

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**(2003)**

**THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA**

**WORKING OF INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CULTURAL CENTRES ABROAD**

**THIRTEENTH REPORT**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT  
NEW DELHI**

***December, 2003/Pausa, 1925 (Saka)***

***Presented to Lok Sabha on 23.12.2003***

***Laid in Rajya Sabha on 23.12.2003***

## INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Standing Committee on External Affairs (2003) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Thirteenth Report on the "Working of Indian Council for Cultural Relations with special reference to Cultural Centres abroad."

2. Recognising the vital role of cultural diplomacy in the modern world, the Standing Committee on External Affairs decided to examine in detail the functioning of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations with special reference to Cultural Centres abroad. During the course of examination, the Committee invited non-official experts viz. Smt. Shovana Narayan, renowned dancer, Shri Suvaprasanna, renowned painter, Shri Mrinal Sen, Film Producer and Director and Prof. Syed Shahid Mahdi, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia University to give their views/suggestions before the Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2003. Suggestions in writing were also received from Smt. Anjolie Ila Menon, renowned painter, for improvement in the working of ICCR. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and the ICCR on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2003.

3. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at their sitting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2003.

4. The Committee express their thanks and appreciation to the eminent artistes and distinguished scholars for tendering their valuable suggestions, comments and concerns before the Committee.

5. The Committee also wish to express their thanks to the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations for tendering evidence before the Committee and furnishing detailed information that the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the subject.

6. The Committee place on record their appreciation for the valuable assistance rendered to them by the officials of the Lok Sabha Secretariat attached to the Committee.

7. 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.

NEW DELHI  
19 December, 2003  
28 Agrahayana, 1925

KRISHNA BOSE,  
Chairman,  
Standing Committee on External Affairs

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## **CHAPTER- I**

### **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

India recognized the role and importance of cultural relations, even prior to becoming independent. It was at the Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1946 that it was resolved to set up the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) for “strengthening the ties of cultural cooperation and exchange between India and other Asian countries”. The mandate of ICCR was, however, expanded to cover all other countries at the behest of Indian leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

1.2 The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was formally set-up in 1950 with the primary objectives of establishing, reviving and strengthening the cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries. The major activities of the Council are –

- i) administration of scholarship schemes for overseas students on behalf of the Government of India;
- ii) maintaining Indian Cultural Centres abroad and supporting special bilateral programmes;
- iii) establishing and maintaining Chairs and Professorships for Indian Studies abroad;
- iv) exchange of performing arts groups;
- v) distinguished visitors programme;
- vi) publications;
- vii) organization and participation in non-performing arts such as seminars, symposia and conferences;
- viii) exchange of exhibitions; and maintenance of Library

1.3 The Headquarters of the ICCR is based in New Delhi with eight regional offices in various states of the Country. To promote greater awareness of India's composite cultural heritage abroad, the ICCR has set up 15 Cultural Centres abroad. The activities of the Cultural Centres broadly focus on programmes involving participation of the local population and on intellectual work such as organising lectures, talks, panel discussions and seminars on subjects of contemporary and cultural interests.

1.4 On being asked how far the ICCR has succeeded in achieving its primary objectives so far, the Ministry stated that ICCR's activities had consistently geared towards fulfilling the mandate elaborated in its Constitution. The activities of the Council are consolidated in an Annual Plan of Action, which is approved by the Planning Committee, Finance Committee and Governing Body.

1.5 It was further stated that the Council had accomplished to a large measure its objectives over the years. Apart from executing its activities through its Regional Offices within India, Cultural Centres abroad, it was deputing a number of professors to various prestigious universities abroad for imparting training in Indian languages, Indology and other related subjects. It also administered various scholarship schemes under which scholars were given placements in different Indian educational institutions and facilitated meaningful intellectual exchanges on subjects of contemporary relevance through its programmes of seminars, exchange of visitors and exhibitions. A vibrant exchange of cultural programmes was also in place contributing to an appreciation of India's cultural heritage abroad. It was, however, stated that all the above could be further strengthened and augmented with innovative policies and programmes if additional resource were made available.

**1.6 During the examination of the subject, the Committee have visited the Headquarters of ICCR and its regional Cultural Centres in various parts of the country. The Committee feel that the ICCR has not quite fulfilled the vision and mission with which it was launched 53 years ago. Although the Committee appreciate the work ICCR is doing, yet keeping in view the increasing role of cultural diplomacy, an extensive campaign needs to be done through media and other sources to spread the rich Indian cultural heritage all over the world, which will not only strengthen our diplomatic relations with other countries but also expand the horizon of our great artistes and exponents.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 1)**

**1.7 The Committee also feel that ICCR has not been interacting to the desired extent with the people who are actively involved in the field and who can tell them more from their experiences what really is needed to be done. In the opinion of the Committee the ICCR must adopt a multifaceted approach. For this purpose, it is of utmost necessity that the functioning of the ICCR should be fine-tuned to meet the present day growing needs with a view to improving and upgrading its activities by inviting views and suggestions from artistes and eminent personalities in the field. It would certainly help the ICCR to function effectively and respond to the changing demands and priorities in the conduct of our cultural diplomacy.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 2)**

## **CHAPTER-II**

### **CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND ROLE OF ICCR**

Cultural diplomacy is the domain of diplomacy concerned with establishing, developing and sustaining relations with foreign states through the means of culture, art and education. It is a proactive process of external projection in which a nation's institutions, value system and unique cultural personality are promoted at the bilateral and multilateral levels. The success of cultural diplomacy depends on the effective use of the art of diplomacy in promoting culture and also in nurturing a favourable perception of the image of the country to the foreign audience. Recently, many countries have started recognising the important role that culture plays in the understanding and conduct of international relations.

2.2 Cultural diplomacy is important for India as our country has a rich and varied cultural heritage that is nearly five thousand years old. Ours is a vast country where 18 major languages and many more regional languages are spoken. This pluralistic nature of our culture therefore becomes the glue that binds us with all the countries in the world. We have so much to offer to the world in terms of language and culture. Thus there is an inherent need for proper projection of the richness and vastness of our cultural heritage to the foreign audience.

2.3 During evidence the Committee expressed the view that as far as promotion of Indian culture through the means of cultural diplomacy was concerned, the ICCR, down the years, has not quite fulfilled the vision and the mission with which it was launched some sixty years ago. The international scenario was ever changing and the programmes and proposals of ICCR lacked momentum and initiative in meeting the

changing requirements of conducting an effective cultural diplomacy. However, the Ministry stated that it would not be appropriate to suggest that the proposals of ICCR lacked momentum and initiative. The Ministry explained that ICCR's activities towards promotion of art and culture were rooted in a very strong tradition in diverse fields. Still on account of limitations relating to infrastructure and funds, it was impossible for ICCR to meet the aspirations of every community across the globe. On account of these limitations, ICCR was able to respond positively to a fraction of demands made upon it. The Council was conscious of the need to establish more Cultural Centres abroad and create greater awareness through modern media like films, television, Internet and CD-Roms. The Ministry hoped that in places where full-fledged Cultural Centres did not exist, the misperception about lack of momentum and initiative would be suitably addressed, with greater awareness about ICCR's activities. They have further stated that ICCR was seeking to focus on the People of Indian Origin and trying to associate them with mainstream Indian culture. This was sought to be done with multi-media activities in our Missions/Cultural Centres abroad and production of CD-Roms, films and Internet.

**2.4 Cultural diplomacy is a powerful tool for furthering diplomatic interests in commercial, political and strategic fields. Keeping this important aspect in view, the Committee are of the opinion that the ICCR has been doing a good job in the field of cultural diplomacy. But there is need to further increase the scope and intensity of its activities with innovative policies and programmes in the ever-changing circumstances. Its policies and programmes will have to be specific, pointed and purposeful. The Committee feel that ICCR's approach is**



conventional and unprofessional and as such, the ICCR has not been able to go beyond propagating the stereotyped image of our country. The Committee would, therefore, like to impress upon the Government to accord cultural diplomacy the highest importance. Since ICCR is the nodal agency under the Ministry of External Affairs for cultural promotions, the Committee would urge the ICCR to intensify its efforts in external projection. Apart from our efforts in sustaining our traditional ties with some specific Asian countries, the ICCR should widen its area of activity and strive hard to achieve a stronger cultural presence all over the world.

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 3)**

2.5 The Committee are also of the opinion that it is not sufficient for the ICCR to merely draw up ambitious projects for cultural promotion. What is needed is the effective implementation of these projects. To achieve its objectives, the ICCR has to work in unison with the civil society, the Indian diaspora who have been the strongest promoters of Indian culture in foreign countries. Therefore, the Committee strongly feel that the ICCR needs to change its mantle, reorient its activities in such a way that it is able to cope with the changing requirements in cultural diplomacy and actively involve the Indian diaspora in all its drives for cultural promotion. This way, the image of our country can be projected in a better perspective and at the same time the creative energies and the subtle strength of these people could also be utilised in the most efficient and productive manner.

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 4 )**

## **CHAPTER-III**

### **REGIONAL CENTRES OF ICCR**

The headquarters of ICCR is based at New Delhi with eight Regional Centres at Bangalore, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Chennai, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram.

3.2 The main function of the regional centers is to represent the Council in their respective regions. The regional centres are responsible for coordinating arrangements with the State Governments and local cultural institutions for the Council's activities there. They are also responsible for providing assistance to international students studying in various colleges/universities/institutions in their respective regions under various ICCR scholarship schemes. Logistic support is also provided during the visit of distinguished visitors and performing delegations sponsored by the Council.

3.3 The Ministry has informed the Committee that the Council has planned to open more regional centres in India as the members of the Standing Committee on External Affairs, Governing Body/General Assembly of the ICCR and other eminent personalities in the field of art and culture have expressed the views that Regional Offices of the ICCR should be opened in other parts of India. New regional centers proposed to be opened are: Jaipur, Bhopal, Bhubeneshwar and North East Region.

3.4 As regards regional centres in North-east the Council has plans to open its main office at Shillong (Meghalaya) and two sub-offices one each at Manipur and Nagaland. The DG, ICCR has written to the Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya requesting to nominate an officer from Meghalaya Government with whom

the Council could coordinate the opening of ICCR's regional office. Similarly, letters have also been sent to the Chief Secretaries of Government of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa to nominate officers from the concerned State-Governments regarding opening of Regional Centres at Bhopal, Jaipur and Bhubneswwar. It was however stated that the above centres would be opened after the State Governments rendered necessary support.

3.5 During evidence it was pointed out by the Committee that ICCR did not have any regional centre in Srinagar, where tourists flocked from all parts of the world. Therefore, Srinagar should be given priority in the next list of regional centres. With regard to Regional office in Srinagar, the Foreign Secretary submitted that in the past few years, Srinagar has been in pretty trouble.

**3.6 The Committee note that ICCR has planned to open more regional centres in different parts of the country viz. Jaipur, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar and North-eastern Region. However, the Committee find that certain key regions of the country like Bihar and Jammu & Kashmir have been ignored. Hardly any attention has been given to Bihar and Jammu & Kashmir who have contributed significantly to the country's culture and the latter attracts a large number of tourists. Besides, to remove the regional imbalances, certain regions need to be strengthened.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 5 )**

**3.7 The Committee also find that the Chief Secretary of Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa have been requested to nominate officers from the concerned State Governments with whom the Council could coordinate the**

opening of Regional Offices. The Committee hope that the matter would be pursued earnestly with the concerned authorities and the proposed regional centres would be opened soon. The Committee also recommend that regional centres in Srinagar, Bihar and other parts of the country which have rich cultural traditions should be opened at the earliest.

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 6 )**

3.8 The Committee note that the regional centres are responsible for coordinating arrangements with the concerned State Governments and local cultural institutions for the Council's activities. They are also responsible for organising shows of performing art groups, welfare of foreign scholars, organisation and participation in non-performing arts such as seminars, symposia and conferences organised in that region, providing logistic support during the visits of distinguished visitors, making arrangements for incoming and outgoing exhibitions and sending books/musical instruments for presentation to the Indian Cultural Centres or Missions abroad.

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 7 )**

3.9 However, the Committee are not satisfied with the functions being performed by the regional centres as they have been simply doing the work of coordination in organising shows of performing art groups, arranging incoming and outgoing exhibitions and giving logistic support during the visits of distinguished visitors. They are not even allowed to go in for talent hunt and hardly have any interaction with the people engaged in various activities in the region. The Committee feel that continuous interaction of this kind is absolutely

necessary for improvement in the working of regional centres in the country. Based on the interaction with the people of the region in the field and also from the incoming as well as outgoing groups, etc., reports should be presented to the headquarters with suggestions to improve the functioning and activities of the respective regional centre. The Committee also desire that regional centres of ICCR should prepare a comprehensive data bank giving information about the local artistes/groups/theatres in the form of cassettes/CD Roms. Such data could be made available at all the regional centres in the country as well as Cultural Centres abroad. It will work as a ready reckoner for organising cultural activities in India and abroad.

