working as Cultural Attaches is quite inadequate as it is only an orientation programme organised during the initial period when they join the Foreign Service. The Committee, therefore, consider it imperative that a specially designed training course should be organised exclusively for these officers. At the start of his or her posting, each officer should be enabled to brush up on different subjects such as Indian philosophy literature, dance, music and visual art. (Para No. 9.7 Sl. No. 64).

Government's Reply

Due attention is paid to the cultural aspects of India in the training course designed by the Foreign Service institute for the new entrants in the service. A special attachment with ICCR is arranged for Cultural Attaches before their posting abroad.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee feel that the ICCR should strive for a more cohesive and purposeful interaction among Indian artistes and foreign artistes which will prove beneficial in enriching and strengthening inter-cultural and intra-cultural appreciation, evolution and absorption of styles, themes and artforms, where ever found fesible/worthwhile. Besides, the ICCR should consider utilising the presence of local cultural associations formed by the persons of Indian origin and the Indian artistes on foreign soil to organise programmes through Indian Embassies and Missions so that there is more exposure of Indian artforms abroad. To facilitate interaction between the artistes, our Missions should initiate in organising get-togethers, talks and receptions for them and provide them adequate opportunities to interact with local artistes and impresarios. (Para No. 9.8 Sl. No. 65).

Government's Reply

The recommendations have been noted. The visits of senior Indian performing artistes abroad are utilised for arranging workshops and interaction with leading local artistes. Our missions also try to associate local organisations of Indian origin as far as possible for cultural activities.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The ICCR ought to work out a system where all the artistes—small or eminent—on their visits abroad, whether sponsored by the ICCR or on a private visit, are extended minimum courtesies by our Missions abroad so that they are not only shown respect by the local people but their presence is gainfully utilised. Similarly when foreign artistes visit India and programmes/receptions are arranged, suitable steps ought to be taken to ensure the presence of our senior eminent artistes in those programmes. Apart from extending due courtesies befitting their status, they should be properly introduced to the visiting artistes. This would reflect positively on the cultural organisations sponsoring the show and convey the right impression in the minds of the foreign artistes about the respect and regard shown to our artistes and culture in the country. (Para No. 9.9 Sl. No. 66).

Government's Reply

This is being done. All artistes sponsored by ICCR are extended due courtesies by our Missions abroad. When ICCR is kept informed of private tours by established and eminent artistes, the Council requests our missions to extend due courtesies and assistance and, if possible, try to arrange additional performances/lectures or workshops. However, this may not always be possible in the case of less well-known artistes.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee would like to mention that the visiting foreign artistes receive due attention and courtesy from us. But the same is not always true abroad. The ICCR should, therefore, ensure together with the Missions/Posts abroad, that there is a suitable reciprocity in the cultural exchange programmes from the countries whenever our artistes and scholars visit them. (Para No. 9.10 Sl. No. 67).

Government's Reply

Efforts are made through our Missions/Posts abroad to ensure that our visiting artistes and scholars are extended due courtesies and hospitality on the basis of reciprocity.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Missions/Posts abroad should also be instructed to motivate the persons of Indian origin abroad to actively participate in the programmes of the ICCR and to promote Indian cultural activities. It is unfortunate that the ICCR/Missions/Posts have not exploited persons of Indian origin adequately for promoting India's best national interests. (Para No. 9.11 Sl. No. 68).

Government's Reply

This is being done. Indian Cultural Centres and Missions/Posts abroad make efforts to secure active participation of people of Indian origin settled abroad in cultural activities organized by them.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are pleased to learn that a bibliography of Maulana Azad's marginal notings in his personal collection of books is being prepared by the ICCR and is proposed to be published. These marginal notings, covering various fields of religion, history, art and culture, would be of tremendous importance. These notes together with the Centenary volume entitled "India's Maulana" should be sent to all important libraries, universities, interested individuals, journalists etc of various countries of the world. Also, sufficient number of copies thereof should be made available to Missions/Posts abroad to enable them to distribute in their respective countries so as to make an everlasting impact on the people by the Maulana and his views, vision and foresight. (Para No. 10.6 Sl. No. 69).

Government's Reply

The comment has been noted for guidance. Copies of "India's Maulana" have already been sent to our Missions for local distribution to universities and important personalities.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee consider the organising of annual Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture, where eminent people speak on a wide range of subjects, a befitting tribute to the great Maulana Azad. They, however, feel that the standard of this programme should be maintained high by inviting famous and eminent writers, scholars and philosophers from India and abroad. (Para No. 10.7 Sl. No. 70).

Government's Reply

All efforts are being made to ensure the highest possible standard for the Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture by inviting persons of eminence to deliver the lecture.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also feel the need to redefine more clearly the object and role of the External Publicity Division of the Ministry of External Affairs in promoting India's cultural image abroad. The Committee consider the External Publicity Division, to be the primary

instrument in conjunction with the Information wing of our Missions/ Posts abroad for projecting the official views of the Government of India on international affairs or on bilateral matters of direct concern to the country. This role is distinct from that of the ICCR which is intended to promote Indian culture in foreign countries. External Publicity has to be more issue-oriented, diplomatically precise and correct while cultural promotion may adopt a more generalised and broad approach and idiom. No doubt both in the field of information and culture, the same section and perhaps the same officer are involved, namely the Press Attache and Information Section. But at the base in Delhi, cultural work should be transferred to the ICCR, including publication of periodicals and non-periodical material of general interest, production and supply of films, video tapes and audio tapes as well as books of general interest for foreign audiences and targets. In brief, the External Publicity Division should concentrate on and specialise in Information, while the ICCR should take up Culture. Such clear bifurcation would have the merit of eliminating duplication and overlap as well as smoothen the flow of material from other Ministries and Departments involved, which are canalised through the ICCR. The Committee also suggest that the diplomatic officer in charge of information should be redesignated as First Secretary or Second Secretary or Attache (Information and Culture), as the case may be, in most Missions/Posts which do not have a separate Cultural Wing or Section. (Para No. 9.12 Sl. No. 71).

