

REPORT
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(1999-2000)
(THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA)
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2000-2001)
SECOND REPORT

Presented to Lok Sabha on 18.4.2000.

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 18.4.2000.

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

April, 2000/Chaitra, 1922 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (1999-2000)

Chairperson

Shrimati Krishna Bose,

Members (Lok Sabha)

2. Shri E. Ahmed

3. Shri R.L. Bhatia

4. Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi

5. Shri Bhim Dahal

6. Shri Mohan S. Delkar
7. Shri Bikram Keshari Deo
8. Shri Gurcharan Singh Galib
9. Shri K. Francis George
10. Shri Adv. George Eden
11. Dr. S. Jagathrakshakan
12. Shri P. Kumarasamy
13. Shri Suresh Kurup
14. Shri D. Rama Naidu
15. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
16. Shri Amarsinh Vasantryao Patil
17. Shrimati Prabha Rao
18. Shri Saiduzzama
19. Shri Dileep Sanghani
20. Shrimati Minati sen
21. Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde
22. Shri Chandara Bhushan Singh
23. Shri Shri Thirunavukarasu
24. Shri Dinesh Chandra Yadav
25. Shri Saleem Iqbal Sherwani
26. Shri Kolur Basavanagoud
27. Shri Kirti Jha Azad
28. Shri Chandra Vijay Singh
29. Shri Ganta Sreenivasa Rao
30. Vacant

Members (Rajya Sabha)

31. Shri Ranganath Misra
32. Shri Bhuvnesh Chaturvedi*
33. Ms. Mabel Rebello
34. Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma
35. Shri Triloki Nath Chaturvedi
36. Dr. L. M. Singhvi
37. Shrimati Sarla Maheswari
38. Shrimati Jayaparada Nahata
39. Shri N. Thalavai Sundaram
40. Shri Swaraj Kaushal
41. Dr. Yoginder Kumar Alagh*
42. Shri Jayant Kumar Malhoutra*
43. Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma
44. Shri Pritish Nandi
45. Dr. Karan Singh

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. A.K. Pandey - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Harnam Singh - Joint Secretary
3. Shri A.K. Singh - Deputy Secretary
4. Shri R.K. Saxena - Under Secretary
5. Smt. Anita B. Panda - Committee Officer

*** Ceased to be Member of the Committee consequent upon their retirement w.e.f. 2.4.2000**

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on External Affairs having been authorised by the Committee to submit the report on their behalf, present this Second Report on Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2000-2001.

2. The Standing Committee on External Affairs was constituted on 31st December, 1999. One of the functions of the Standing Committee as laid down in Rule 331E of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha is to consider the Demands for Grants of the concerned Ministries/Departments and make a report on the same to the Houses. The Report shall not suggest anything of the nature of cut motions.

3. The Committee (1999-2000) took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs on 4th April, 2000. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of External Affairs for placing before the Committee the material and information which they desired in connection with the examination of the Demands for Grants of the Ministry for 2000-2001 and for giving evidence before the Committee.

4. The Committee (1999-2000) considered and adopted the report at their sitting held on 13 April, 2000.

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

NEW

DELHI;

RISHNA BOSE,

April 13,

2000

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Chaitra 24,1922 (Saka) Standing Committee on External Affairs

R E P O R T

The Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs were laid on the Table of Lok Sabha on 15th March, 2000. The budgetary provision for the Ministry of External Affairs has earlier been entirely non-plan. However, from the financial year 1996-97 onwards, a Plan Budget Head was created for meeting the large outlay on the Tala Hydro-electric Project in Bhutan being executed with Government of India assistance. Similarly, Kurichu Hydro-electric project and Dungsum Cement Project in Bhutan is also now being funded from 'Plan' Budget. In 1999-2000, the Budget Estimate under the Plan Head was Rs.400 crores and for the financial year 2000-2001, the allocation under this Head is Rs.575 crores.

2. Demand No. 25 pertaining to the Ministry of External Affairs contains the figures of Revenue as well as Capital expenditure for 2000-2001, as per details given below:-

(In thousand of Rs.)