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 8 )**

## **CHAPTER-IV**

### **INDIAN CULTURAL CENTRES ABROAD**

One of the primary objectives of the Council is to promote greater awareness of India's composite cultural heritage abroad. Towards this end, the Council has set up and maintains 15 Cultural Centres: Georgetown(Guyana), Paramaribo (Suriname), Port Louis (Mauritius), Jakarta (Indonesia), Moscow (Russia), Berlin (Germany), Cairo (Egypt), London (UK), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Almaty (Kazakhstan), Johannesburg (South Africa), Durban (South Africa), Port of Spain (Trinidad & Tobago), Colombo (Sri Lanka) and Dushanbe (Tajikistan). All these Cultural Centres are functioning under the overall policy guidelines of the Indian Missions in the respective countries.

4.2 According to the Ministry, all the Cultural Centres abroad were functioning under the administrative and policy supervision of Indian Missions in the respective countries. However, the Council provided the financing, the staffing, the policy guidelines and determined the main activities of each centre. The role of the Indian Missions was in overseeing the functioning of the Centres so that they functioned as an effective unit and complemented the activities of the respective Mission. However, the Committee found that the Heads of Indian Cultural Centres abroad were generally not accorded diplomatic status, and as such were not much effective and faced functional problems.

4.3 These Cultural Centres could broadly be classified under two categories. Several of these centres have been set up in countries having sizeable expatriate Indian population like the centres in Trinidad and Tobago, Mauritius, Guyana, Suriname, Indonesia and South Africa. The activities of these Centres focused on

programmes involving the participation of the local population. Regular classes were organized on various dance forms, Hindustani Vocal Music, Instrumental Music and Yoga. A large number of students have been enrolled in these centres for the purpose. The ICCR has also been deploying teachers from India and on a few occasions locally qualified teachers for conducting classes in the Centres. These training classes catered to both the beginners and advanced artistes. The second category of Indian Cultural Centres was located in countries with a known interest in India. These Centres included those in London, Berlin, Moscow, Almaty, Tashkent and Dushanbe. The activities of these Centres focused more on intellectual work such as organizing lectures, talks, panel discussions and seminars on subjects of contemporary and cultural interest. The events were aimed primarily at enhancing an understanding of India.

4.4 The Committee enquired how far India's Cultural Centres abroad had been successful in projecting a realistic picture of India's rich and diverse cultural heritage and whether any study had been done so far in this regard. The Ministry replied that all the 15 Indian Cultural Centres abroad had been extremely successful in projecting India's image and diverse cultural heritage. These centres were also playing a pivotal role in showcasing and promoting Indian cultural traditions abroad. The Centres had been organising Indian dance and music performances, lectures, talks, seminars, conferences etc. not only in the cities where they were located but also in other parts of the country. The Centres also organised regular screening of Indian films which brought out India's varied culture, its values and tradition. Some of the Centres had

formed cultural troupes with the help of teachers and local students and staged their programmes in different parts of the country.

4.5 The Committee were informed by the Ministry that many proposals for opening new Cultural Centres/strengthening of existing cultural wings have been received from Indian Missions abroad. A statement showing country wise proposals received for the opening of new Cultural Centres, year in which the proposal was received and progress made so far is as follows:-

Sl. No.	Name of the Country from which proposal received	Year of receipt of the proposal	Status report
1.	Washington D.C. (USA)	1994	MEA had confirmed that budget provision of US\$ 5 Million has been kept under the capital outlay during the current financial year for the purchase of building for the cultural center, Washington. Embassy of India, Washington is presently identifying a suitable property.
2.	Paris, France	1994	The proposal is being examined in MEA.
3.	Dushanbe, Tajikistan	1997	Additional grant to ICCR for the deployment of three India-based Teachers has been made in the RE 2002-03.
4.	Bishkek, Kyrghystan	1997	
5.	Kathmandu, Nepal	1995	
6.	Nairobi, Kenya	1996	
7.	Suva, Fiji	1999	The matter is in active consideration with the MEA. A team is expected to visit Fiji soon for the purpose.
8.	Haque, Netharland	1995	
9.	Budapest, Hungary	1993	



10.	Warsaw, Poland	1993	
11.	Prague, Czechoslovakia	1993	
12.	Beijing, China	2000	
13.	Seoul, S. Korea	1998	
14.	Yangon, Mynmar	1996	
15.	Brussels, Belgium	2000	
16.	Sao Paulo, Brazil	1999	
17.	Tel Aviv, Israil	1996	
18.	Tokyo, Japan	1989	The proposal is under scrutiny in the MEA.
19.	Saint Denis, Reunion Island	1999	
20.	Birmingham, U.K.	1994	
21.	Tehran, Iran	1999	ICCR's detailed proposal is under MEA's consideration
22.	Hanoi, Vietnam	1999	
23.	Mexico City, Mexico	1999	
24.	Copenhagen, Denmark	1999	
25.	Canberra, Australia	1999	
26.	Madrid, Spain	1999	

4.6 The Committee enquired about the abnormal delay in setting up a cultural centre in Washington and also reasons for not having a centre in Kathmandu. The Foreign Secretary stated that as far as cultural centre in Washington was concerned, the Ministry was on the verge of a decision as the property had been selected and negotiations were going on. With regard to the cultural centre in Kathmandu; the

Committee were informed that our Ambassador in Nepal was of the view that we did not need a cultural centre in Nepal.

4.7 It was also pointed out by the Committee that South-East Asia, Latin America, Europe except U.K. and Germany were some what neglected while deciding on opening of Cultural Centres abroad. In France, which is the Cultural Centre of Europe, there was no centre so far.

4.8 The Ministry of External Affairs, admitted that non-availability of funds was one of the main reasons for not opening more Cultural Centres abroad. The other reason was the difficulty in the creation of posts for the new centres.

4.9 According to the Ministry the following general parameters for establishing/opening Cultural Centres were adhered to: -

- i) Project India's cultural heritage, scientific and technological achievements and its secular and democratic traditions so as to dispel misunderstandings and prejudices against India.
- ii) Conduct teaching courses in Indian dance, music, both vocal and instrumental, yoga and Indian languages in accordance with pre-determined prospectus.
- iii) Foster close links with Cultural Centres being run by other countries, artistes, opinion makers, academicians, administrators and media persons through contacts, organization of seminars, symposia, exhibitions, publication of periodical newsletter etc. aiming at enhancing awareness about India's achievements in socio-economic and political fields specially empowerment of women, eradication of poverty, human rights assuring the dignity of the individual.
- iv) Organising festivals, celebrating important festivals of India and giving performances with the objective of developing people-to-people contact and meeting the aspirations of the local people.
- v) To inform and publicize activities of ICCR on exchange of visitors, cultural delegations, scholarships, presentation of cultural programmes and maintenance of optimum utilization of libraries attached to the Centres.

4.10 The Ministry of External Affairs stated that the aims and objectives of the Indian Cultural Centres abroad were:-

- a) To project India's rich cultural heritage, propagate Indian languages and literature, encourage a better understanding of India's cultural, economic, scientific and social developments and facilitate a bilateral intellectual dialogue.
- b) The activities of ICCs abroad are: Organise shows of performing arts, hold classes of Indian languages, performing arts and yoga, organise seminars, symposia, conferences, exhibitions, lectures, demonstrations, workshops etc. processing applications for ICCR's sponsored scholarships, screening of film shows and maintenance of library. presentation of books, musical instruments and art objects, printing of Newsletter.

4.11 However, the Ministry agreed that there was still scope for further improvement, which could be ensured through monitoring of the Indian cultural centre activities. It was proposed that these Centres would be periodically inspected to ascertain their shortcomings in future and take remedial measures.

4.12 With a view to popularizing traditional Indian festivals, the centres also organised programmes to observe important events like National Days, Diwali, Holi, Dussehra etc. All Centres maintained Libraries, Reading rooms, Audio-video library and TV rooms. When asked, whether the ICCR had formulated a long-term plan for increasing its activities/programmes abroad, the Ministry stated the Council had made continuous efforts to increase its activities abroad, within the constraints of budgetary and personnel resources. The Council planned its activities on the basis of an Annual Plan of Action based on the inputs received from various Missions abroad. A number of new initiatives have been formulated and presented to the General Assembly/General Body meetings for their approval. However, the Council would be keen to further expand its activities and sought adequate budgetary and personnel support for the purpose.

4.13 The Committee expressed the feeling that our Missions abroad had often been blamed of not doing adequate groundwork before the start of cultural events abroad,

resulting in a poor response from the audience. The Ministry replied that the role of the Indian Missions in this regard had generally been positive and satisfactory. In a few cases, however, minor problems arose due to lack of coordination between the Indian Embassies, ICCR and the sponsoring organisations. The Missions were asked to make all efforts including coordination between the various concerned agencies to ensure a successful outcome of the cultural events.

**4.14 The Committee find that a large number of proposals for opening cultural centres abroad are under consideration of the Ministry for the last several years but due to non-availability of funds and difficulty in creation of posts for the new centres, they have not come to any decision so far. Besides, South-East Asia and Latin American countries have been neglected in this respect. In Europe too, except UK and Germany, not much attention has been given to other important countries like France, which has proximity with UNESCO. The Committee view that there should be a kind of regional balance globally while deciding to open a cultural centre abroad. Keeping in view the importance of cultural diplomacy in the modern age and changing world scenario, the Committee recommend that more Cultural Centres need to be opened preferably in South-East Asia, Latin America and in countries where a sizeable Indian community resides.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 9 )**

**4.15 As recommended in their 12<sup>th</sup> Report presented on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2003 the Committee desire that the cultural centre at Washington should be opened**

without any further delay. The Committee desire that setting up of a centre at Kathmandu should be given sincere consideration.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 10 )

4.16 Non-availability of funds and difficulty in creation of new posts for the centres are stated to be the main reasons for not opening more Cultural Centres abroad. Since cultural diplomacy has gained significant importance today the Committee strongly feel that such constraints should not come in the way of projecting India's cultural heritage and fostering close cultural linkages abroad.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 11 )

4.17 The Committee find that the persons heading the Cultural Centres abroad face functional difficulties as they are not given diplomatic status in some of the countries. In some countries they are on a diplomatic list of the Missions only. The Committee feel that unless a person heading the cultural centre is given a diplomatic status, he is not taken seriously and is not effective enough in strengthening and promoting cultural activities of the centre. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Director or head of the centre should be given a diplomatic status. Such person may not necessarily be a diplomat. He may be a person well conversant with the art, culture and our traditional heritage and capable of achieving the aims and objectives for which the Council was established.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 12 )

## **CHAPTER-V**

### **BUDGET OF ICCR**

The Committee have been informed that the ICCR's grant for the activities for the year 2003-04 is Rs.54.50 crore against Rs. 42.43 crore for 2002-03. When asked whether the budgetary allocation of funds to ICCR was sufficient to carry out its activities and programmes effectively in the country as well as abroad the Ministry have stated that the range and the number of activities of the Council are constantly increasing. Efforts were also being made to introduce new and innovative projects with a view to enhancing the Council's profile and promoting Indian culture abroad.

5.2 It has further been stated that the ICCR's budget has recorded only marginal increases over successive years while there was constant pressure on it to increase the scope and intensity of its activities. If inflationary trends and rise in cost of living were also taken into account, ICCR's budget, in real terms, actually stood reduced over the last few years. This was detrimental to the organization's interest.

5.3 The Committee have also been informed that the Council has visualized a number of activities which were innovative in nature, and intended to promote more aggressively India's culture abroad and provide a better national and international profile for the Council's activities. These activities included projects to bring together classical musicians of India and other ancient civilizations in a series of concerts and organisation of international seminars with prestigious institutions like National Museum and Jamia Millia Islamia. These seminars would facilitate an intellectual debate on a diverse range of subjects such as the contribution of India to Asia's culture and civilization, and the Islamic heritage of India. The Council has also devised publicity

campaign to highlight India's diverse and rich culture for audiences abroad. Furthermore, there were a number proposals for establishing new cultural centres abroad to expand the reach and intensify activities of the Council.

5.4 However, the Council stated that all these projects were dependent on ICCR receiving additional financial resources to strengthen its organizational structure, and implement projects both traditional and those with a new vision, in order to better fulfill its mandate.