Government's Reply

The Valuable observations of the Committee will be kept in mind. It would be appreciated that ICCR does not have a presence in all of the countries with which we have diplomatic relations. A good deal of cultural work will perforce have to be done by those whose main function may be in the information and publicity fields. The missions bring out periodicals basically directed at local audiences in local languages. ICCR would not have the facilities to get them printed at headquarters. However, the suggestion that ICCR should be the major agency for the production and distribution of printed literature, films and tapes will be explored. So also the observations regarding nomenclature of officials.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

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

These are :

- (i) The momentous and dramatic transformation in regional and global alignments among nations which require effective and immediate responses;
- (ii) The imperative need to project a holistic image of a vibrant, dynamic India not only to assist in the better perception of India among a larger cross-section of people in the world but also, to correct concerted attempts at image distortion by certain vested interests and countries; and
- (iii) The budgetary constraints under which the Council perforce has to operate because of the general constraints on resources necessitates that the Council identify and concentrate on activities most likely to give it maximum mileage. (Para No. 11.1, Sl. No. 72)

Government's Reply

The comments have been noted and are being given due attention while drawing up the Council's programmes & activities.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July. 1996]

Recommendation

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

abroad and would contribute greatly towards winning friends for India. (Para No. 11.2, Sl. No. 73)

Government's Reply

The Ministry values the attention given by the Committee to the functioning of the ICCR. It agrees with the view that ICCR should work and develop on sound professional lines, with a focussed agenda so as to reflect India's concerns and priorities and contribute towards winning friends for India.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee has noted with interest some of the steps the two former Directors-General initiated during the past three years to restructure the ICCR's activities, introduce professionalism in its functioning and to make it more relevant to contemporary needs. It has also noted with considerable interest the various steps the latter Director-General took to implement some of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee. Much more, however, remains to be done to revamp and reorient the Council's functioning in keeping with the changed and changing circumstances in world politics and the new role which India must progressively play in the new emerging world order. (Para No. 11.3, Sl. No. 74)

Government's Reply

As appreciated by the Standing Committee the ICCR has already shifted the focus of its activities in recent years. The Council will continue to endeavour to improve its working so that it can play an effective role in promoting India's interests (abroad) in a changing world.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

CHAPTER III

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

Recommendation

The Committee observe that most of the officers posted as Director-Generals of the ICCR were unable to do full justice to their assignments because of inadequate tenures. In some cases, they did not have enough time to fully understand the nature and scope of their work and bring about marked improvement in the working of the ICCR. Shri Niranjana Desai, for instance, was Director-General from 30.11.92 to 1.7.94 and Shri S.S. Mukherjee from 1.7.94 to 30.9.95 only. The Committee therefore, strongly feel that the post of Director-General of the ICCR should not be treated casually and should be given due importance in the scheme of things. Those appointed Director-General should be normally assured a minimum tenure of 3 years. In special cases, the tenure may even be extended to 5 or 6 years. Apart from affording the officer adequate opportunity to understand, plan and implement his plans and ideas, it would also enable him to function as a think tank and suggest ways and means to make the ICCR a more effective instrument of India's cultural diplomacy. Likewise, the posts of the two Deputy Director-Generals should be for normally assured tenures of at least 3 years. (Para No. 3.15, Sl. No. 11)

Government's Reply

Barring exceptional circumstances, the average tenure of the Director General has been from two to four years. In some cases, the Director General has served for a much longer time whereas in a few cases the terms have been shorter. The third Director General, for example, served for 19 years.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee were given to understand that presently the Indian Cultural Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal, known as the Nepal

Bharat Sanskritik Kendra, which is serving as a major instrument in India's public relations exercise in Nepal, does not have adequate infrastructure and facilities. It is located in the premises of the Royal Nepal Airline Corporation (RNAC) under a lease due to be over by January 1, 1997. The sub-Committee feel that keeping in view the importance of India in Nepal and the necessity for an institutionalised and organised window for Indo-Nepalese cultural interaction, it is imperative to have a properly-equipped full-fledged Cultural Centre in Kathmandu. The Sub-Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR should take suitable steps in this regard. In fact, the Sub-Committee firmly feels that the ICCR should also consider the need for Cultural Centres in all the SAARC countries for closer cultural interaction in the region and strengthening mutual understanding. (Para No. 5.22 Sl. No. 21).