	Revenue	Capital	Total
Charged	3,00	-	3,00
Voted	2220,66,82	405,02,00	2625,68,8

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3. The details of the actual Revenue and Capital expenditure for the year 1998-99, Budget Estimates 1999-2000 and Revised Estimates for 1999-2000 and Budget Estimates for 2000-2001 of the Ministry are as under :

(In thousands of Rs.)

Sl. No.	Major Head	Items	1998-99	1999 - 2000	2000-	
			Actual Non-plan	BE - RE Non-Plan	BE Non-plan	
1.	2052	Secretariat General Services	Charged	1,00	1,21	1,00
			Voted	83,56,05	86,10,00	89,26,49
2.	2061	External Affairs Training Embassies & Missions	Charged	2,00,00	1,25,00	1,50,00
			Voted	1,00	0,79	1,00
				629,26,50	617,21,69	652,84,21
						674,74,00

			Special Diplomatic				
			Expenditure	Charged		1,00	1,00
Voted	471,50,12	422,40,00	429,99,00	514.99,00			1,00
			International	72,84			
1,00,00	10,00	1,00,00					
			Conferences/ Meetings				
			Passport and Emigration	64,93,33	68,87,00	87,57,00	88,41,00
			Entertainment Charges	17,67,60	18,00,00	16,50,00	19,00,00
			Irrecoverable Loans			7,50,00	
			Written Off				
			International	22,60,42	30,86,13	27,28,33	31,14,00
			Cooperation				
			Other Expenditure	68,87,94	52,50,18	58,93,97	56,86,82
			Total Major Head "2061"				
Charged		2,00	1,79	2,00			
Voted	1276,72,14	1212,85,00	1281,97,51	1387,64,82			
3.	2075	Miscellaneous	-	1,00	1,00		1,00
		General Services					
4.	3052	Shipping	-	1,00	1,00		1,00
5.	3053	Civil Aviation		1,00	1,00		1,00
6.	3605	Technical and		534,42,74	641,44,00		
594,12,00	731,50,00						
		Economic					
Cooperation	*	**	***	****			
		with other countries					
		Total: Revenue Section					
Charged		3,00	3,00	3,00			
Voted	1894,70,93	1940,42,00	1965,39,00	2220,66,82			
CAPITAL SECTION							
7.	4059	Capital outlay		30,16,79	70,00,00	60,00,00	
70,00,00		on Public works					
8.	4216	Capital outlay		12,75,34	30,00,00	20,00,00	
30,00,00		on Housing					
9.	7605	Advances to Foreign		136,12,74	169,01,00		
204,01,00	305,01,00	Governments	#	##	###		
####							

10.	7615	Miscellaneous Loans	-		
	1,00	1,00	1,00		
		Total: Capital Section	179,04,87	269,02,00	
284,02,00	405,02,00				
		Grand Total :			
		Charged		3,00	3,00
3,00		Voted	2073,75,80	2209,44,00	2249,41,00
2625,68,82					

* Includes Rs.172,97,08 Plan expenditure in respect of Aid to Bhutan

** Includes Rs.246,00,00 Plan expenditure in respect of Aid to Bhutan

*** Includes Rs.246,00,00 Plan expenditure in respect of Aid to Bhutan

**** Includes Rs.345,00,00 Plan expenditure in respect of Aid to Bhutan

Includes Rs.124,61,36 Plan expenditure in respect of Loan to Bhutan.

Includes Rs.154,00,00 Plan expenditure in respect of Loan to Bhutan

Includes Rs.154,00,00 Plan expenditure in respect of Loan to Bhutan

Includes Rs.230,00,00 Plan expenditure in respect of Loan to Bhutan

OVERVIEW

4. The BE 2000-2001 of Rs.2625.72 crores is Rs.416.25 crores more than BE 1999-2000 and Rs.376.28 crores more than the RE 1999-2000. The break-up of BE 2000-2001 is as under:

(Amount in crores of Rupees)

Revenue	2220.70
Capital	405.02
Total	2625.72

The Revenue allocation includes Rs.3.00 Lakhs as charged expenditure.