5.5 One of the non-official experts, in his evidence before the Committee suggested that ICCR should generate its own resources on the pattern of the British Council to fulfill the budgetary requirements. On being asked about their reaction to this suggestion, Ministry stated that the mandate of ICCR was to promote India's culture abroad and as such it was not expected to be a revenue generating institution. However, the Council has made some efforts in this regard. The total internal receipts generated during the year 2002-2003 were Rs. 46.23 lakhs comprising mainly of Cultural Centres abroad, rent received from Auditorium/Foyer and on account of administering British Council Division.

**5.6 The Committee find that ICCR's budget has recorded only marginal increases over successive years while there was constant pressure on it to increase the scope and intensity of its activities. If inflationary trends are taken into account, ICCR's budget, in real terms, has been actually reduced over the last few years. It is also noted that the Council has visualized a number of innovative activities, projects and it also intends to promote more aggressively India's culture abroad and provide a better national and international profile for**

its activities. Furthermore, there are a number of proposals awaiting the establishment of cultural centres abroad. But all those projects could not be taken up by the Council due to lack of additional financial resources.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 13 )

5.7 The Committee are constrained to observe that in spite of their repeated recommendations, there has been virtually no increase in the annual grants of the Council in real terms, though the same have been increased from Rs. 42.43 crore in 2002-03 to Rs. 54.50 crore in 2003-04. The Committee are of the view that even the proper maintenance of the existing level of activities of the Council would justify a further increase in the budgetary allocations of ICCR. However, they feel that the Ministry of External Affairs have not been able to present the case of ICCR properly and forcefully and the Ministry of Finance have also not realised the importance of cultural diplomacy. The Committee strongly feel that the financial allocation being given to the Council is not at all sufficient for the gamut of its activities and for achieving its objectives fully. ICCR was established to act as India's premier institution for promoting India's cultural heritage, fostering cultural exchanges and strengthening cultural ties with the countries of the world. For better projection of India's image abroad and also for the increased activities and projects of the Council, financial constraints should not come in its way. The Committee would like to emphasize that nothing else can project our country in the world in a stronger way than our culture and heritage. Therefore,



**the Committee recommend that the budgetary allocations for ICCR should substantially be augmented so that it could achieve its desired objectives.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 14 )**

**5.8 Furthermore, the Committee would like to point out that ICCR has not been working in tandem with the civil society of various countries of the world which leaves it high and dry and somewhat lonely in the matter of raising resources. The Committee have no doubt that ICCR could substantially augment its resources if it starts involving the civil society globally and the Indian diaspora in those countries. The Committee also suggest that to reduce the budgetary constraints of the Council, the Ministry should explore the possibility of coordinating trade and culture as there are several Fortune 500 companies of Indian origin and their resources can be tapped. Greater coordination between business and culture would certainly be helpful in meeting the budgetary constraints.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 15)**

## **CHAPTER-VI**

### **OTHER ACTIVITIES OF ICCR**

The following activities are being carried out by the different Units of the ICCR –

#### **I SCHOLARSHIP AND WELFARE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

One of the major activities of the Council is the implementation of the various scholarship programmes of the Government. The Council administers about 2000 scholarships annually under these schemes for studies in graduate, post-graduate and doctoral programmes as well as for pursuing professional courses such as engineering, pharmacy, accountancy, business administration and management. The thrust of the scholarship programme is towards developing nations with special focus on the neighbouring countries.

6.2 Apart from this, the ICCR also looks after the general welfare of international students studying in India under self-finance and on ICCR scholarship schemes. The ICCR continues to organise various activities throughout the year to familiarize them with the political, economic, social and cultural milieu of India. These activities include the organisation of zonal meetings of international students, holding of International Student Festivals, summer and winter camps and programmes by 'Kala Kshitij' to show case the progress for foreign students.

6.3 When the Committee enquired about the criteria for selection of foreign students for granting scholarship to them for pursuing various courses in Indian Institutions, the Ministry stated that the Council offered scholarships under various schemes administered by it alongwith prescribed application forms to the Governments concerned through Indian Missions abroad. The information on offer of scholarships

was generally advertised by Governments concerned in the important local newspapers of the respective countries. The Missions abroad received nominations, scrutinised applications, verified proficiency in English of the applicant and then forwarded them to ICCR for final selection and placement. The Council in turn forwarded these applications to various educational institutions in India for consideration and on fulfillment of eligibility criteria of respective educational institutions and the guidelines of Association of Indian Universities (AIU), granted admission and scholarship. A specially constituted Selection Committee decided admission of scholars under ICCR scholarship scheme.

6.4 As regards courses being pursued by foreign scholars in India, the Ministry informed that the following courses were offered:-

Undergraduate/Postgraduate  
M.Phil./Ph.D. Courses in Humanities/Science/Technology  
M.D./M.S./M.Tech./M.E.  
Post-doctoral studies in Humanities/Science, Engineering & Technology.

6.5 The major Institutions offering such courses were stated to be:-

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (01) Jawaharlal Nehru University   | (02) Delhi University                    |
| (03) Pune University   | (04) M.S. University, Baroda             |
| (05) Hyderabad University  | (06) Bangalore University                |
| (07) Osmania University  | (08) Calcutta University                 |
| (09) Madras University   | (10) Punjab University                   |
| (11) I.I.T. Roorkee  | (12) Major Govt. Regional Engg. Colleges |
| (13) Reputed Dance/Music Institutions like Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Shriram Bhartiya Kala Kendra, Kathak Kendra & Kalakshetra. |  |

6.6 However there was no compulsory system under which scholars were required to furnish details of their stay in India.

6.7 During the meeting with representatives of the Ministry it was pointed out that only the foreign students coming here were offered scholarships and not the other way round. During a conference called 'South Asia Initiative'. President of Harvard University suggested to have a couple of scholarships by which Indian students could go abroad and stay for some period.

6.8 When inquired whether any efforts have been made by ICCR to promote Indian studies abroad, the Ministry stated that ICCR's mandate was restricted to effectively administer the scholarship schemes under its charge.

6.9 As regards the fee structure of various courses in different institutions where the scholars sought admission, the Ministry intimated as under:-

SL. NO.	Name of Institutions	Courses	Fees(Annually) (In Rupees)
1.	Jawaharlal Nehru University	Humanities Science Streams	60,000.00 1,35,000.00
2.	Delhi University	Bachelor in Arts Master in Arts Ph. D.	60,000.00 70,000.00 80,000.00
3.	Pune University	Any Course	50,000.00
4.	M.S. University, Baroda	Any Course	1,00,000.00
5.	Hyderabad University	Any Course	75,000.00
6.	Bangalore University	Any Course	50,000.00

6.10 The expenses incurred annually on a foreign student including fee, board and lodging were stated to be as under:

- |    |  |                 |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1) | Ph. D. (Technical Programme) Engineering | Rs.3,85,000.00  |
| 2) | Ph.D.(Science)                           | Rs. 1,20,000.00 |

3)	Ph. D. (Humanities)	Rs. 1,00,000.00
4)	B.E./B.Tech.	Rs. 2,60,000.00
5)	U.G.	Rs. 1,00,000.00
6)	P.G.	Rs. 1,10,000.00

6.11 The Council paid Rs. 500/- extra towards House Rent Allowance(HRA) in Metro cities and Pune. The Council also reimbursed medical claims of students. The scholarship amounts covered all basic and essential expenses of scholars. The stipend in each category has been increased by Rs. 500/- per month from June, 2001. When asked about the periodicity of review of the amount of scholarship, the Ministry informed that there was no fixed time for review of the amount of scholarship, but as and when the cost of living increased the amount of scholarship was also reviewed.

6.12 The representative of the Ministry also stated:-

*“Suppose the students want to come here to do a very specific project on Indian monuments. We give an orientation grant for about three months so that can meet a part of the expenditure of the students while they stay in India. In addition to that, as the Foreign Secretary has said, we also give hundred scholarships to foreign students who wish to learn Indian dance and music. On an average, they spend three or four years here. This scheme is very much popular among the students. We have just increased this number from 60 to hundred keeping in mind the response which it has generated and the interest which has been exhibited. We have also introduced a scheme whereby, on the return, the students can go and open schools in their own countries in the field of dance and music. We have to get them back after five or six years for a re-orientation or a mid-career training. We have just introduced it so that they can come here and spend two or three months in any of these schools of their choice, in any part of the country. They can again go back and propagate further Indian dance and music to upgrade the skills”.*

6.13 On being asked about the impact in promoting the cultural ties between India and the countries to which such scholarships are offered, the Ministry stated that India's educational system was recognised as being of international standard and was appreciated the world over. Some of our former scholars were occupying prestigious posts in their countries. The scholars, on their return to their countries, were able to

demonstrate a greater understanding and appreciation of India's culture, economy, political system and social diversity based on their personal experiences of their sojourn in India.

6.14 From the details furnished by the Ministry, it was seen that out of 1083 scholarships offered in 1999-2000, 1076 in 2000-2001, 1052 in 2001-2002 and 1093 in 2003-2004 the scholarships utilised by foreign students were 675, 667, 612 and 779 respectively. However, the Ministry have further stated that during the academic year 2003-2004 out of 779 admissions confirmed by the ICCR only 606 have actually joined their courses. When asked about the non-utilisation of scholarships, the representative of the Ministry explained:-

*“There are two reasons for this. One is that these scholarships do not carry air fares and this has to be provided by the students themselves. In most of the cases, I think, the problem is the inability to pay the air fare. The second may be that the students apply for three-four countries for studying abroad and may be they go somewhere else in one of these countries. These two reasons come to our mind for non-utilisation of this percentage.”*

6.15 When asked whether we can help them with air fare too, the representative of the Ministry stated:-

*“We have done it for Central Asia. We give three air fares, but now we have increased it to ten fold and it comes to 30 for each country. It is because they were finding it very difficult to avail of this facility. From next year it will be 30 air fares.”*

6.16 The Ministry also informed that the Council as well as its Regional Offices, received the students on arrival, arranged their transit stay and onward journey to places/colleges/universities where they were admitted and paid them three months' advance stipend. Students were paid stipend, House Rent Allowance, non-refundable

compulsory institutional fees, contingent allowance and also compensation for medical facilities. Summer camps and study tours were also arranged for their benefit.

6.17 About the problems being faced by foreign scholars, the Ministry stated that a problem with some new scholars was homesickness and the inability to cope with the new environment. However, in rare cases, students returned to their country, for not having adapted themselves to the Indian life style, environment etc.

6.18 The Ministry had stated that the Council had started a programme to prepare a comprehensive database of its scholars with the following information:-

- (01) File Number
- (02) Section
- (03) Scheme
- (04) Student's Name
- (05) Sex
- (06) Permanent Address
- (07) Country
- (08) Course of Study
- (09) University
- (10) Payment Rate of Stipend, HRA, Contingent Grant.

Efforts were being made to complete the database within one year.

6.19 While stating that quality of education being imparted in India was of a high standard and at par with international standards the Committee were informed that the infrastructure available to the students needed improvement. For instance, hostel facilities could be improved to give the scholars a comfortable stay. The administrative systems in the Universities and other educational institutions also needed to be streamlined to ensure that the student received his/her financial entitlements and other dues in time. There was a need to further intensify our efforts through Indian diplomatic Missions abroad to keep in touch with our scholars after their return to their respective

countries. This continuing association will help the students keep abreast of developments in India.