Government's Reply

Presently ICCR does not have a Cultural Centre in any of the SAARC countries. The Nepal Bharat Sanskritik Kendra basically is a library in a rented building. Opening of Cultural Centres in the SAARC countries would be desirable and can be considered subject to availability of funds and depending on the prevailing situation in these countries. ICCR, however, gives a special focus to SAARC in its scholarship scheme with the majority of scholarships earmarked for students from the South Asian countries. ICCR also supports the cultural exchanges initiated under the SAARC programme.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

In order to get the maximum mileage in terms of its expenditure, the ICCR should also consider interacting with cultural institutions and professional and commercial impresario organizations abroad. This would require planning for two to three years in advance. But such arrangements would ensure presentation in the right kind of auditoria in major cities which are associated with quality performance with a regular clientele of cognoscenti and proper publicity and coverage by leading critics in the media. This would ensure that the impact of the performance was more serious in nature and one which would eventually bring the Indian performing arts into the mainstream network. (Para No. 5.32 Sl. No. 24).

Government's Reply

ICCR selectively supports the activities of reputed and well established private cultural institutions and impresario organisations abroad, particularly for well known events. In the foreseeable future, however, it is difficult to see this work being done entirely by private organisations, particularly in developing countries where such organisations are not well developed.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

With regard to the CEPs, the Sub-Committee further feels that India is hosting far too many performing art troupes from foreign countries without corresponding obligations on the part of those countries to host such troupe from India. The Committee also feel that while the ICCR spends considerable amount in organizing foreign tours by India's best artistes of proven calibre it must be ensured that they are treated by the local organisers with dignity and courtesy. The ICCR must see that the quality of facilities and technical paraphernalia being provided to our artistes is upgraded to a satisfactory level. The Committee recommend that Cultural Exchange programmes should provide for some sort of a diplomatic understanding within the Governments in terms of a quid pro quo so that terms could be negotiated with regard to reciprocal facilities to be given to the artistes. (Para No. 5.34 Sl. No. 26)

Government's Reply

There is a fair balance between the number of performing groups hosted by the Council and the number of groups set abroad. During Financial year 95-96, the Council sponsored 41 cultural troupes for performances abroad and hosted 32 incoming cultural troupes. In addition 12 cultural troupes were sent out for the Festival of India in Thailand.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Although as per the rules an artiste is not sponsored/assisted on more than one occasion within a period of 3 year, yet 38 artistes/groups were sponsored on more than one occasion within a period of

3 years during the last 5 years. Repeated violation of the rules in this regard only reconfirm the charges of unfair selection procedure voiced by some of the artistes who appeared before the Sub-Committee (Para No. 5.46 Sl. No. 30)

Government's Reply

The three year rule does not apply to artistes being sponsored to neighbouring countries for Republic Day/Independence Day celebrations or to artistes being sponsored for Festivals of India abroad which are approved by a Committee headed by the Minister of HRD and are funded from Deptt. of Culture's budget. Practically all the 38 artistes/groups referred to in the report fall under these categories.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee are of the clear view that the ICCR's main task is to project India's rich cultural heritage abroad. It should, therefore not be spending its time, money and energy in organising Indian performing arts events within India. Any such exercise would be only duplicating what other institutions are legitimately required to do. (Para No. 5.54 Sl. No. 36).

Government's Reply

Arranging programmes of Indian artistes in India does not constitute a major activity of ICCR. It is, however, felt that it is necessary to arrange some performances from time to time to keep up with the work of different artistes and art forms. Such performances are arranged mainly at ICCR's auditorium and do not entail much expenditure. They also help foreign students and diplomats to become acquainted with our art.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

It is therefore essential that the MEA identified the main themes where an effective projection of Indian is required, those where there has been an orchestrated negative portrayal (and hence, requires correction). Similarly, it is important to identify those countries/regions where such distortions have received widespread publicity, and hence,

possibly acceptance. It would also be useful to identify key persons who have been influenced by this negative campaigning. Even bitter critics should be identified in this regard to enable a pragmatic assessment of how deep-rooted and widespread the negative image of India is. Similarly, it would be equally important to identify influential persons who are inclined to be supportive of India generally. Such an exercise would have to be carried out jointly between the MEA and the ICCR. Once this is done, the ICCR would be in a position to re-orient its Distinguished Visitors Programme and target persons and through them groups and institutions through quiet diplomacy aimed at improving perceptions, removing distortions and knowing India better. Only then will the image of India abroad undergo a radical transformation and receptivity to India and Indian things increase. In other words, we can effectively assist opinion makers, academics, and such identified target groups in "Knowing India" better only when we ourselves can identify in the first instance areas where image perceptions need to be corrected and improved. (Para No. 5.63 Sl. No. 40).

Government's Reply

The guests under the Council's Distinguished Visitor's Programme are invited in close consultation with our Missions abroad and the Ministry of External Affairs.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Additionally, it is important to identify those who can turn out to be an investment in the long term. This latter category includes children and young persons who have some links with India. There are, for instance, a very large number of Indian children who have been adopted by European and American families. Studies have demonstrated that such children are keen to retrace and maintain their roots and, more importantly, that they tend to adopt strong anti-root attitude in case their overtures are not met with a warm response. Some adopted children are known to have saved money for years to pay for a ticket to India. The majority of foster parents in Europe and America are known to encourage links of their adopted children with their mother country. The Council can, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, organise package know-India programmes for such families. If the programme is for the entire family, the correcting of

misperceptions of India is likely to be sustainable. Such programmes should, as far as possible, associate the tourism industry and the media, and package a glimpse of India in its totality. Such experiences will not be short-lived and would contribute towards the creation of a lobby for India, not only among these children but also their parents. (Para No. 5.64 Sl. No. 41).