5. The expenditure on establishment represents 32.93% of the total budget of the Ministry. This is made up of expenditure on Missions/Posts abroad (25.70%), Headquarters (3.87%) and Passport & Emigration (3.37%). The break-up on the rest of the expenditure is as follows:

Aid to Foreign Governments	27.86%	
Special Diplomatic Expenditure	19.61%	
Capital Section	15.43%	Other Activities (Grants-in-aid to various institutions including ICCR)
	04.17%	Expenditure on

Headquarters

6. The estimated expenditure on the Headquarters Organisation of the Ministry during the financial year 2000-2001 is expected to be Rs.101.50 crores which is 4.57% of the total estimated revenue expenditure of this Ministry. Out of this, Rs.31.00 crores will be on Salaries and Wages, Rs.17.00 crores on Foreign Travel Expenses, Rs.25.75 crores on Office Expenses, Rs.8.58 crores on Rents, Rates & Taxes and Rs.17.50 crores on Advertisement and Publicity.

Expenditure on Missions

7. The total estimated expenditure on Indian Embassies/Missions abroad is expected to be Rs.674.75 crores during the financial year 2000-2001 which works out to 30.38% of the total estimated Revenue Expenditure of the Ministry. Out of this, an amount of Rs.319.77 crores is for Salaries (including Foreign Allowance and Representational Grant), Overtime allowance and Wages, Rs.68.42 crores for Travel Expenses (Transfer Passages/Home Leave Passages and Local Tours), Rs.97.91 crores for Office Expenses and Rs.165.00 crores for Rents, Rates & Taxes as well as repairs and maintenance of Government owned/rented accommodation in Missions abroad and Rs.23.65 crores for Advertising and Publicity.

8. The Demands for Grants 2000-2001 were discussed by the Committee with the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and the salient points arising out of the discussions held are given head-wise in the succeeding paragraphs.

Increase in RE 1999-2000 over BE 1999-2000

	(Rs. In Crores)	
	BE 1999-2000	RE 1999-2000
Revenue Section	1940.45	1965.42
Capital Section	269.02	284.02
Total	2209.47	2249.44

9. The overall increase of Rs.39.97 crores is primarily due to the following enhancements/decrease at RE stage:

(i) Increase in RE 1999-2000 over BE 1999-2000

(a) Secretariat - General Services	Rs. 3.17 crores
(b) Embassies and Missions	Rs. 35.62 crores
(c) Special Diplomatic Expenditure	Rs. 7.59 crores
(d) Passport and Emigration	Rs. 18.70 crores
(e) Irrecoverable Loans Written Off	Rs. 7.50 crores
(f) Other Expenditure	Rs. 6.44 crores
(g) Loans to Foreign Governments	Rs. 35.00 crores
TOTAL	Rs.114.02 crores

(ii) Decrease in RE 1998-99 over BE 1998-99

(a) Training	Rs. 0.75 crores
(b) International Conferences/Meetings	Rs. 0.90 crores
(c) Entertainment Charges	Rs. 1.50 crores
(d) International Cooperation	Rs. 3.58 crores
(e) Technical and Economic Cooperation	Rs.47.32 crores
(f) Capital Outlay.	Rs.20.00 crores
TOTAL	Rs.74.05 crores
Net increase (i) - (ii)	Rs.39.97 crores

10. The overall increase of Rs.39.97 crores in the RE 1999-2000 over the BE 1999-2000 is primarily due to certain major enhancements in the budgetary provisions for Secretariat General

Services(Rs.3.17 crores), Embassies and Missions (Rs.35.62 crores), Special Diplomatic Expenditure (Rs.7.59 crores), Passport and Emigration (Rs.18.70 crores), Irrecoverable Loans Written Off (Rs.7.50 crores), Other Expenditure (Rs.6.44 crores) and Advances to Foreign Governments (Rs.35.00 crores). There is a decrease in Training (Rs.0.75 crores), International Conferences/Meetings(Rs.0.90crores), Entertainment Charges (Rs.1.50 crores), International Cooperation(Rs.3.58 crores), Aid Programmes to Foreign Governments (Rs.47.32 crores)and Capital Outlay for Public Works and Housing (Rs.20.00 crores).