**6.20 The Committee observe that ICCR's schemes of offering scholarships to foreign students play a significant role in generating goodwill and better understanding of India. Over the last more than 50 years, when the ICCR was in existence, the Council has imparted training to a large number of foreign students under this scheme. Today several such students/persons are occupying important positions in their countries. Such students can be seen as good friends of India as after learning and living here, they obtain first hand knowledge of India's rich cultural traditions, understanding of India's political, socio-economic systems, etc. and can actually contribute in different ways to our image abroad.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 16)**

**6.21 However, the Committee feel that keeping in view the changing world scenario and development in our economic and political strategies, the scholarship programmes of the Council should be formulated to make it specific and targeted to our foreign policy objectives. Several courses are being offered by the Council to the foreign scholars in various Universities of the country. The Committee desire that courses such as "India Study programme" as**



has been started by the University of Hyderabad should be introduced which has attracted quite a number of students from the west. The Council could use this mode for promoting Indian studies in a more structured way in collaboration with various Universities of the country. For starting the “Study India programmes”, many of our Universities, like Jamia Milia University, could be asked to provide course content and other support for preparing such courses.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 17 )

6.22 The Committee note that under the scholarship programme of the Council, scholarships are offered to foreign students in different courses. It is only the foreign students who come here and not the other way round. The Committee understand that ICCR does not make any arrangement under its schemes for the Indian students who wish to go for studies in the Universities abroad. The Committee desire that ICCR should bring under its schemes the programme of sending Indian students abroad for studies to Universities, like Harvard University and others who may, perhaps, be willing to offer a couple of scholarships for the Indian students.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 18 )

**6.23 The Committee are constrained to note that utilisation of scholarships offered to foreign students is constantly very low, although, the ICCR has stated that, it is working towards optimizing utilisation of scholarships being offered. Even during the year 2003-2004 ICCR offered 1093 scholarships out of which only 606 students have joined their respective courses. The reasons cited by the ICCR for non-utilisation of scholarships, viz. decision of the scholars not to pursue studies in India after making application or to opt for some scholarship scheme in another country or the scholar's inability to pay international fare which is not covered by scholarship scheme, is not satisfactory at all. The Committee, therefore, suggest that a system should be evolved whereby if seats offered for scholarships for a particular course remain unutilised, waitlisted candidates should be offered the scholarship.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 19 )**

**6.24 As regards the student's inability to pay international air fare, the Committee find that the air fares offered have been increased from 3 to 30 for each country. The Committee desire that the number of air fares being offered be increased substantially covering not only Central Asia but also other parts of the world. The Committee also**

hope that the ICCR would take steps to provide suitable hostel facilities to foreign students and ensure their comfortable stay in the country so that they may not feel home sick and could cope with the new environment. It should also be ensured that the students receive their financial dues as per their entitlement in time. The Committee also recommend that the amount of scholarships being paid to the scholars should be reviewed biannually.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 20 )

6.25 The Committee appreciate the scheme introduced by ICCR, under which on the completion of the course, the students can go and open schools in their own countries in the field of dance and music. After five or six years they can come back for a re-orientation or mid-career training. They can again go back and propagate further Indian dance and music to upgrade the skills. The Committee desire that the scheme should be encouraged and ICCR should provide logistic support to the scholars for opening schools in their countries.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 21 )

6.26 The Committee are happy to note that the Council has started a programme to prepare a comprehensive data base of its scholars. The Committee desire that information about the positions held by

**foreign students in their respective countries after availing the scholarships, should also be included in it. The Committee hope that the computerised data base will be completed expeditiously.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 22 )**

## **II. VISITING PROFESSORS AND CHAIRS OF INDIAN STUDIES ABROAD**

6.27 The Council deutes Visiting Professors abroad to teach Indian languages and other related subjects under the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme and the scheme of Propagation of Hindi abroad. The Council presently has on deputation 16 professors teaching Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Modern Indian History, Indian Civilization in Paramaribo (Suriname), Budapest (Hungary), Moscow (Russia), Seoul (South Korea), two in Warsaw (Poland), two in Port of Spain (Trinidad & Tobago), Ankara (Turkey), Bucharest (Romania), Beijing (China), Bangkok (Thailand), Paris (France), Osh (Kyrghyzstan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Madrid (Spain).

6.28 The Ministry have also informed that they were setting up Chairs and professorships for Indian studies abroad with the idea to impart greater momentum to the study of India and its languages. Chairs and Professorships for Indian Studies abroad were established to educate students of foreign University about Indian studies including Indian languages, civilization, culture, history and other related subjects. The knowledge and information injected to young students helped influence their perceptions about India and assisted them in a better understanding and appreciation of our position on various issues.

**6.29 The Committee are of the opinion that the Council's programme of establishing chairs and deputing Visiting Professors abroad to**

educate foreign University students in Indian studies and other related subjects is very meagre but useful as it influences the perception of foreign students about India and assists them to understand India's position on various issues in the right perspective. The Committee find that there are presently only sixteen chairs and Professorships which are functional worldwide under the aegis of ICCR. They desire that more chairs should be established under this programme and the number of Professors being sent abroad to teach Hindi and other Indian languages, particularly where a large number of persons of Indian origin reside, should be increased substantially

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 23 )

### **III. PERFORMING ARTS**

6.30 According to the Ministry the ICCR organises visits of performing artistes/troupes to India from countries all over the world for performances in various cities of India. These groups are hosted under the ambit of bilateral Cultural Exchange Programmes as well as in response to recommendations of the Indian Missions abroad and requests received from Foreign Diplomatic Missions/Cultural Centres in India. Under its two series of Indian art forms (initiated in late 1997) viz. "Horizon" and "Retrospectives", the Council continued to present performances by emerging and outstanding artistes respectively, in New Delhi and other cities. Some of these Indian artistes were brought together to present a number of festivals viz. "Malhar Festival", "Sufi Festival", "Thumri Festival" and "Kashmir Festival".

6.31 The Ministry further informed that India does not have cultural agreements with all the countries. Moreover it is not found possible to renew the Cultural Exchange Programmes under the cultural agreement periodically, as required. Moreover, even when Cultural Exchange Programmes are valid, full implementation of their provisions is rarely achieved.

6.32 The objective was to depict different performing art forms of India in various parts of the world. Some of these groups participated in major international events/festivals. However, a non-official expert submitted before the Committee that contemporary art has never been sufficiently promoted by ICCR. The Indian contemporary art has gained a fair amount of recognition, but it has been entirely due to private galleries and auction houses. Sporadic exhibitions/festivals were ignored by the serious art media.

6.33 On being asked whether the various events/festivals held in several countries had been able to reach the mainstream art and culture network in those countries the Ministry of External Affairs stated that the Council had been able to reach to a large measure the mainstream art and culture network in these countries. The Indian Missions abroad have been making efforts in this direction and have been able to do so through local publicity, radio, television and print media. However, the Ministry agreed that the involvement of professional public relations agencies and even managers would certainly maximise this impact. In the Council's view this would be a preferred option but additional financial resources would be needed for the purpose. Efforts were being made to include modern technologies through plans to produce CD's, shows with laser technology, and projection of Indian culture through international electronic media.

However, these plans were subject to receipt of adequate budgetary resources for their execution.

6.34 According to the Ministry, a significant number of younger artistes and folk groups from various parts of the country were also sponsored. It was further stated that the Council has three categories of dancers and musicians namely Outstanding, Established and Proficient. The Council worked through an Empanelment Committee in empaneling new artistes including young talent. The Council was following a policy of not sending an artist abroad more than once in a four year period, so that a larger number of artistes, including young artistes, got sponsored by ICCR. The norm for sponsorship to neighboring countries was three years.

6.35 Details of folk groups sponsored during the last three years were as under: -

<u>1999-2000</u>	<u>2000-2001</u>	<u>2001-2002</u>
13	14	16

6.36 About the criteria for selecting artistes/troupes for performing abroad, the Ministry of External Affairs stated:-

- (i) "It is mandatory for artistes to be on the panel of ICCR. For this, artist has to go through various screening tests under the purview of an 'Expert Committee'.
- (ii) The Council requests our diplomatic Missions abroad to suggest the type of cultural groups that they wish to host and the festivals in which the groups should participate.
- (iii) On the basis of the requests of the Indian Diplomatic Missions and Organisers of the Festival a detailed chart, called the Plan of Action, is drawn up and put up before the Planning Committee, along with the reference list of artistes. The Planning Committee deliberates on these inputs and decides on the group/artistes to be sent abroad for different events.
- (iv) On the basis of above meeting the Plan of Action, as revised, is put before the Council's Finance Committee for financial approval, and then before the Council's General Assembly/General Body for final endorsement/approval. It may be mentioned that Council's General

Assembly/General Body consists of eminent personalities and is chaired by the President of ICCR”.

6.37 When the Committee expressed the feeling that eminent artistes based in some selected cities were given preference against the junior artistes while representing India abroad in cultural programmes/festivals, the Ministry stated that while drawing up the annual plan of action, care was taken to represent the different regions of the country.

6.38 On being asked about the efforts being made by the ICCR to promote cultural troupes/artistes from different regions of the country particularly North east, West Bengal and Eastern region of the country, the Ministry stated that the Council had not only sponsored groups based in these regions but had also sponsored the art form of these regions such as Odissi Dance, Chhau Dance, Bhojpuri, Kunjban, Bihu, Pung and Dhol Chalam, Theatre, Mizo Group, Naga Group and Sikkim Group etc. The Committee asked whether the Ministry/ICCR had ever considered to get cultural programmes sponsored by private parties so that their financial burden could be reduced and that more troupes and artistes could be sent abroad, the Ministry had stated that the Council had not been successful in obtaining sponsorships for groups going abroad owing to commercial reasons. Firms were reluctant to offer sponsorship for Indian groups abroad as they either might not be represented in these countries or were not assured of the desired exposure for their products and services. However, a number of sponsorships have been obtained for performances of foreign troupes in India.

6.39 It was suggested by the Committee that Ministry of External Affairs particularly the Embassies must keep in touch with the regional groups that were better organised in those countries. For example, Telugu Association, Marathi Association, Punjabi



Association, Gujarati Association, were more organised and more active because they also wanted to preserve their regional identity and their culture. The representative of the Ministry stated:-

*“ As far as regional groups are concerned, firstly I will talk about India. In fact, we have contacted all the regional centers set up by the Department of Culture to give us a list of artistes and dancers who are on their panel. They may not be on our panel. We have found out that they are not in our panel. So, we are getting in touch with each of them so that we can, to the extent possible, take them on our panel and send them abroad so that we can cover as many groups as possible from our country”.*

*“ The local organisation approach people who are well established, who have international reputation, who organise large scale cultural events. They do their selection on their own. They don't want to be guided by the Government or the Embassies. They rely on their own talent potent and their own expertise in the matter. They send people to visit the country and look around. They have much greater reliance on their own selection process. It is because they feel, wrongly or rightly, they may not send the best, they may send people who for political or other reasons may be favoured, or some other considerations may be there”.*

It was, however, submitted that in some cases theatre groups were also sent.

#### **IV. DISTINGUISHED VISITORS PROGRAMME**

6.40 Sharing the ideas and holding free discussions has been a part of India's cultural tradition. In keeping with this tradition and as part of its effort to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries, the Council facilitates exchange of scholars, intellectuals, academicians and artistes under the Distinguished Visitors Programme.

6.41 Under the programme distinguished Indian intellectuals, scholars, academicians and artistes are funded and facilitated to participate in seminars, symposia, study tours and conferences abroad.

6.42 Reciprocally, distinguished foreign intellectuals, scholars and think tanks are invited to India to facilitate exchange and sharing of ideas through discussions and

meetings with their counterparts. In addition, they are also given exposure to rich Indian cultural heritage.

**6.43 The Committee note that ICCR organises visits of performing artistes/troupes to various parts of the world for performances under the ambit of bilateral cultural exchange programmes as well as in response to the recommendations received from Indian Missions abroad with the objective of depicting different performing art forms of India in various parts of the world. However, the Committee find that the Council does not have cultural agreements with all the countries and also many of the bilateral exchange agreements which are agreed upon for two years remain unfulfilled and unexplored. Moreover, the Council does not renew the cultural exchange programmes agreements periodically, as required and even where cultural exchange programmes are valid, full implementation of their provisions is rarely achieved. The Committee are not at all satisfied with such a state of affairs. The Committee recommend that the reasons for non-fulfillment of the cultural exchange agreements be identified and in the light thereof the Council should make all out efforts to ensure that bilateral cultural exchange agreements do not**

remain unfulfilled. The Council must also go in for bilateral cultural exchange agreements with various countries of the world.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 24 )

6.44 The Committee have received the impression that ICCR is focussing more on performing arts and is sending a number of troupes/groups for performances in various parts of the world, but contemporary art has not been sufficiently promoted by the Council. In the Committee's view whatever recognition the Indian contemporary art has achieved, has been more through private galleries or otherwise rather than through the efforts of the Council. In order to promote contemporary Indian art, to give exposure to the Indian art and culture worldwide and also to organise festivals and other activities, permanent presence of Indian art is a must at least in key cities of the world. The Committee desire that the Council, in collaboration with Indian Missions abroad, should make sincere efforts in this regard.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 25 )

6.45 The Committee feel that the Council gives preference to certain eminent artistes/troupes/groups based in some selected cities while representing India abroad in cultural performances and programmes.