Government's Reply

It is for the Department of Tourism to develop special package tours aimed at Non-resident Indians and foster parents who have adopted Indian children. The Council will be happy to associate itself with cultural programmes aimed at exposing the target group to Indian culture.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

In view of the substantial expenditure being incurred on these festivals and the views expressed by some eminent artistes/critics regarding their effectiveness, the Committee feel that there is need to constantly monitor/assess the impact created by these festivals in enhancing mutual understanding and good relations with these countries. (Para No. 6.12 Sl. No. 51).

Government's Reply

The Ministry fully agrees with the observation of the Committee.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee feel there is also need to take a fresh look at the organising of the festivals. For each festival, there should be a National Organising Committee, set up by the Governing Body of the ICCR, over which the Vice-President of India presides. The National Organising Committee should have representatives from various Ministries, institutions and States. There should also be Specialised Working Committee under the National Organising Committee to ensure effective and meaningful implementation. Every festival should normally have a specific theme and a specific targetted audience in accordance with the changing perceptions of the country in which the

festival is held. Of late the festivals have tended to be organised somewhat mechanically and according to one expert, have become "glorified version of the Cultural Exchange Programme." The Committee feel that efforts should be made to involve local endowments, foundations and corporate sponsorship in the financing of such festivals, since this would ensure greater success of the exercise in projecting India abroad. (Para No. 6.13 Sl. No. 52).

Government's Reply

Festivals of India have so far been organised in countries which are important to us economically/politically or strategically. A Committee headed by the Ministry of HRD examines and finalises the concept and components of the Festivals of India abroad. In the case of several Festivals held in the past, such as the Festivals of India in the USA and Japan, sponsorship was obtained from local endowments, foundations and corporations.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also took a look at the Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP) which India has signed with about 65 countries. The Committee feel that it may be necessary to have a serious look at the CEP's which, it was informed, are today a long and detailed list of activities and regrettably with little, if any implementation. The CEP's need to reflect our foreign policy, priorities and concerns. The cataclysmic changes the world over suggest that there should be a de-emphasis of cultural exchanges which reflects a bias towards traditional interpretation and stereotypes of culture. A linkage with foreign policy interests and concerns will give the cultural exchanges the personality that distinguishes relations between countries. Today, the CEP's are not distinctive. The CEP with Germany is much the same as the CEP with Uganda. This makes the entire exercise mechanical and devoid of substance. Bilateral relations between nationals need therefore to be reflected in the CEP. Furthermore, only those activities should be taken on board which can be implemented in the prescribed time-frame. This can be done only if each CEP is drafted keeping in mind the current state of bilateral relations and further projections for the future. (Para No. 8.22 Sl. No. 61).

Government's Reply

We understand that the Department of Culture has set-up a group to review and assess the Cultural Exchange Programmes with various countries.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

A major part of the ICCR's working is its dependence on networking only through our Embassies and Missions abroad. Culture is one area in which India has a unique contribution to make to the world. Our Missions abroad should therefore be more alert and sensitive to seeking such opportunities as would give them a foothold in this area. This would have a definite fallout for India in terms of greater goodwill and understanding of its problems. (Para No. 9.5 Sl. No. 62).

Government's Reply

Projection of Indian Culture abroad is an important aspect of our diplomacy. The Ministry has from time to time emphasised to our missions the need to be alert and sensitive to seeking opportunities for cultural projection.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

CHAPTER IV

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

Recommendation

The Committee note the stand of the Ministry of External Affairs that the ICCR is autonomous and is only administratively attached to it. Yet, it is surprised to find that the Annual Report of the Ministry presented to Parliament includes a chapter on the work of the ICCR. It is equally surprised to note that the Director General of the ICCR is designated *ex-officio* head of the Ministry's Cultural Division. Both seem to be incongruous in the context of the Ministry's claim that the Council is autonomous. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR should prepare its own Annual Report and that the same be presented to Parliament and appropriately considered by the Parliament's Standing Committee on External Affairs and the two Houses. (Para No. 2.10 Sl. No. 1)

Government's Reply

Following the normal practice where annual reports of such autonomous organisations are presented to the Parliament as part of the annual report of the administrative Ministry concerned, the ICCR's Annual Report forms part of the Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs. The input for this is provided by the ICCR.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee therefore feel that there is urgent need to examine in depth how the ICCR could be reoriented and given real autonomy to enable it to function effectively in response to the changing needs and priorities of our national objectives. This essentially means that the ICCR's activities and mandate should adapt to the new demands in the conduct of our cultural diplomacy. Basically, the ICCR should function as a nodal agency to enable it to project more effectively an integrated and unified image of India's personality, perceptions and

concerns abroad. That would, among other things, entail a subtle but meaningful shift in its methodology. The ICCR must gradually de-emphasise some of the very general cultural programmes which have generated over the years little else beyond passing goodwill. (Para No. 2.11 Sl. No. 2).