Increase in BE 2000-2001 over BE 1999-2000

11. Against the budget estimates (BE) 1999-2000 of Rs.2209.47 crores, the Budget Estimates for 2000-2001 is Rs.2625.72crores which means that there is increase to the tune of Rs.416.25 crores. The break-up of Rs.416.25 crores is as under:

Variation (Rs. in crores)

(a) Major Head 2052 Secretariat-General Services	15.39
(b) Major Head 2061 External Affairs	174.80
(c) Major Head 3605 Technical and Economic Cooperation	90.06
(d) Major Head 7605 Advances to Foreign Governments	136.00

12. It is seen from Demands for Grants that against the Budget Estimates (BE) 1999-2000 of Rs.2209.47 crores for the Ministry of External Affairs, Revised Estimates (RE) for 1999-2000 was raised to Rs.2249.44 crores. For BE 2000-2001, the proposed allocation is Rs.2625.72 crores, which is a step up over RE 1999-2000 by Rs.376.28crores i.e. 16.73% and over BE 1999-2000 by Rs.416.25 crores i.e. 18.84%.

13. According to the Ministry, out of the total Budgetary Estimate for the year 2000-2001, i.e., Rs.2625.72 crores, the major amount is to be spent on expenditure on Indian Embassies/Missions abroad (Rs.674.75 crores), Special Diplomatic Expenditure (Rs.515.00 crores), Technical and Economic Cooperation with other Countries (Rs.731.50 crores) and Capital Section (Rs.100 crores) and Advances to Foreign Government (Rs.75.01 crores). Thus, allocation under the above four Heads works out to be Rs.2096.26 crores, which is more than 79.84% of the total budgetary allocation under BE 2000-2001.

14. Encapsulating the basic objectives that inform India's foreign policy directions and day-to-day activities which provide the setting of the budgetary requirement of the Ministry, the Foreign Secretary stated those objectives as follows: (i) To promote International understanding and win support for India's national interest, priorities, aspirations and concerns.

(ii) To promote the cause of democracy and individual freedom which involves strengthening the global consensus in favour of democracy as an essential basis for peace and development.

(iii) To develop broad based, mutually beneficial and synergistic structures of cooperation in trade, industry, investment and technology transfer with all countries and also to actively facilitate business and professional contacts.

(iv) To strengthen peace and stability in the region and deepen ties of friendship, cooperation and mutually beneficial inter-dependencies with our South-Asian neighbours.

(v) To strengthen the trends of cooperation, friendship and trust with countries of India's extended neighbourhood based on old civilisational and historical ties as well as strong contemporary relevance. The countries of South-East Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean

region have a common stake with India in promoting peace, stability and development.

(vi) To work with the P-5 countries and with other major powers to promote bilateral relations and to work towards strengthening peace, stability and multi-polarity in the world.

(vii) To work constructively with other countries to find answers to the complex, socio-economic and political problems, which the International community faces. These include concerns relating to peace and security especially the goals of nuclear disarmament, a rational and equitable International economic order, globalisation, environment protection, public health, terrorism, menace of narcotics, the far reaching impact of technology, the information revolution, culture, education and so on.

(viii) To give greater focus and priority to economic diplomacy in order to promote foreign trade and investments, equitable transfer of technology and strengthening our country's economic and commercial links with the rest of the world. 15. The Foreign Secretary further informed the Committee that in the past one year, certain serious challenges to our security and territorial integrity, particularly the aggression committed by Pakistan across the Line of Control, have been successfully addressed. The Ministry also brought together effectively an international coalition of support against this aggression and won international backing on key issues such as counter-terrorism. He further stated that democratic India projected a mature and balanced response to unsettling challenges to its security and displayed that our strength is tempered with wisdom and restraint.