Junior and up-coming artistes are not being given adequate opportunities while making selection for performances abroad. Also regional representation of artistes/folk dancers, etc. particularly from North-Eastern States, West Bengal and other remote areas are not given fair chance to perform abroad. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the criteria for selecting artistes/troupes for performing abroad should be made more transparent. Also, while selecting artistes/groups for sponsoring to perform abroad, junior up-coming artistes from various regions of the country, particularly from remote areas should also be included in the list in addition to the established and outstanding musicians, dancers or groups, so that India's true traditional art performances could be represented abroad. The Committee would also like the ICCR to make efforts to get the cultural programmes sponsored by private parties so that its financial burden could be reduced and more artistes/troupes could be sent abroad.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 26 )

6.46 The Committee also recommend that the Ministry, particularly the Indian Missions abroad, should collaborate with organisations of regional groups in foreign countries e.g. Telugu Association, Marathi

**Association, etc. in organising cultural shows by ICCR in various countries. These Associations/groups, if involved by the Council, will be a great help in promoting Indian art and Culture abroad. The Committee also recommend that more number of theatre groups should be sent abroad.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 27 )**

**6.47 The Committee find that the Council's Distinguished Visitors Programme is an extremely useful programme under which it facilitates exchange of scholars, intellectuals, academicians and artistes. Such exchanges provide ample opportunities of sharing ideas through discussions and meetings. The Committee therefore recommend that more emphasis be given to this programme, keeping in view the new trends and priorities of our foreign policy objectives.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 28)**

## **V. PUBLICATIONS**

**6.48 The Council has a major publication programme that works under the guidance of a Publication Committee. The publication activity in the Council was stated to be as old as the ICCR itself. The Council was established in 1950 and with this came out the first issue of its Arabic quarterly "Thaqafat-ul-Hind".**

6.49 According to the Ministry, presently the Council has a major publication programme, which has been growing over the years. Details of periodic publications brought out by the ICCR, are as follows: -

Sl. No.	Name of the Journal
1	Africa Quarterly (English Quarterly)
2	Indian Horizons (English Quarterly)
3	Gagananchal (Hindi Quarterly)
4	Thaqafat-ul-Hind (Arabic Quarterly)
5	Recontre Avec 1' Inde (French journal, bi-annual)
6	Papeles de la India (Spanish journal, bi-annual)

6.50 Besides the regular issues of the journals, the Council also brings out special issues focusing on special themes related to Indian culture/foreign relations.

6.51 Other publications brought out by the Council included books specifically recommended by the Ambassadors in different countries and were targeted at filling the lacunae in information about India in these countries. These publications generated awareness and created goodwill for India, as ICCR publications were targeted at influential decision and opinion makers, besides people of Indian origin resident in other countries. These publications were also available in libraries of Indian Missions abroad, as also of Indian Cultural Centres abroad where general public have access to them.

6.52 The Ministry has, however, submitted that given its limited resources, all its expectations could not be fulfilled. With a view to reach a larger readership at a more cost effective price, the Council proposed to start a programme of publication on the Internet, particularly with a focus on younger generation readership.

6.53 The Ministry of External Affairs have also furnished the following details of information about assistance provided by ICCR for publication in foreign languages:

S.No.	Name of book	Foreign Language	Author
1.	Bhagavat Gita	Russian	V.V. Melikov

2.	Reminiscences and Observation Indologist	Russian	Dr. SrikMomarov
3.	Meera Bai's Poetry	Hungarian	Mr. Imre Bangha
4.	Bhagavat Gita	Irish	Head Master of Scottus School
5.	Dhammapada	Slovak	Hajiko & Hajkova
6.	Sanskrit Theatre Symposium in a form	English	Kamaluddin Nilu
7.	Gandhi and Non-Violence	Spanish	Jose Antonio Reyna
8.	Mahabharat	Kazakh	Aubakir Das Nilibayev

6.54 During a meeting with non-official experts, it was suggested that, some of the Journals, or some of the interesting articles might be converted into net magazines. That was a very easy way of disseminating information.

6.55 When the Committee pointed out that the ICCR's publications were not available to the common men, the Foreign Secretary stated:

*"So far as publications are concerned, we have India Perspective, which is published by the XP Division. It is free publication, we do not, frankly, have the logistics in the XP Division to make it commercially available".*

"The Foreign Secretary further informed that the Ministry was also trying to upgrade and energize the Publication Division of the Council. All these measures would enhance the profile of the Council in India and abroad and make it an effective instrument in promoting our foreign policy goals."

**6.56 The Committee note that ICCR publishes a number of journals to spread its cultural message. Though these journals are very useful and informative in nature, the Committee feel that these are not accessible to the common man. The Committee recommend the ICCR to publish a single and comprehensive publication which can be an effective instrument for carrying information about India's art and culture to the targeted readership. Each issue may carry, apart**

from cultural information, profiles of achievers in diverse fields of art and culture and with authoritative knowledge in the respective field of specialisation. The Committee are of the opinion that such a single publication by ICCR will be a more effective voice of the rich Indian cultural heritage, which needs to be given exposure with great thrust. A video-CD edition of the publication may also be brought out by the Council and made available to the media in the country as well as abroad. The Committee further recommend that necessary steps may be taken to make the Council's publications commercially available to the common man, but at an affordable price.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 29)

6.57 The Committee also desire the Council to design and print meaningful posters to disseminate India's cultural philosophy. Such posters may be displayed at the regional centres of the Council and also at our Missions and Cultural Centres abroad. This will further strengthen India's cultural relations with the rest of the world.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 30 )

6.58 The Lectures delivered by our founding fathers, eminent personalities and intellectuals at the Council's "Memorial Lecture", Seminars, etc. are available with the Council in book forms. But the Committee have an impression that they are badly produced and not maintained properly. They, therefore, recommend that necessary steps be taken by the Council to preserve and produce these



lectures in a presentable form. Such publications can be given to distinguished visitors and distributed in the Universities for the benefit of students and others.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 31 )

## **VI. SEMINARS/SYMPOSIA/CONFERENCE**

6.59 The Council organizes Maulana Azad Essay Competition, Maulana Azad Lecture Series, Seminars and Conferences.

6.60 The Council also functions as the Secretariat for the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding since institution of this award in the year 1965 in memory of the first Prime Minister of India with a cash prize of Rs. 25 lacs.

6.61 According to the Ministry the Council took part in the organization of international seminars and conferences on issues of cultural interest. A large number of Indian writers, poets, dancers, musicians and scholars have been given travel grants by the Council to enable them to present papers and participate in important seminars and conferences held abroad.

6.62 Year-wise break-up of the Indian writers, poets, musicians, scholars and artistes whose visit was facilitated by ICCR during the last five years is as follows:-

1997-98	138
1998-99	108
1999-2000	71
1999-2001	49
1999-2002	48

6.63 It was further stated that the Council provided a return international air ticket to the individuals. The cost of air ticket covered, in most of the cases, approximately 90% of the total expenditure since local hospitality was usually offered by the hosts/organizers.

6.64 The Council also co-sponsored seminars in association with organizations. During the last three years, the Council has sponsored 7 seminars both at the national as well as international level. ICCR do not co-sponsor any seminars abroad.

6.65 When the Committee asked whether it would not be prudent to make the ICCR the nodal agency for implementing all the cultural activities abroad particularly when

different organizations seemed to have parallel operation, the Ministry stated that India's cultural interaction with the rest of the world was done both by Government agencies as well as by private groups. However, the Ministry further stated that being an autonomous body, it would be easy for ICCR to coordinate and implement the initiatives of Government departments and agencies. The solution, therefore, would be a mechanism of coordination between all agencies dealing with cultural activities, both governmental and autonomous to ensure optimum results. However, to undertake this role, ICCR would need to be substantially buttressed with additional resources and manpower.

**6.66 The Committee note that the number of Indian writers, poets, musicians, scholars and artistes whose visits are facilitated by the Council to participate in international seminars and conferences of cultural interests has been coming down gradually over the last few years. The Committee desire that the Council should take initiative to encourage and facilitate Indian writers, scholars, musicians, etc. to take part in the organisation of international seminars and conferences held abroad by giving them more incentives, as these persons leave a positive impact of our efforts to strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries of the world through these programmes. The Council should also co-sponsor seminars abroad in association with other organisations. The Committee would like the Council to act as the nodal agency for implementing all the cultural activities in association and in co-ordination with other Government agencies and private groups/agencies engaged in cultural activities so as to ensure optimal results.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 32 )**

## **VII. EXHIBITIONS**

6.67 Under the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme and as a part of its own activities, the Council sponsors exhibitions of Indian art and crafts to foreign countries and also receives exhibitions from abroad for exposition in India. The Council has since compiled its own exhibitions viz. "Contemporary Graphic Prints", "Madhubani Paintings", Photo Exhibition "My Land My People", "Indian Dolls and Dresses" and "Cartoons".

These exhibitions have been created by noted experts like Rabina Karode, Manu Parikh, Raghu Rai, Sudhir Dar and experts of Dolls Museum, New Delhi.

6.68 The Ministry, however, informed that the Council has created some exhibitions. However, the absence of services of trained curator in ICCR could result in damage deterioration of valuable paintings. The Committee were also informed by a non-official expert that there was a proposal to get the basement of Nehru Centre London for setting up a small gallery for exhibiting Indian arts. When enquired in this regard, the Council informed that a proposal had been received regarding renovation of the Nehru Centre, London which was the property of the Ministry and renovation would be handled by the Ministry.

6.69 During evidence when inquired whether the Council was doing anything in the field of exchange of films, the representative of the Ministry stated:

*“We are depending upon for feature films either of the Directorate of Film Festivals or bodies like NFDC, etc. Making of Bollywood and other joint venture is the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting matter. What we have managed to do in recent years, as the Foreign Secretary indicated, is that some rights become available to us particularly we have managed to get packages of famous films like Raj Kapoor films, Amitabh Bachchan films, and Gurudutt films and those packages which have become available to us, we have now got sub-titles into major languages. These are proving very useful in countries for holding film festivals etc. As far as new Bollywood films are concerned, it is basically the commercial exercise and wherever we can help, we certainly do help”.*

6.70 The Ministry further informed that under its scheme of presentation of books and art objects, the Council gifted books on Indian art, culture, architecture, cuisine, dance and music to various visiting foreign dignitaries and to libraries, institutions and schools in various countries. Accordingly, the Council, through Missions abroad, also gifted Indian music instruments, art objects, video/audio cassettes/CDs, CD-ROMs (on Indian classical dances and music).

**6.71 The Committee note that the Council sponsors exhibitions of Indian art and crafts to foreign countries and also receives exhibitions from abroad for exposition in India. However, the Committee understand that the Council has created very few exhibitions of its own and depends more on other sources to lend exhibitions for sponsoring abroad. The Committee desire that the Council should create more exhibitions of its own depicting Indian traditions, heritage and different art forms for exhibiting abroad. They also recommend that the**

posts of trained curators should be created in ICCR so that the paintings, etc. could be saved from damage. The Committee hope that the basement of the Nehru Centre, London would be renovated and a small gallery for exhibiting Indian art there would be set up soon.

(RECOMMENDATION NO.33 )

6.72 The Committee feel that the impression created by the Indian films is tremendous which no other area can achieve easily. They, therefore, recommend that the Council in collaboration with the External Publicity Division of the Ministry should make efforts to get the rights for sponsoring more and more Indian popular films abroad, giving suitable sub-titles in major languages.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 34 )

## **VIII. LIBRARY**

6.73 The ICCR Library was established in 1950. It started with the personal collections and rare manuscripts of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Over the years it has grown manifold and now has a collection of approximately 50,000 volumes mainly on Indian history, art and culture. It also subscribes to various newspapers and magazines. The main attraction of the Library is its collection of 195 rare manuscripts in Urdu, Arabic and Persian languages. The manuscripts, other rare books along with microfilm rolls are housed in a special section of the Library called "Gosha-e-Azad". The Library is a member of DELNET (Developing Library network). Library database has been developed on LIBSYS platform. Retro-conversion of English documents was stated to be available in the Library and was in the process of converting the language publication to MARC (Machine-Readable Catalogue) Format.

6.74 The Library has introduced a new scheme of fellowship in the fields of art, culture, history and literature aimed at getting scholars to make better use of resources available in the Library.

6.75 The Committee enquired whether the ICCR Library was complete by all means and what steps had been taken for its improvement. The Ministry replied that the ICCR

Library was being continuously improved and modernized by using the latest technology.

#### AUDIO AND VIDEO CD

6.76 The Ministry has informed that in collaboration with Doordarshan, the Council has brought out Audio CDs viz. “Begum Akhtar” and “Sufiana Qawwali” and Video CDs “Kathak” and “Bharatanatyam”. These CD were released on the “Bhartiya Pravasi Diwas” on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2003. The Council has also brought out Video CDs on various Indian classical dance forms viz. Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Mohiniattam, Kathak and Kuchipudi.

#### ICCR ON LINE

6.77 According to the Annual report of the Ministry of External Affairs, the Council had its own websites. The creation of new comprehensive website by amalgamating all the three sites was under progress. The efforts will be to build a website of international standard featuring the latest technologies available. The work was expected to be completed within the current financial year.