Government's Reply

ICCR functions autonomously within the framework of its own organizational structure. Decisions with regard to ICCR's programme of activities and its budget allocations under different heads are approved by the Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Governing Body of ICCR. The ICCR constantly undertakes to improve its working in order to enhance the usefulness of its outlays. In the BE for 1996-97 the allocation for incoming and outgoing cultural delegations accounts for only about 12% of the total budget. Around 36% of ICCR's resources go towards the scholarship schemes for Foreign students. Maintenance of cultural Centres and Chairs Abroad account for another 35% approximately.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

Keeping in view the need for a reorientation of the ICCR's role in the changed international context, the Committee feel it is time to review the Council's existing organisational set up and functioning including the selection of its President, the choice and tenure of the Director-General and the composition of the General Assembly and other bodies. (Para No. 3.7 Sl. No. 3).

Government's Reply

The Ministry has closely examined the existing organisational set up and functioning of ICCR and feels that this set up is the best available for the Council to discharge the objectives for which it was set up.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee considered the question whether the ICCR should continue to be under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs or revert to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

now called the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Culture) in the light of suggestions and comments made by witnesses. It is of the considered view that the ICCR may continue to be under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs since Indian Missions/Posts abroad have to play a crucial role in continuously assisting the ICCR in conducting its cultural diplomacy. At the same time, the Committee strongly feel that the Council should be accorded real autonomy, which should among other things entitle it to present its own report to the Parliament. In such a set up, the Director-General should continue to be from the Ministry of External Affairs but should be upgraded to the rank of Additional Secretary. There should be two Deputy Director Generals, one from the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the other from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure functional coordination between the three main Ministries actively involved. Both the Deputy Director Generals should be of the rank of Joint Secretary. Simultaneously, the permanent staff should be provided much needed motivation and incentives to serve the ICCR and its mission to the best of their ability. Good work and welcome initiatives should be rewarded by ways of promotions to Senior Administrative levels of the headquarters and posting abroad. (Para No. 3.10 Sl. No. 6).

Government's Reply

The Ministry agrees with the recommendation of the Committee that it is functionally necessary for ICCR to continue to be under the Administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs, so that the continuous involvement of the missions in cultural diplomacy is ensured and further strengthened. The Ministry also feels that the existing set up and procedures of ICCR already provide for the autonomy necessary for ICCR to undertake its own programmes and fulfil the objectives for which it was set up.

Since 1974 DG, ICCR has been a Joint Secretary rank officer from MEA. This level has been found appropriate for the post of DG, ICCR and the Ministry feels that there is no need to upgrade the post. Similarly the posts of Deputy Director General should be maintained at the present level. Mechanisms for coordination with Department of Culture and Ministry of I&B already exist. Secretary (Culture) and Secretary (I & B) are members of the General Assembly of ICCR. Secretary (Culture) is also on the Planning Committee and Governing

Body of ICCR. From the functional point of view it would be desirable to continue with the present system where two Deputy Director Generals are Director level officers from the Ministry of External Affairs, since their work involves continuous interaction with our Missions abroad and with Diplomatic Missions in India.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Constitution of the ICCR provides that the Director-General, who is the Principal Executive Officer of the Council, shall be appointed by the President of the Council, with the approval of the Governing Body. The Committee felt that the Ministry of External Affairs should be required to submit a panel of three names to the President of the Council for the appointment of a new Director-General. Likewise, the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting should submit a panel of three names each to the Director-General for the appointment of the two Deputy Directors-General proposed by the Committee with the approval of the President of the Council. (Para No. 3.11 Sl. No. 7).

Government's Reply

For the selection of the post of DG, ICCR, the Ministry has no objection to submitting a panel of three names to President, ICCR. The Ministry also has no objection to submitting a panel of three names for the posts of Deputy Directors General but, for the reasons outlined above, the Ministry does not perceive any advantage in inducting Deputy Directors General from other Ministries.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

The Committee also favour some changes in the organisational set up and functioning of the ICCR. The General Assembly should meet at least twice every year, not annually. Also, instead of 15 representatives from the educational institutions in its composition, it should have 10 representatives from the educational institutions and 5 from the print and electronic media. Worthwhile representation should also be given to the Private Sector to involve it meaningfully in the work of the Council. On the basis of past experience, only such persons

should be nominated as can spare sufficient time to contribute significantly to its deliberations. Further Clause 7 (vi) of the Constitution should be revised to provide that nine members to be elected to the Governing Body by the General Assembly from amongst its members should belong to various categories of whom at least one should be from the media. The Governing Body should meet at least once every quarter. (Para No. 3.12 Sl. No. 8).

Government's Reply

Art (4) of the Constitution of ICCR lays down in detail the composition of the General Assembly and the GA is constituted accordingly. The private sector and the media are already represented in the Governing Body and the General Assembly. At present there are 4 representatives from the media and 3 representatives from the private sector on the General Assembly. Also on the Governing Body there are 2 representatives from the print and electronic media and one representative from the private sector. As per the Constitution of the Council (Art 6) the General Assembly should meet at least once every year which has been found adequate. The Governing Body, which is itself fairly large, meets at least twice every year and can meet more often if necessary. The views of the Standing Committee will be placed before the Governing Body and General Assembly.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

With the emergence of satellite television and other forms of electronic media new and powerful avenues are now available for presenting Indian Culture abroad. Effective steps should, therefore, be taken to make maximum use of the means provided by the electronic media. For example the ICCR should enter into arrangements with the Doordarshan which today has its foot-prints in many neighbouring countries away from the borders of India. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting should explore the possibility of entering into arrangements with electronic media abroad such as INTERNET for projecting India's cultural image to audiences in other countries. The ICCR should set up a special committee of people in the field of electronic communication as well as scholars and artists to go into the matter. It should also produce floppies on different aspects of the Indian culture for projection abroad through the electronic media. (Para No. 5.36 Sl. No. 28).