16. During the evidence on Demands for Grants of the Ministry, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs informed the Committee that the budget has been prepared taking into account the anticipated expenditure since development in international relations and foreign policy cannot be predicted with any degree of precision. The budget allocation may, therefore, require a review at the Revised Estimate stage through re-appropriation and augmentation. Some of the areas in which increased allocations have been proposed are Secretariat (Rs. 12.22 crores), Embassies and Missions abroad (Rs. 21.90 crores), International Cooperation (Rs. 3.86 crores), Grant to ICCR (Rs. 2 crores), Technical and Economic Cooperation (Rs. 137.38 crores), Projects in Bhutan (Rs. 175 crores), Capital Outlay on Public Works and Public Housing (Rs. 20 crores) and Advances to Foreign Governments (Rs. 101 crores). The figures cited are increases in allocation over the Revised Estimate of 1999-2000.

17. It may be pointed out that the pattern followed by the Ministry in projecting their budgetary requirement and actual expenditure incurred in the last three years has been as follows:

(Rs. in crores)		
BE 1997-98	RE 1997-98	Actuals 1997-98
1513.42	1553.42	1509.00
	(Plan 60.00)	(Plan 60.00)
	(Non-Plan 1493.42)	(Non-Plan 1449.03)
BE 1998-99	RE 1998-99	Actuals 1998-99
2120.72	2236.17	2073.75
(Plan 250.00)	(Plan 300.00)	(Plan 297.58)
(Non-Plan 1870.72)	(Non-Plan 1936.17)	(Non-Plan 177.61)

BE 1999-2000

2209.47

(Plan 400.00)

(Non-Plan 1809.47)

RE 1999-2000

2249.44

(Plan 400.00)

(Non-Plan 1849.44)

BE 2000-2001

2625.72

(Plan 575.00)

(Non-Plan 2050.72)

Major Head 2052 Secretariat General Services

Actuals 1998-99 Rs.83.56 crores

BE 1999-2000 Rs.86.11 crores

RE 1999-2000 Rs.89.28 crores

BE 2000-2001 Rs.101.50 crores

18. This provides for the expenditure on Secretariat of Ministry of External Affairs and expenditure at Headquarters on Advertisement and Publicity. The Ministry in a subsequent note stated that the increases under this Head include those mandatory in nature, e.g., under Salaries and Rents, Rates and Taxes (RR&T). While the increase under Salaries is mainly on account of provision for payment of retirement benefits to a large number of officials of this Ministry who will be superannuating in the financial year 2000-2001, the increase in the RR&T Head is on account of increased rental for Akbar Bhavan (Rs.2 crores). The other major increase in the Secretariat Budget pertains to Advertising and Publicity mainly to cater to activities which were slowed down during the current financial year due to pre-occupation with the Kargil and hijacking incidents. The Ministry further stated that austerity measures are being implemented in a phased manner and modern communication systems are being increasingly used in order to use available funds in an economic and financially prudent manner.

19. When enquired about austerity measures, the Ministry stated that they are continuously identifying areas where economy can be effected. About 18 Posts lying vacant over period of one year have been identified and surrendered. Besides, efforts are being made to find ways and means of reducing costs on transfer passages. Increased computerisation and E-mail connectivity, while facilitating intra-office and inter-mission communications, which is also expected to reduce costs.

20. During the evidence it was pointed out that all posts lying vacant in the Ministry should not necessarily be abolished because some of the posts may be required for successful implementation of our diplomatic functions. When asked about the winding up of Historical and Research Division, the representative of the Ministry stated that as its services were not found satisfactory, at one stage, it was decided to wind up this Division. Now to revive it the Ministry have to go through all motions including obtaining Cabinet approval for creating a new cadre and creating new posts and also to find out why earlier experience failed. It was also informed that the proposal for revival of the Research Cadre in the Ministry is at the stage of preparation of a final note for the consideration of the Cabinet.

Responding to the queries about the neglect of Legal and Treaties Division, the representatives of the Ministry agreed that it was not adequate in the kind of servicing that they required. However,

the Legal and Treaties Division has given extremely competent service and when the Ministry needs to supplement this advice they go to the Law Ministry and expertise from outside. The Ministry is doing everything possible within their means.