**6.78 The Committee note that ICCR has a large library with Maulana Azad’s personal collections, rare manuscripts and a lot of books which have detailed marginal notes from Maulana Azad’s own study. But these collections are not in good shape and are poorly maintained. The Committee desire that necessary measures should be initiated to preserve and maintain the Council’s Library, which has very rare collection of valuable heritage left by its founding father and others by using the latest technology. The Committee recommend that the ICCR should also establish a Research Cell-cum Archives Unit to study and preserve the works and profiles of distinguished and eminent personalities, scholars, writers and artistes in diverse fields. The Committee hope that the new**

**comprehensive web-site being created by ICCR, featuring the latest technologies of international standard will be completed soon.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 35 )**

## **CHAPTER-VII**

### **CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

ICCR is an autonomous organisation administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs. As per the provisions of ICCR constitution, the President of India appoints the President of ICCR for a period of three years. At present, the Hon'ble Chairman of Rajya Sabha is the President of the Council. The organisational set up of the ICCR is at Annexure-IV

7.2 As per the provisions of the ICCR Constitution, the Governing Body shall meet at least twice every year at a place and on a date to be fixed by the President. More meetings may be called by the President on his own initiative or at the request received in writing from two-thirds of the members of the Governing Body.

7.3 The Governing Body approves the ICCR Annual Plan Action for the respective years. The Governing Body gives guidelines and directions for strengthening the activities of the Council.

7.4 During evidence, the Committee expressed the view that proper coordination and greater involvement of different wings of the Government was needed. The Ministries of External Affairs, Tourism, Education, Information and Broadcasting and also trade and commerce needed to have coordinated efforts and exchange of views to promote our cultural heritage across the Globe. The Foreign Secretary, thereupon stated-

*“So far as the larger question of coordination between the different Government Departments are concerned, that is beyond the purview of the Ministry of External Affairs.*

7.5 On being asked about the sanctioned as well as working strength of different posts in ICCR and its Regional Centres, the Ministry informed that out of the sanctioned staff strength of 351, in different categories, the present staff strength of ICCR was 252. It was further stated that all efforts were being made to fill these vacancies as this was adversely affecting the working of the Council.

**7.6 The Committee note that the ICCR is an autonomous organisation administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs. While the Committee appreciate the work being done by ICCR in promoting India's rich cultural heritage globally, they are of the firm opinion that there is still a lot of scope to revamp and reorient the Council's functioning in keeping with the changing circumstances the world over. The Committee feel that ICCR or for that matter no other organisation can work in isolation. Cultural diplomacy has to be a basic and significant element in our foreign policy and for achieving this objective ICCR should identify organisations and institutions which may supplement its efforts in strengthening its activities. The Committee do not agree with the Ministry that coordination between the different Government Departments is beyond the purview of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee strongly feel that to achieve the objectives of ICCR and also to enhance its activities, there is need for an increased coordination and greater involvement of different wings of Government of India. The Ministries of External Affairs, Tourism, Information & Broadcasting, Human Resource Development (Departments of Culture and**



Education) and also Commerce need to have a coordinated and combined effort in this direction.

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 36 )**

**7.7 Cultural Diplomacy being the responsibility mainly of the Ministry of External Affairs, it is they who should act as the nodal Ministry. The Committee therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should form a Coordination Committee which may include senior officers of the Ministries of External Affairs, Tourism, Information and Broadcasting, Human Resource Development (Departments of Culture and Education) and Commerce as its Members. The Committee hope that with the active involvement of various Ministries of the Government of India, the ICCR will be able to formulate in real terms comprehensive action plans for strengthening and promoting its activities within the country as well as abroad. Apart from affording adequate opportunities to understand, plan and implement various ideas, the Coordination Committee could function as a think tank for ICCR to enable it to become a more effective instrument for India's cultural diplomacy.**

**(RECOMMENDATION NO. 37)**

**7.8 The Committee note that against the sanctioned staff strength of 351 in different categories, the present working strength of the Council is only 252. The Ministry have themselves admitted that this has adversely affected the working of ICCR. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government to fill up the vacant posts immediately, particularly those at the operational levels, so that the work of the Council is not adversely affected. Keeping in view the Council's proposals to**

open more Regional Centres in the country and Cultural Centres abroad and also the likely increase in the workload of the Council, the Committee suggest that the Ministry may review the sanctioned staff strength of the Council in different categories. The Committee feel that inadequate staff, lack of promotional avenues and ineffective cadre management are bound to have an adverse impact on the morale of the staff resulting in poor efficiency. The Committee, therefore, desire that to motivate the staff to work with zeal and to the best of their ability, adequate incentives should be given to them by way of opening more promotional avenues, particularly at operational and supervisory levels and in postings abroad.

(RECOMMENDATION NO. 38)

NEW DELHI  
19 December, 2003  
28 Agrahayana, 1925

KRISHNA BOSE,  
Chairman,  
Standing Committee on External Affairs,

## **ANNEXURE-I**

### **MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 13<sup>th</sup> August, 2003**

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1648 hrs.

#### **Present**

Smt. Krishna Bose – Chairperson

#### **Members**

##### **Lok Sabha**

2. Shri R.L. Bhatia
3. Shri Bikram Keshari Deo
4. Shri A.D.K. Jeyaseelan
5. Shri Suresh Prabhu
6. Shri Ramshakal
7. Shri Saiduzzaman

##### **Rajya Sabha**

8. Shri K. Janakrishnamurthy
9. Shri P.G. Narayanan
10. Shri Mahendra Prasad
11. Shri Shunmugasundaram
12. Dr. L.M. Singhvi
13. Shri K. Natwar Singh

#### **Witnesses**

1. Shri Mrinal Sen, MP, Film Producer & Director
2. Smt Shovana Narayan, Renowned Dancer
3. Shri Shuvaprasanna, Renowned Painter
4. Prof. Syed Shahid Mahdi, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia

#### **Secretariat**

1. Shri P.K.Grover - Director
2. Shri R.K. Saxena - Under Secretary

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members and witnesses to the sitting of the Committee. In her introductory remarks, Hon'ble Chairperson expressed that an extensive campaign was needed to spread the rich heritage of Indian culture all over the world which would not only strengthen our diplomatic relations with other countries but also expand the horizon of our great artistes and exponents and therefore, it is of utmost necessity that the functioning of ICCR should be fine-tuned to meet the present day growing needs. Thereafter, the witnesses presented their opinions on the ICCR.

2. The witnesses strongly pointed out the regional imbalances in the activities of ICCR in different parts of the world. Activities of ICCR were almost negligible in Southeast Asia and Latin American countries. The European countries also were not being given due care by the ICCR in regard to presentation of their activities. It was also stated that imbalances existed even within the country. The witnesses therefore suggested spreading of activities of ICCR in a balanced manner and also maintaining balance between traditional and classical arts. The witnesses also suggested that the publications and magazines of ICCR should be converted into Net-Magazines for wider access by the people. Besides impressing upon the effective use of cyber technology, the formation of small committees to suggest improvements and upgradations of various activities of ICCR was also suggested. The library of ICCR was also desired to be reshaped. The cost-benefit analysis of Regional Centres of ICCR was also needed to be conducted.

3. Witnesses and the Members of the Committee were of the view that the ICCR somehow could not fulfill the vision and the missions for which this premier institution had been established fifty three year ago. Various other suggestions for improvements in working of the ICCR were given by the witnesses.

4. The verbatim record of the proceedings of the sitting has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

## **ANNEXURE-II**

### **MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 6th NOVEMBER, 2003**

The Committee sat from 1100 hrs. to 1240 hrs.

#### **Present**

Smt. Krishna Bose – Chairperson

#### **Members**

##### **Lok Sabha**

2. Shri R. L. Bhatia
3. Shri Manibhai Ramjibhai Chaudhri
4. Shri Bikram Keshari Deo
5. Shri A.D.K. Jeyaseelan
6. Shri P. Kumarasamy
7. Shri Suresh Kurup
8. Shri Zora Singh Mann
9. Shri Saiduzzaman
10. Shri Chandra Vijay Singh
11. Smt Shyama Singh

##### **Rajya Sabha**

12. Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu
13. Shri P.G. Narayanan
14. Shri Fali S. Nariman
15. Shri R.Shunmugasundaram
16. Dr. Karan Singh

##### **Witnesses (Ministry of External Affairs)**

1. Shri Kanwal Sibal , Foreign Secretary
2. Shri Rakesh Kumar, DG (ICCR)
3. Shri Ashok K Attri, Joint Secretary (Coord)
4. Shri R. Dayakar, Joint Secretary (NRI)
5. Shri Sarvajit Chakravarti, DDG (P), ICCR
6. Shri K.V. Bhagirath, Joint Secretary (Estt)
7. Shri Navtej Singh Sarna, Joint Secretary (XP)

8. Shri Pradeep Singh, DDG (A), ICCR

### **Secretariat**

1. Shri P.K.Grover - Director
2. Shri R.K. Saxena - Deputy Secretary

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and Representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and ICCR to the sitting of the Committee. The Committee then took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and ICCR on the subject “ Working of the ICCR with special reference to Cultural Centres Abroad”.

2. The main issues discussed during the sitting related to increase in budget of ICCR, activities of the Regional Centres of ICCR and Cultural Centres abroad, promoting cultural heritage across the world, need for opening of New Cultural Centres abroad, establishment of Cultural Centres at Srinagar and Kathmandu, sponsorship of cultural troupes going abroad, exchange of Films through ICCR, academic exchange in order to promote Indian culture abroad, role of Indian Missions and prospects of involving Indian Diaspora in programmes of ICCR etc. The representatives of MEA and ICCR replied to the queries raised by the Members on certain points.

3. The verbatim proceedings of the evidence have been kept on record.

The Committee then adjourned.

## **ANNEXURE-III**

### **MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 19<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER, 2003**

The Committee sat from 1500 hrs. to 1600 hrs. on 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2003 in Committee Room 'E' Parliament House Annexe.

#### **Present**

Smt. Krishna Bose – Chairman

#### **Members**

##### **(Lok Sabha)**

2. Shri R. L. Bhatia
2. Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi
3. Shri Bikram Keshari Deo
4. Shri Holkhomang Haokip
5. Shri Shri Ramshakal
6. Shri Saiduzzama
7. Shri Dileep Sanghani
8. Smt Minati Sen
9. Shri Saleem Iqbal Shervani

#### **Members**

##### **(Rajya Sabha)**

10. Shri Ranganath Misra
11. Shri P. G. Narayanan
12. Shri Mahendra Prasad
14. Shri R. Shunmugasundaram

#### **Secretariat**

1. Shri P. K. Grover – Director
2. Shri R.K. Saxena – Deputy Secretary

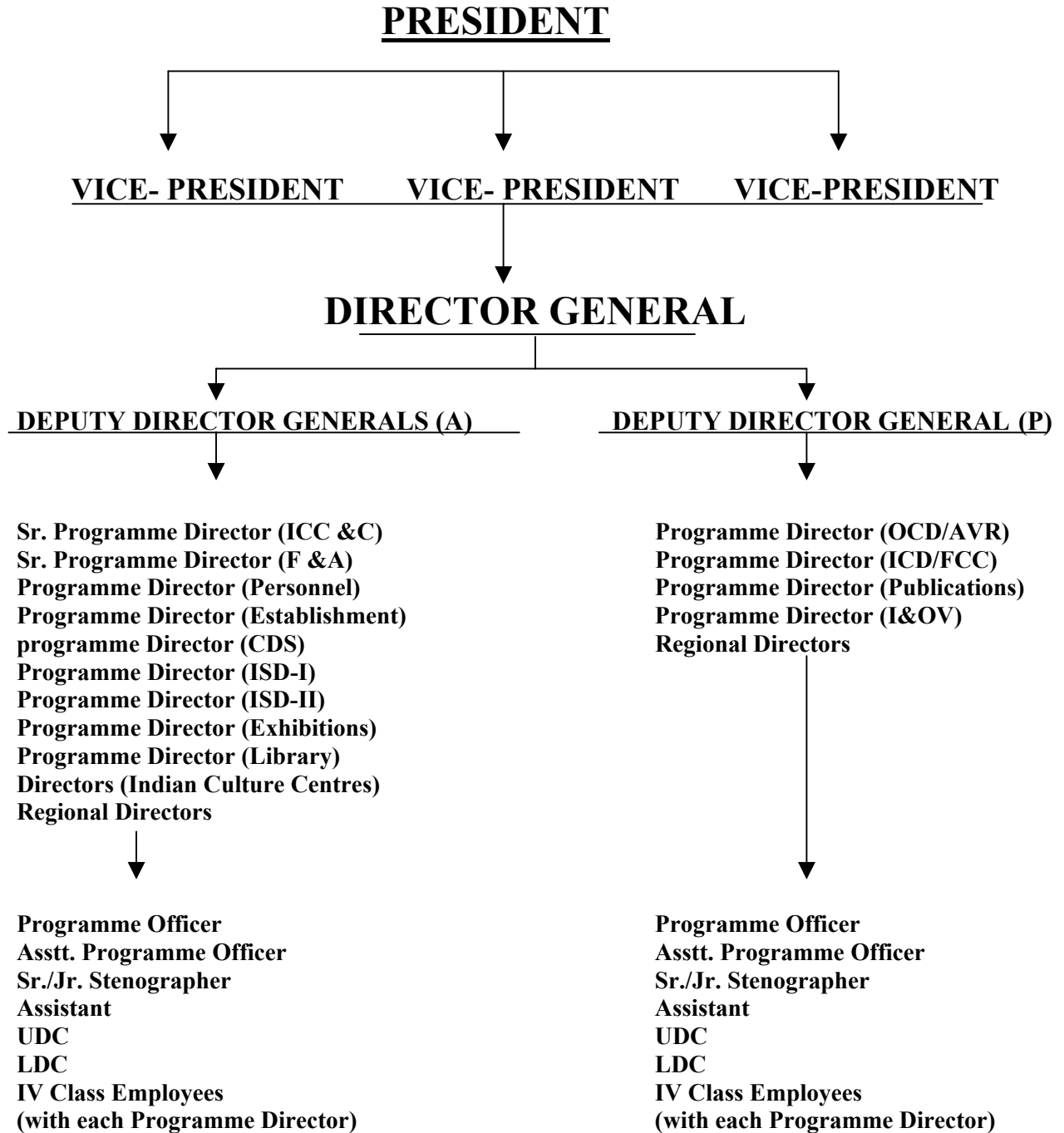
At the outset, the Committee considered and adopted the draft Report on the subject "Working of Indian Council for Cultural Relations with special reference to Cultural Centres abroad".