Government's Reply

The ICCR will support the promotion of Indian Culture abroad through the electronic media. However the electronic media decide their own programmes independently. The Council has initiated discussions with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Doordarshan on the utilisation of the electronic media for promotion of Indian Culture abroad.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated 15th July 1996]

Recommendation

On the basis of evidence available, the Committee are of the view that the travel grants programme is administered on an *ad hoc* basis without relevance to the above guidelines. There is also a great element of patronage in the programme. For instance, in one case the Committee found that 2 travel grants were approved for two round-the-world tickets for very vague programme of lectures in total violation of the guidelines approved. According to the latest annual report of the ICCR (April 1994—march 1995), one journalist representing a Calcutta daily was sent to Egypt in November 1994 to "attend" the Cairo International Film Festival and a free-lance journalist of Bombay was sent to France in January 1995 to participate in the 7th Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival at Paris. In another case, seven persons, including two journalists from New Delhi, a photo journalist from Lucknow and a well-known artist from New Delhi, were sent to Thailand in December 1994 to attend the 11th International Ramayana Conference in Bangkok. Reputed Ramayana Scholars were overlooked and ignored. In another case, a well-connected publisher was sent to Kazakhstan for a week in February 1995 for collecting "material to publish biographies of the Presidents of these countries". No wonder, therefore, that the ICCR is sometimes dubbed as a travel agency since over the years it has provided travel grants to various persons without even assessing their utility to the Council. The Committee therefore recommended that the Council should at the earliest reassess the utility of its travel grants scheme so that it is restricted to only those persons who are categorically identified in keeping with the Council's restructured basis. Moreover, the Council must institute proper procedures to make the scheme as transparent as possible and leave no scope for controversy and condemnation. (Para No. 5.73 SL No. 48).

Government's Reply

The Council has a programme of travel grants under which scholars, intellectuals, academics, and artists etc. are assisted to participate in seminars symposia, study tours, lecture tours, performance tours and exhibitions abroad. The Council has framed guidelines to ensure that the travel grant programme is administered in an objective and institutionalised manner.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

Recommendation

All expenditure on Festivals in India and abroad is borne on the Festival Budget of the Department of Culture. The information regarding the total expenditure incurred on the festivals held so far by all the concerned agencies together has not been furnished to the Sub-Committee. Only the figures of expenditure incurred by the Department of Culture and the ICCR for events assigned to the ICCR has been given. According to these figures the expenditure on outgoing Festivals/days of Indian culture was Rs. 8.58 crores and on incoming Festivals/Days of culture was Rs. 7.26 crores. In the absence of figures for total expenditure on the festivals, it is difficult to come to any conclusion about the total amount of money and resources put in to achieve the success of such endeavours as indicated by the Ministry. (Para No. 6.11 Sl. No. 50).

Government's Reply

The budget for Festivals of India abroad is provided by the Department of Culture to various implementing agencies. The information on total expenditure on Festivals of India abroad can only be collected through the Department of Culture.

[MEA O.M. No. AA/125/Parl./7/95-IX Dated: 15th July, 1996]

CHAPTER V

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

—NIL—

NEW DELHI;
April 4, 1997

Chaitra 14, 1919 (Saka)

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

APPENDIX I

MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 31 MARCH, 1997

The Committee sat from 1200 hrs. to 1245 hrs.

PRESENT

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee — *Chairman*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Manabendra Shah
3. Col. Rao Ram Singh
4. Dr. Gunawant Sarode
5. Shri Vijay A. Mude
6. Shri Bijoy K. Handique
7. Smt. Meira Kumar
8. Begum Noorbano
9. Dr. Hari Singh
10. Shri Anil Kumar Yadav
11. Shri Rupchand Pal
12. Shri George Fernandes
13. Shri Pramotes Mukherjee
14. Shri G.G. Swell

Rajya Sabha

15. Smt. Chandresh Kumari
16. Smt. Vyjayantimala Bali
17. Shri V.N. Gadgil
18. Shri Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi

19. Shri Sikander Bakht
20. Shri Triloki Nath Chaturvedi
21. Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra
22. Shri M.A. Baby

SECRETARIAT

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Ashok Kumar Pandey— | <i>Additional Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri V.N. Gaur — | <i>Director</i> |
| 3. Shri Ashok Sarin — | <i>Deputy Secretary</i> |
| 4. Shri R.K. Saxena — | <i>Under Secretary</i> |

At the outset the Chairman welcomed the members to the sitting of the Committee. The Committee then took up for consideration the following draft Report :

** ** ** ** **

2nd Report on Action Taken on the recommendations contained in the 9th Report (10th Lok Sabha) on Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

2. The Chairman invited Members to offer their comments/ suggestions on the draft Report. The Members made certain suggestions and desired that those might be suitably incorporated into the body of the Report.