21. The Committee note that the Budget Estimates for the financial year 1999-2000 was Rs. 2209.47 crores. At the RE stage, it was augmented to Rs. 2249.44 crores. The total additionality between RE 1999-2000 and BE 1999-2000 was Rs. 39.97 crores. The Committee also note that the proposed Budget allocation of Rs. 2625.68 crores for 2000-2001 shows 18.84% increase as compared to BE 1999-2000. It was informed by the Ministry that barring the Special Diplomatic Expenditure (SDE) component, the increase is primarily due to the routine increase in the costs of maintaining establishment, increase in allocations for Passport Offices and the increase in provisions for Aid and Loan to the Government of Bhutan and Bangladesh. However, the Ministry also claim to implement austerity measures by abolishing 18 vacant posts, reducing cost on transfer passages and use of modern means of communication.

22. The Committee are of the view that available funds should be prudently utilised by the Ministry keeping in view our foreign policy objectives, expenditure be monitored closely and financial discipline be enforced to observe austerity. The Committee, however, feel that certain austerity measures proposed to be implemented by the Ministry for instance, abolition of posts and cutting cost of transfer passage do not seem to be realistic. The Ministry should implement economy measures in terms of cost benefit ratio. In their earlier report the Committee have been emphasising that the Ministry should undertake an exercise to identify the activities which can be done more economically at Headquarters. Such activities could be a proper utilisation of modern means of communication, for instance, E-Mail, Satellite Phones and use of latest computer technology to speed up links within the Ministry and also between the Ministry and the Missions.

23. The Committee express concern over the fact that winding up of Historical and Research Division and also the revival of Research Cadre have not been handled with the seriousness they deserved. The Committee strongly feel that Historical and Research Division should be re-established soon where Historical documents/records could be kept not only for the benefit of the Ministry but also for the use of academicians, researchers, students and others interested in the subjects.

24. The Committee note that due to neglect of the Legal and Treaties Division, it is not providing the kind of service, that is required. It is, therefore recommended that the Legal and Treaties Division must be strengthened further to enable it to render excellent advice and provide competent service. The Committee also desire that the revival of Research Cadre should be given high priority and all the required formalities for Government approval should be completed urgently.

Incorrect depiction of India's External Boundaries

25. As per the Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs for the Year 1999-2000, the Policy Planning and Research Wing of the Ministry examines the depiction of India's International Boundaries in foreign Publications. Cases of incorrect depiction are taken up with the concerned Government or the publishers through Indian Missions abroad for necessary corrective measures. The Division also scrutinises Foreign Publications containing maps depicting India's International boundaries before these are imported into the country and offer its views to the Ministries dealing

with such matters.

26. On being enquired by the Committee as to how many cases of incorrect depiction have been identified by the Ministry till date, the Ministry furnished eight instances wherein the Government of China and Sri Lanka and certain publishing companies of the United Kingdom, one Vietnamese newspaper, the Indian Association at Sharjah and a private tourist company of Maldives have shown wrong boundaries of the Indian Territory in the maps published by them. It was also informed that generally the Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are wrongly depicted in these maps.

27. On being asked about the corrective measures taken by the Ministry in such cases, the Ministry informed that letters have been sent to concerned Missions/authorities of London, Hanoi and Dubai drawing their attention to the wrongful depiction and requesting appropriate corrective action. As regards China, the Ministry has conveyed India's position on the issue of Jammu & Kashmir and Sikkim to the Chinese side, at the highest levels. With regard to Sri Lanka, the Indian Government, through the High Commission of India in Colombo, took up the matter with the Sri Lankan Ministry of Transport, Highways, Housing, Electricity, Town Planning, Sports and Youth Affairs of the Western Province requesting necessary action to have the Maps corrected. The High Commission of India in Maldives has also taken up the matter with the Government of Maldives in February, 2000 and requested appropriate corrective action.