2. The Committee also authorized the Chairperson to finalise the Report in the light of verbal and consequential changes, if any, arising out of factual verification of the Report by the Ministry/ICCR and thereafter to present the Report to Parliament.

The Committee then adjourned.

## ANNEXURE-IV

### ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP OF ICCR





## **Abbreviations**

<b>ICC&amp;C</b>	<b>Indian Culture Centres and Chairs</b>
<b>F&amp;A</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Accounts</b>
<b>CDS</b>	<b>Creative Dialogue Section</b>
<b>ISD</b>	<b>International Students Division</b>
<b>OCD</b>	<b>Outgoing Cultural Delegations</b>
<b>AVR</b>	<b>Audio Visual Recording</b>
<b>ICD</b>	<b>Incoming Cultural Delegations</b>
<b>FCC</b>	<b>Foreign Cultural Centres</b>
<b>I&amp;OV</b>	<b>Incoming &amp; Outgoing Visitors</b>

## **ANNEXURE-V**

### **STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry	Observations/Recommendations
1.	1.6	External Affairs	During the examination of the subject, the Committee have visited the Headquarters of ICCR and its regional Cultural Centres in various parts of the country. The Committee feel that the ICCR has not quite fulfilled the vision and mission with which it was launched 53 years ago. Although the Committee appreciate the work ICCR is doing, yet keeping in view the increasing role of cultural diplomacy, an extensive campaign needs to be done through media and other sources to spread the rich Indian cultural heritage all over the world, which will not only strengthen our diplomatic relations with other countries but also expand the horizon of our great artistes and exponents.
2	1.7	External Affairs	The Committee also feel that ICCR has not been interacting to the desired extent with the people who are actively involved in the field and who can tell them more from their experiences what really is needed to be done. In the opinion of Committee the ICCR must adopt a multifaceted approach. For this purpose, it is of utmost necessity that the functioning of the ICCR should be fine-tuned to meet the present day growing needs with a view to improving and upgrading its activities by inviting views and suggestions from artistes and eminent personalities in the field. It would certainly help the ICCR to function effectively and respond to the changing demands and priorities in the conduct of our cultural diplomacy.
3	2.4	External Affairs	Cultural diplomacy is a powerful tool for furthering diplomatic interests in commercial, political and strategic fields. Keeping this important aspect in view, the Committee are of the opinion that the ICCR has been doing a good job in the field of cultural diplomacy. But there is need to further increase the scope and intensity of its activities with innovative policies and programmes in the ever-changing circumstances. Its policies and programmes will

			<p>have to be specific, pointed and purposeful. The Committee feel that ICCR's approach is conventional and unprofessional and as such, the ICCR has not been able to go beyond propagating the stereotyped image of our country. The Committee would, therefore, like to impress upon the Government to accord cultural diplomacy the highest importance. Since ICCR is the nodal agency under the Ministry of External Affairs for cultural promotions, the Committee would urge the ICCR to intensify its efforts in external projection. Apart from our efforts in sustaining our traditional ties with some specific Asian countries, the ICCR should widen its area of activity and strive hard to achieve a stronger cultural presence all over the world.</p>
4	2.5	External Affairs	<p>The Committee are also of the opinion that it is not sufficient for the ICCR to merely draw up ambitious projects for cultural promotion. What is needed is the effective implementation of these projects. To achieve its objectives, the ICCR has to work in unison with the civil society, the Indian diaspora who have been the strongest promoters of Indian culture in foreign countries. Therefore, the Committee strongly feel that the ICCR needs to change its mantle, reorient its activities in such a way that it is able to cope with the changing requirements in cultural diplomacy and actively involve the Indian diaspora in all its drives for cultural promotion. This way, the image of our country can be projected in a better perspective and at the same time the creative energies and the subtle strength of these people could also be utilised in the most efficient and productive manner.</p>
5	3.6	External Affairs	<p>The Committee note that ICCR has planned to open more regional centres in different parts of the country viz. Jaipur, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar and North-eastern Region. However, the Committee find that certain key regions of the country like Bihar and Jammu &amp; Kashmir have been ignored. Hardly any attention has been given to Bihar and Jammu &amp; Kashmir who have contributed significantly to the country's culture and the latter attracts a large number of tourists. Besides, to remove the regional imbalances, certain regions need to be</p>

			strengthened.
6	3.7	External Affairs	The Committee also find that the Chief Secretary of Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Orissa have been requested to nominate officers from the concerned State Governments with whom the Council could coordinate the opening of Regional Offices. The Committee hope that the matter would be pursued earnestly with the concerned authorities and the proposed regional centres would be opened soon. The Committee also recommend that regional centres in Srinagar, Bihar and other parts of the country which have rich cultural traditions should be opened at the earliest.
7	3.8	External Affairs	The Committee note that the regional centres are responsible for coordinating arrangements with the concerned State Governments and local cultural institutions for the Council's activities. They are also responsible for organising shows of performing art groups, welfare of foreign scholars, organisation and participation in non-performing arts such as seminars, symposia and conferences organised in that region, providing logistic support during the visits of distinguished visitors, making arrangements for incoming and outgoing exhibitions and sending books/musical instruments for presentation to the Indian Cultural Centres or Missions abroad.
8	3.9	External Affairs	However, the Committee are not satisfied with the functions being performed by the regional centres as they have been simply doing the work of coordination in organising shows of performing arts groups, arranging incoming and outgoing exhibitions and giving logistic support during the visits of distinguished visitors. They are not even allowed to go in for talent hunt and hardly have any interaction with the people engaged in various activities in the region. The Committee feel that continuous interaction of this kind is absolutely necessary for improvement in the working of regional centres in the country. Based on the interaction with the people of the region in the field and also from the incoming as well as outgoing groups, etc., reports should be presented to the headquarters with suggestions to improve the

			functioning and activities of the respective regional centre. The Committee also desire that regional centres of ICCR should prepare a comprehensive data bank giving information about the local artistes/groups/theatres in the form of cassettes/CD Roms. Such data could be made available at all the regional centres in the country as well as Cultural Centres abroad. It will work as a ready reckoner for organising cultural activities in India and abroad.
9	4.14	External Affairs	The Committee find that a large number of proposals for opening cultural centres abroad are under consideration of the Ministry for the last several years but due to non-availability of funds and difficulty in creation of posts for the new centres, they have not come to any decision so far. Besides, South-East Asia and Latin American countries have been neglected in this respect. In Europe too, except UK and Germany, not much attention has been given to other important countries like France, which has proximity with UNESCO. The Committee view that there should be a kind of regional balance globally while deciding to open a cultural centre abroad. Keeping in view the importance of cultural diplomacy in the modern age and changing world scenario, the Committee recommend that more Cultural Centres need to be opened preferably in South-East Asia, Latin America and in countries where a sizeable Indian community resides.
10	4.15	External Affairs	As recommended in their 12 <sup>th</sup> Report presented on 17 <sup>th</sup> December, 2003 the Committee desire that the cultural centre at Washington should be opened without any further delay. The Committee desire that setting up of a centre at Kathmandu should be given sincere consideration.
11	4.16	External Affairs	Non-availability of funds and difficulty in creation of new posts for the centres are stated to be the main reasons for not opening more Cultural Centres abroad. Since cultural diplomacy has gained significant importance today the Committee strongly feel that such constraints should not come in the way of projecting India's cultural heritage and fostering close cultural linkages abroad.

12	4.17	External Affairs	The Committee find that the persons heading the Cultural Centres abroad face functional difficulties as they are not given diplomatic status in some of the countries. In some countries they are on a diplomatic list of the Missions only. The Committee feel that unless a person heading the cultural centre is given a diplomatic status, he is not taken seriously and is not effective enough in strengthening and promoting cultural activities of the centre. The Committee, therefore, suggest that the Director or head of the centre should be given a diplomatic status. Such person may not necessarily be a diplomat. He may be a person well conversant with the art, culture and our traditional heritage and capable of achieving the aims and objectives for which the Council was established.
13	5.6	External Affairs	The Committee find that ICCR's budget has recorded only marginal increases over successive years while there was constant pressure on it to increase the scope and intensity of its activities. If inflationary trends are taken into account, ICCR's budget, in real terms, has been actually reduced over the last few years. It is also noted that the Council has visualized a number of innovative activities, projects and it also intends to promote more aggressively India's culture abroad and provide a better national and international profile for its activities. Furthermore, there are a number of proposals awaiting the establishment of cultural centres abroad. But all those projects could not be taken up by the Council due to lack of additional financial resources.
14	5.7	External Affairs	The Committee are constrained to observe that in spite of their repeated recommendations, there has been virtually no increase in the annual grants of the Council in real terms, though the same have been increased from Rs. 42.43 crore in 2002-03 to Rs. 54.50 crore in 2003-04. The Committee are of the view that even the proper maintenance of the existing level of activities of the Council would justify a further increase in the budgetary allocations of ICCR. However, they feel that the Ministry of External Affairs have not been able to present the case of ICCR properly and forcefully and the Ministry of Finance have also not realised the

		External Affairs	importance of cultural diplomacy. The Committee strongly feel that the financial allocation being given to the Council is not at all sufficient for the gamut of its activities and for achieving its objectives fully. ICCR was established to act as India's premier institution for promoting India's cultural heritage, fostering cultural exchanges and strengthening cultural ties with the countries of the world. For better projection of India's image abroad and also for the increased activities and projects of the Council, financial constraints should not come in its way. The Committee would like to emphasize that nothing else can project our country in the world in a stronger way than our culture and heritage. Therefore, the Committee recommend that the budgetary allocations for ICCR should substantially be augmented so that it could achieve its desired objectives.
15	5.8	External Affairs	Furthermore, the Committee would like to point out that ICCR has not been working in tandem with the civil society of various countries of the world which leaves it high and dry and somewhat lonely in the matter of raising resources. The Committee have no doubt that ICCR could substantially augment its resources if it starts involving the civil society globally and the Indian diaspora in those countries. The Committee also suggest that to reduce the budgetary constraints of the Council, the Ministry should explore the possibility of coordinating trade and culture as there are several Fortune 500 companies of Indian origin and their resources can be tapped. Greater coordination between business and culture would certainly be helpful in meeting the budgetary constraints.
16	6.20	External Affairs	The Committee observe that ICCR's schemes of offering scholarships to foreign students play a significant role in generating goodwill and better understanding of India. Over the last more than 50 years, when the ICCR was in existence, the Council has imparted training to a large number of foreign students under this scheme. Today several such students/persons are occupying important positions in their countries. Such students can be seen as good friends of India as after learning and living here, they obtain firsthand knowledge of India's rich cultural traditions, understanding of India's political,