3. The draft Action Taken Report was then adopted.

4. The Committee authorised the Chairman to finalise the Action Taken Report for presentation to the House.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Introduction of Report)

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON THE 9TH REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (10TH LOK SABHA)

- I. Total Number of Recommendations 74
- II. Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by Government
- Sl. Nos. 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73 and 74.
- Total : 53
- Percentage : 71.62%
- III. Observations/Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies:
- Sl. Nos. 11, 21, 24, 26, 30, 36, 40, 41, 51, 52, 61 and 62
- Total : 12
- Percentage : 16.21%
- IV. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which replies of Government have not been accepted and which require reiteration:
- Sl. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 28, 48 and 50.
- Total : 9
- Percentage : 12.16%
- V. Observations/Recommendations in respect of which final replies of Government are still awaited:

NIL

APPENDIX III

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry	Observations/Recommendations
1	2	3	4
1.	6	External Affairs	The Ministry have claimed that the ICCR functions autonomously within the framework of its own organisational structure since its decisions are approved by its own Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Governing Body of ICCR. However, the reply of the Ministry is not convincing enough to justify that ICCR enjoys real functional autonomy in view of the fact that its Director General is designated as <i>ex-officio</i> head of the Ministry's Cultural Division and secondly, it does not prepare and present its own Annual Report to the Parliament. The Committee feel that ICCR must have real functional autonomy as its status then can provide a great deal of flexibility in pursuit of its objectives and at the same time confer on it greater credibility without being branded as propagandist. With its autonomous status, it can deal with, for instance, a large

1

2

3

4

number of individuals/institutions who would otherwise shy away from being involved directly with a Government Ministry/Department. Further, in developed countries cultural inter-action with foreign countries is taking place more and more through autonomous institutional linkages. Thus, it is absolutely necessary that the ICCR is reoriented and given real autonomy. For this, apart from bringing about organisational changes (as discussed later in the Report), the ICCR ought to prepare a separate Annual Report of its activities and present the same to the Parliament.

The Committee have, however, been given the impression that the practice being followed by the ICCR in regard to preparation of its Annual Report does not require rethinking. The Ministry have stated that the ICCR follows the normal practice of providing inputs for inclusion in the Annual Report of the Ministry concerned i.e. the Ministry of External Affairs, since annual reports of autonomous organisations are presented to the Parliament as part of the annual report of the

1

2

3

4

administrative ministry concerned. The Committee are constrained to note that the Ministry of External Affairs have merely cited the existing practice of ICCR's Annual Report forming a part of their own Annual Report, a practice which the Committee would like to be dispensed with. In this connection, the Committee would like to refer to Para 1.12 of the Second Report of the Committee on Papers laid on the Table of the Sixth Lok Sabha, which mentioned :

".....all Statutory/Autonomous organisations, Public Undertakings, Corporations, Joint ventures, Societies etc., which are financed out of funds drawn from the Consolidated Fund of India, after being voted by the Parliament, in the form of shares, subsidies, grants-in-aid etc., either wholly or partly should lay their Annual Reports/Audit Reports (both English and Hindi versions)."

Para 1.14 of the same Report further mentioned as under :

"The Committee further recommend that Government might consider the feasibility of amending , where necessary, the relevant statutes/Rules/Regulations of such

1

2

3

4

organisations, to make it obligatory on the part of the administrative Ministry concerned to lay the Annual Reports/Audit Reports of such organisations under their administrative control before Parliament within nine months of the close of accounting year so that Parliament is apprised of their activities."

Both these recommendations were circulated by the Department of Parliamentary Affairs to all Ministries and Departments of Government of India *vide* their O.M. No. F. 28 (B)/78-Leg. dated 8th November, 1978 for compliance. Evidently these recommendations have not been implemented by the Ministry of External Affairs so far. The Committee regret to observe the failure of the Ministry for not acting upon the recommendations of the Committee on Papers Laid on the Table of the House for so long and again, in furnishing an evasive reply to this Committee's specific recommendation in this regard. The Committee hope that an early decision would now be taken to enable the ICCR to prepare its own Annual Report which would be presented to Parliament.

1	2	3	4
2.	9	External Affairs	<p>The Committee are distressed to find that the Ministry of External Affairs have not accepted the organisational changes proposed by them in ICCR which, in their opinion, was necessary to ensure real autonomy in the functioning of the Council and effective coordination between the concerned Ministries. The Committee had desired that instead of one Director-General and two Deputy Directors-General from the Ministry of External Affairs, ICCR should have one Director-General from the Ministry of External Affairs and a Deputy Director-General each from the Department of Culture and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Ministry have asserted that existing set up and procedure of ICCR already provide for the autonomy necessary for ICCR to undertake its own programme and fulfill its objectives. The Committee are not convinced by this reply of the Ministry which merely justifies the already existing situation. In the Committee's view, merely having Secretaries from Department of Culture and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in General Assembly and Governing Body</p>

1

2

3

4

is not enough. The inclusion of two Deputy Director-Generals from other two Ministries would not only ensure greater coordination between ICCR and those Ministries but would also ensure greater participation and role for them in the working of ICCR. Further, this would make the ICCR sufficiently broad-based and functionally autonomous. The contention of the Ministry that it is desirable to have two Deputy Directors-General from the Ministry of External Affairs as their work involves continuous interaction with our Missions abroad hardly carries any weight as the Director-General of ICCR from the Ministry of External Affairs, could easily take care of such interaction. The Committee, therefore, reiterate that the proposed changes in the organisation of ICCR should be brought about at the earliest.

3.