28. During the evidence, it was informed that Indian territories of Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are being shown incorrectly in certain countries. The Foreign Secretary clarified that the matter has been taken up through our Missions abroad instructing those to contact the Foreign Office of the country concerned directly. He further informed that the Customs Department checks the Maps coming into India and either impounds wrong Maps or puts a stamp on the Maps being incorrect, if so. Members of the Committee pointed out that such a stamp is not seen in many of the wrong Maps of India appearing in various publications and emphasised that the matter must be dealt with more seriously.

29. The Committee note that the Policy Planning and Research Wing of the Ministry of External Affairs examines the depiction of India's International Boundaries in foreign publications. The Committee express their concern over the fact that certain cases have come to light wherein publications belonging to UK, China, Vietnam, Dubai, Sri Lanka and Maldives have incorrectly depicted India's External Boundaries particularly those in Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The Committee feel that the corrective measures taken by the Ministry in such cases are not sufficient. The Committee desire that the matter should be taken up not only with the concerned Indian Missions abroad but also at a higher level with the concerned Foreign Government. Further, the Committee desire that the Ministry may remain in touch with the concerned authority on a regular basis to ensure that all such Maps showing wrong Indian External Boundaries are invariably stamped as "incorrect" so that students, researchers and others consulting such Maps are not misled by inaccuracies.

Non-resident Indians (NRIs)

30. An important issue which caught the attention of the Committee pertains to the NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIO). The six million Indian citizens and over twenty million PIOs resident abroad have collectively evolved into a major instrument for furtherance of India's Foreign Policy. In

this connection, the Ministry informed that matters relating to NRIs being of varied nature are at present dealt by different divisions in the Ministry of External Affairs depending on the particular issue in question. Issues of a political nature or the question of welfare of Indian community (at a collective level) in any country abroad are dealt with by the concerned Territorial Division. On the other hand individual cases of welfare of Indians and their consular needs are attended to by the CPV Division. If the issue relates to investments in India, this is dealt with by the IPP Division in the Ministry which has been actively disseminating information through the Missions abroad regarding the policies and incentives that are announced by the Government from time to time in respect of NRIs. It is further informed that it has been decided to set up a Department in the Ministry of External Affairs exclusively dealing with the problems of NRIs and PIOs. An officer has been appointed for the Department and the functions and responsibilities of this division are at present being worked out. The newly created division would improve coordination among various Ministries and Departments of the Government to optimise the benefits of the Policies of the Government directed towards the NRIs as well as PIOs.

31. Recognising the significant role played by NRIs and PIOs in the shaping of the country's destiny, the Government have launched a comprehensive scheme on 31 March, 1999 for persons of Indian origin called the PIO Card Scheme. Under this Scheme, persons of Indian origin, settled in countries specified by the Government, which, besides introducing a Visa-free regime, also confers some special economic, educational, financial and cultural benefits. It is informed that all preparations have been completed for the issue of PIO Cards from Missions and Posts abroad.

32. During the evidence, the Members of the Committee desired to know the distinction between NRIs and PIOs. The Foreign Secretary informed that the NRIs and PIOs are two different categories. Although, in a broader context, both are people of Indian origin. While NRIs are basically the Indian Passport holders who happen to be living abroad and PIOs are people of Indian origin and they are generally citizens of another country. The Committee specifically enquired whether the Ministry have ever considered conferring dual citizenship to our NRIs and PIOs. To this, the Foreign Secretary informed that the issue of granting dual citizenship to NRIs and particularly PIOs is complex and very sensitive. According to him, PIOs are citizens of another country and to rush to give them Indian citizenship without considering their own position in their respective countries would not be advisable. Explaining the technical difficulties in providing dual citizenship, the Foreign Secretary stated that before considering dual nationality, we have to consider first a definition of those who are eligible for it. It will probably make millions of people of neighbouring countries eligible for our nationality and for free access to India, which will be a security threat. Moreover, it is not possible to select certain PIOs for conferring dual citizenship and exclude certain people. Keeping this in view, the Foreign Secretary informed the Committee that after due consideration the Government have taken the view that many of the grievances of PIOs abroad can be met through the PIO Card, which is essentially like a passport. It enables the holders to have access to India for a period of twenty years without applying for a Visa. In addition, it gives opportunity to the children of Indian origin to come and study in educational institutions in India. To a limited extent, it also enables them to acquire property in India.