		External Affairs	socio-economic systems, etc. and can actually contribute in different ways to our image abroad.
17	6.21	External Affairs	However, the Committee feel that keeping in view the changing world scenario and development in our economic and political strategies, the scholarship programmes of the Council should be formulated to make it specific and targeted to our foreign policy objectives. Several courses are being offered by the Council to the foreign scholars in various Universities of the country. The Committee desire that courses such as "India Study programme" as has been started by the University of Hyderabad should be introduced which has attracted quite a number of students from the west. The Council could use this mode for promoting Indian studies in a more structured way in collaboration with various Universities of the country. For starting the "Study India programmes", many of our Universities, like Jamia Milia University, could be asked to provide course content and other support for preparing such courses.
18	6.22	External Affairs	The Committee note that under the scholarship programme of the Council, scholarships are offered to foreign students in different courses. It is only the foreign students who come here and not the other way round. The Committee understand that ICCR does not make any arrangement under its schemes for the Indian students who wish to go for studies in the Universities abroad. The Committee desire that ICCR should bring under its schemes the programme of sending Indian students abroad for studies to Universities, like Harvard University and others who may, perhaps, be willing to offer a couple of scholarships for the Indian students.
19	6.23	External Affairs	The Committee are constrained to note that utilisation of scholarships offered to foreign students is constantly very low, although, the ICCR has stated that, it is working towards optimizing utilisation of scholarships being offered. Even during the year 2003-2004 ICCR offered 1093 scholarships out of which only 606 students have joined their respective courses. The reasons cited by the ICCR for non-utilisation of scholarships, viz. decision of the scholars not to pursue studies in India after making application or to opt for some



		External Affairs	scholarship scheme in another country or the scholar's inability to pay international fare which is not covered by scholarship scheme, is not satisfactory at all. The Committee, therefore, suggest that a system should be evolved whereby if seats offered for scholarships for a particular course remain unutilised, waitlisted candidates should be offered the scholarship.
20	6.24	External Affairs	As regards the student's inability to pay international air fare, the Committee find that the air fares offered have been increased from 3 to 30 for each country. The Committee desire that the number of air fares being offered be increased substantially covering not only Central Asia but also other parts of the world. The Committee also hope that the ICCR would take steps to provide suitable hostel facilities to foreign students and ensure their comfortable stay in the country so that they may not feel home sick and could cope with the new environment. It should also be ensured that the students receive their financial dues as per their entitlement in time. The Committee also recommend that the amount of scholarships being paid to the scholars should be reviewed biannually.
21	6.25	External Affairs	The Committee appreciate the scheme introduced by ICCR, under which on the completion of the course, the students can go and open schools in their own countries in the field of dance and music. After 5 or six year they can come back for a re-orientation or mid-career training. They can again go back and propagate further Indian dance and music to upgrade the skills. The Committee desire that the scheme should be encouraged and ICCR should provide logistic support to the scholars for opening schools in their countries.
22	6.26	External Affairs	The Committee are happy to note that the Council has started a programme to prepare a comprehensive data base of its scholars. The Committee desire that information about the positions held by foreign students in their respective countries after availing the scholarships, should also be included in it. The Committee hope that the computerised data base will be completed expeditiously.

23	6.29	External Affairs	<p>The Committee are of the opinion that the Council's programme of establishing chairs and deputing Visiting Professors abroad to educate foreign University students in Indian studies and other related subjects is very meagre but useful as it influences the perception of foreign students about India and assists them to understand India's position on various issues in the right perspective. The Committee find that there are presently only sixteen chairs and Professorships which are functional worldwide under the aegis of ICCR. They desire that more chairs should be established under this programme and the number of Professors being sent abroad to teach Hindi and other Indian languages, particularly where a large number of persons of Indian origin reside, should be increased substantially</p>
24	6.43	External Affairs	<p>The Committee note that ICCR organises visits of performing artistes/troupes to various parts of the world for performances under the ambit of bilateral cultural exchange programmes as well as in response to the recommendations received from Indian Missions abroad with the objective of depicting different performing art forms of India in various parts of the world. However, the Committee find that the Council does not have cultural agreements with all the countries and also many of the bilateral exchange agreements which are agreed upon for two years remain unfulfilled and unexplored. Moreover, the Council does not renew the cultural exchange programmes agreements periodically, as required and even where cultural exchange programmes are valid, full implementation of their provisions is rarely achieved. The Committee are not at all satisfied with such a state of affairs. The Committee recommend that the reasons for non-fulfillment of the cultural exchange agreements be identified and in the light thereof the Council should make all out efforts to ensure that bilateral cultural exchange agreements do not remain unfulfilled. The Council must also go in for bilateral cultural exchange agreements with various countries of the world.</p>

25	6.44	External Affairs	<p>The Committee have received the impression that ICCR is focussing more on performing arts and is sending a number of troupes/groups for performances in various parts of the world, but contemporary art has not been sufficiently promoted by the Council. In the Committee's view whichever recognition the Indian contemporary art has achieved, has been more through private galleries or otherwise rather than through the efforts of the Council. In order to promote contemporary Indian art, to give exposure to the Indian art and culture worldwide and also to organise festivals and other activities, permanent presence of Indian art is a must at least in key cities of the world. The Committee desire that the Council, in collaboration with Indian Missions abroad, will make sincere efforts in this regard.</p>
26	6.45	External Affairs	<p>The Committee feel that the Council gives preference to certain eminent artistes/troupes/groups based in some selected cities while representing India abroad in cultural performances and programmes. Junior and up-coming artistes are not being given adequate opportunities while making selection for performances abroad. Also regional representation of artistes/folk dancers, etc. particularly from North-Eastern States, West Bengal and other remote areas are not given fair chance to perform abroad. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the criteria for selecting artistes/troupes for performing abroad should be made more transparent. Also, while selecting artistes/groups for sponsoring to perform abroad, junior up-coming artistes from various regions of the country, particularly from remote areas should also be included in the list in addition to the established and outstanding musicians, dancers or groups, so that India's true traditional art performances could be represented abroad. The Committee would also like the ICCR to make efforts to get the cultural programmes sponsored by private parties so that its financial burden could be reduced and more artistes/troupes could be sent abroad.</p>

27	6.46	External Affairs	The Committee also recommend that the Ministry, particularly the Indian Missions abroad, should collaborate with organisations of regional groups in foreign countries e.g. Telugu Association, Marathi Association, etc. in organising cultural shows by ICCR in various countries. These Associations/groups, if involved by the Council, will be a great help in promoting Indian art and Culture abroad. The Committee also recommend that more number of theatre groups should be sent abroad.
28	6.47	External Affairs	The Committee find that the Council's Distinguished Visitors Programme is an extremely useful programme under which it facilitates exchange of scholars, intellectuals, academicians and artistes. Such exchanges provides ample opportunities of sharing ideas through discussions and meetings. The Committee therefore recommend that more emphasis be given to this programme, keeping in view the new trends and priorities of our foreign policy objectives.
29	6.56	External Affairs	The Committee note that ICCR publishes a number of journals to spread its cultural message. Though these journals are very useful and informative in nature, the Committee feel that these are not accessible to the common man. The Committee recommend the ICCR to publish a single and comprehensive publication which can be an effective instrument for carrying information about India's art and culture to the targeted readership. Each issue may carry, apart from cultural information, profiles of achievers in diverse fields of art and culture and with authoritative knowledge in the respective field of specialisation. The Committee are of the opinion that such a single publication by ICCR will be a more effective voice of the rich Indian cultural heritage, which needs to be given exposure with great thrust. A video-CD edition of the publication may also be brought out by the Council and made available to the media in the country as well as abroad. The Committee further recommend that necessary steps may be taken to make the Council's publications commercially available to the common man, but at an affordable price.

30	6.57	External Affairs	The Committee also desire the Council to design and print meaningful posters to disseminate India's cultural philosophy. Such posters may be displayed at the regional centres of the Council and also at our Missions and Cultural Centres abroad. This will further strengthen India's cultural relations with the rest of the world.
31	6.58	External Affairs	The Lectures delivered by our founding fathers, eminent personalities and intellectuals at the Council's "Memorial Lecture", Seminars, etc. are available with the Council in book forms. But the Committee have an impression that they are badly produced and not maintained properly. They, therefore, recommend that necessary steps be taken by the Council to preserve and produce these lectures in a presentable form. Such publications can be given to distinguished visitors and distributed in the Universities for the benefit of students and others.
32	6.66	External Affairs	The Committee note that the number of Indian writers, poets, musicians, scholars and artistes whose visits are facilitated by the Council to participate in international seminars and conferences of cultural interests has been coming down gradually over the last few years. The Committee desire that the Council should take initiative to encourage and facilitate Indian writers, scholars, musicians, etc. to take part in the organisation of international seminars and conferences held abroad by giving them more incentives, as these persons leave a positive impact of our efforts to strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries of the world through these programmes. The Council should also co-sponsor seminars abroad in association with other organisations. The Committee would like the Council to act as the nodal agency for implementing all the cultural activities in association and in co-ordination with other Government agencies and private groups/agencies engaged in cultural activities so as to ensure optimal results.
33	6.71	External Affairs	The Committee note that the Council sponsors exhibitions of Indian art and crafts to foreign countries and also receives exhibitions from abroad for exhibition in India. However, the Committee

		External Affairs	for exposition in India. However, the Committee understand that the Council has created very few exhibitions of its own and depends more on other sources to lend exhibitions for sponsoring abroad. The Committee desire that the Council should create more exhibitions of its own depicting Indian traditions, heritage and different art forms for exhibiting abroad. They also recommend that the posts of trained curators should be created in ICCR so that the paintings, etc. could be saved from damage. The Committee hope that the basement of the Nehru Centre, London would be renovated and a small gallery for exhibiting Indian art there would be set up soon.
34	6.72	External Affairs	The Committee feel that the impression created by the Indian films is tremendous which no other area can achieve easily. They, therefore, recommend that the Council in collaboration with the External Publicity Division of the Ministry should make efforts to get the rights for sponsoring more and more Indian popular films abroad, giving suitable subtitles in major languages.
35	6.78	External Affairs	The Committee note that ICCR has a large library with Maulana Azad's personal collections, rare manuscripts and a lot of books which have detailed marginal notes from Maulana Azad's own study. But these collections are not in good shape and are poorly maintained. The Committee desire that necessary measures should be initiated to preserve and maintain the Council's Library, which has very rare collection of valuable heritage left by its founding father and others by using the latest technology. The Committee recommend that the ICCR should also establish a Research-Cell-cum Archives Unit to study and preserve the works and profiles of distinguished and eminent personalities, scholars, writers and artistes in diverse fields. The Committee hope that the new comprehensive web-site being created by ICCR, featuring the latest technologies of international standard will be completed soon.
36	7.6	External Affairs	The Committee note that the ICCR is an autonomous organisation administratively attached to the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of

		External Affairs	<p>to the Ministry of External Affairs. While the Committee appreciate the work being done by ICCR in promoting India's rich cultural heritage globally, they are of the firm opinion that there is still a lot of scope to revamp and reorient the Council's functioning in keeping with the changing circumstances the world over. The Committee feel that ICCR or for that matter no other organisation can work in isolation. Cultural diplomacy has to be a basic and significant element in our foreign policy and for achieving this objective ICCR should identify organisations and institutions which may supplement its efforts in strengthening its activities. The Committee do not agree with the Ministry that coordination between the different Government's Departments is beyond the purview of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee strongly feel that to achieve the objectives of ICCR and also to enhance its activities, there is need for an increased coordination and greater involvement of different wings of Government of India. The Ministries of External Affairs, Tourism, Information &amp; Broadcasting, Human Resource Development (Departments of Culture and Education) and also Commerce need to have a coordinated and combined effort in this direction.</p>
37	7.7	External Affairs	<p>Cultural Diplomacy being the responsibility mainly of the Ministry of External Affairs, it is they who should act as the nodal Ministry. The Committee therefore, recommend that the Ministry of External Affairs should form a Coordination Committee which may include senior officers of the Ministries of External Affairs, Tourism, Information and Broadcasting, Human Resource Development (Departments of Culture and Education) and Commerce as its Members. The Committee hope that with the active involvement of various Ministries of the Government of India, the ICCR will be able to formulate in real terms comprehensive action plans for strengthening and promoting its activities within the country as well as abroad. Apart from affording adequate opportunities to understand, plan and implement various ideas, the Coordination Committee could function as a think tank for ICCR to enable it to become a more effective instrument for India's</p>

38	7.8	External Affairs	<p>become a more effective instrument for India's cultural diplomacy.</p> <p>The Committee note that against the sanctioned staff strength of 351 in different categories, the present working strength of the Council is only 252. The Ministry have themselves admitted that this has adversely affected the working of ICCR. The Committee, therefore, urge the Government to fill up the vacant posts immediately, particularly those at the operational levels, so that the work of the Council is not adversely affected. Keeping in view the Council's proposals to open more Regional Centres in the country and Cultural Centres abroad and also the likely increase in the workload of the Council, the Committee suggest that the Ministry may review the sanctioned staff strength of the Council in different categories. The Committee feel that inadequate staff, lack of promotional avenues and ineffective cadre management are bound to have an adverse impact on the morale of the staff resulting in poor efficiency. The Committee, therefore, desire that to motivate the staff to work with zeal and to the best of their ability, adequate incentives should be given to them by way of opening more promotional avenues, particularly at operational and supervisory levels and in postings abroad.</p>
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