12 External Affairs

After conducting due deliberations and detailed discussions, the Committee had come to the conclusion that the General Assembly and Governing Body of the ICCR should meet more frequently in order to have closer interaction amongst its members and for better control and monitoring of the developments in the

1

2

3

4

cultural field and to take decisions accordingly. The Committee are not convinced by the reply tendered by the Ministry that the existing frequency of meetings of General Assembly and Governing Body have been found 'adequate'. No reasons have been advanced by the Ministry justifying the existing practice. It has not been explained as to why the recommendation of the Committee could not be accepted. The Committee therefore reiterate that General Assembly and Governing Body of ICCR should meet every six months and 3 months respectively. Further, only such representatives should be nominated to these bodies who have sufficient time and requisite willingness to contribute effectively to their deliberations. The Committee would like to apprise of the action taken in this regard.

4. 15 External Affairs

The Committee are of the view that there is need for continuous reorientation of the activities of Cultural Centres abroad not only to meet the cultural thrust which ICCR is supposed to emphasize but also to improve India's image and further our foreign policy

1

2

3

4

objectives. The Committee find that the ICCR has instituted a system of monthly reporting by the Cultural Centres set up by ICCR abroad on their activities. Also, the ICCR is undertaking a special review of the functioning of these Centres in consultation with our Ambassadors in the respective countries. The Committee would like to know whether the review has since been completed and if so, what were its findings. The Committee feel that such reviews should be conducted at regular intervals and shortcomings noticed as a result thereof removed expeditiously.

5.

18 External Affairs

Although the ICCR is stated to have initiated discussions with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Doordarshan on the utilisation of the electronic media for promotion of Indian culture abroad, the Committee have not been informed about the details and out come thereof. The Ministry have also not responded to the specific recommendation of the Committee that the ICCR should set up a Special Committee of people in the field of electronic communication as well as

1

2

3

4

scholars and artistes to go into the matter. As with the emergence of satellite television and other forms of electronic media, powerful avenues are now available for Projection of Indian Culture abroad, immediate steps need to be taken to make maximum use of the means provided by this media. A Special Committee as recommended by the Committee earlier would be of immense help to the ICCR in advising the precise use of the electronic media.

The Committee further reiterate that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting/Doordarshan should cooperate with ICCR in their endeavour and explore the possibility of entering into arrangements for electronic media abroad for promoting India's cultural image in other countries. The Committee would like to be apprised about the steps taken in this regard.

6. 21 External Affairs

Despite the presence of the representatives of the Lalit Kala Akademi, Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National School of Drama in the General Assembly, Governing Body and Advisory Committee of the ICCR, the complaints were voiced by the

1

2

3

4

witnesses representing these bodies before the Committee that they were not being closely and meaningfully associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR. This implied that these bodies were in a position to contribute much more towards the activities of the ICCR which the ICCR has failed to secure so far. Since ICCR has to draw its resources from various expert bodies also to present a composite cultural image of India abroad, it should endeavour to ensure closer and effective coordination at the highest level with such bodies. This would also help in avoiding overlapping of programmes/performances by ICCR and these National Bodies. For this, it is necessary that these institutions are taken into confidence while drawing up programmes, selection of artistes and other related activities. In fact, to begin with these should be a dialogue at the highest level between ICCR and these bodies so as dispel their grievances and ensure as to how they could be actively associated with the programmes/activities of the ICCR in real sense.

7.

24 External Affairs

The Committee had cited certain instances where the

1

2

3

4

Travel Grants Programme was administered by ICCR on an *ad hoc* basis without relevance to the guidelines laid down by them. The Committee had asked the Ministry to re-assess the utility of its Travel Grants Scheme so that it was restricted to only those persons who are categorically identified in keeping with Council's restructured basis. The Committee are surprised to find that instead of reacting positively to their specific recommendation and assuring them of the adherence to the laid down guidelines, the Ministry have merely informed that the Council has framed guidelines to ensure that the Travel Grants Programme is administered in an objective and institutionalised manner. The Ministry have not explained as to what prompted them to sanction travel grants in the cases cited by the Committee. They feel that there is need to ensure that ICCR is not dubbed as a travel agency which provides travel grants to various persons without even assessing their utility to the Council. The Committee are of the firm view that ICCR should ensure that this programme is implemented in an objective manner and as per the

1

2

3

4

guidelines in this regard. The Council should also see to it that proper procedures are instituted to make this scheme as transparent as possible and leave no scope for controversy.

8. 27 External Affairs

Festivals of India abroad are organised in different countries with a view to presenting India through Indian eyes and upgrading the perceptions about India. The nodal agency involved in organising the festivals is the Department of Culture whereas the ICCR is designated to present performing arts. Substantial amount is spent on these festivals and various agencies/ departments are entrusted the different tasks. The Committee had desired to be apprised of the total expenditure incurred on each of the festivals of India abroad held so far to have an idea about the extent of the resources that were put in to achieve the success as claimed by the Government on such endeavours. The Ministry have informed that this information can only be collected through the Department of Culture. The Committee feel that ICCR could have easily collected the information from the Department of Culture and furnished to them. The

1

2

3

4

Committee hope that the requisite information in this regard would now be supplied to them expeditiously.

The Committee would also like the Ministry to assess in coordination with Department of Culture the impact created by each of these Festivals held so far and about the resultant benefits that have accrued to our country. This would help the Government while planning for the Festivals of India abroad in future in appropriately choosing the target country, specific theme and necessary funds for the same.