33. The Committee feel that the NRIs and PIOs are national reserve of India and are extremely valuable for the country in many ways. However, the Government have so far shown a lack of

sensitivity and shortsightedness in their approach towards them, which is evident from the fact that there is a total dearth of data on their economic strength, their cultural concerns, their potentialities and contribution towards their motherland and on many other related issues. Therefore, in the first instance, the Committee desire that a meaningful data-base must be created in the Ministry of External Affairs to formulate an acceptable blueprint of ideas dealing with this issue. Moreover, a comprehensive holistic approach, greater sensitivity and political will is required to effectively deal with NRIs and PIOs for the country's benefit. The Committee further note that there is a lack of coordination among various Ministries/Departments and also complexities in the procedures dealing with the problems of NRIs and PIOs. However, the Committee hope that the Department being created by the Ministry to exclusively deal with the problems of NRIs and PIOs would adequately be equipped to improve coordination among various Ministries/Departments to derive optimal benefits of policies of the Government directed towards the NRIs and PIOs and deal with their problems in an integrated manner.

34. The Committee feel that the Ministry should explore the possibilities of setting up Information Centres or Public Relation offices at each of important Missions particularly in Gulf Countries, where there is a large concentration of Indian workers to provide them all possible assistance in times of distress, specially in terms of providing shelters for the hapless workers who are forced to flee due to ill-treatment of their employers.

Advertisement & Publicity (Secretariat)

BE 1999-2000	Rs.16.50 crores
RE 1999-2000	Rs.11.00 crores
BE 2000-2001	Rs.17.50 crores

Advertisement & Publicity (Embassies & Missions)

BE 1999-2000	Rs.12.43 crores
RE 1998-99	Rs.15.23 crores
BE 1999-2000	Rs.17.50 crores

35. According to the Ministry, it has been their constant endeavour to utilise allocated funds in an effective and cost efficient manner through a comprehensive media and publicity strategy. During the financial year 1999-2000, a part of the budget allocated for External Publicity had to be surrendered due to exceptional circumstances and unanticipated developments. During May-December, 1999, the publicity efforts of the Ministry were focussed mainly on assisting the Government's larger objective of winning international support for India in countering Pakistan's aggression in Kargil sector of Jammu & Kashmir. After the successful conclusion of Kargil War, the Government was faced with handling the fallout of the shooting down of a Pakistani Aircraft, which had intruded into the Indian territory in Kutch Sector. Immediately thereafter, attention was focussed on handling the publicity aspect of Indian efforts to end the hijacking of IA flight No. IC-814 from Kathmandu, the Ministry stated that for the better part of the financial year 1999-2000, the infrastructure and manpower devoted to External Publicity in the Ministry was geared to meet these crises. Consequently, routine publicity-related tasks including visits of journalists, commissioning of documentary films etc. had to be postponed.

36. As per the Ministry, the following tasks will be undertaken by the Government in the next financial year as part of its overall external publicity efforts : (i) Consolidating the gains of US President Bill Clintons visit to India.

(ii) Crystallising positive foreign policy initiatives through greater publicity efforts with the foreign audio-visual and print media, utilisation of Internet and other aspects of information technology, commissioning of documentary films and reaching out to the media of the developing countries particularly in the African continent.

(iii) Reviving the audio-visual project relating to advertisement spots on India with an estimated expenditure of Rs.5-6 crores.

(iv) Gifting of satellite dish-antenna to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation to receive Doordarshan signals.

(v) Setting up of an audio-visual library with State-of-the-art infrastructure in the premises of XP Division of the Ministry, which would serve as archives for films made by the XP Division in recent years.

37. With regard to publicity expenditure for Missions/Posts abroad, against actual expenditure of Rs. 13.15 crores in 1998-99, budget allocation of Rs.22.50 crores in BE 1999-2000 and Rs.22.38 crores in RE 1999-2000, and amount of Rs.23.65 crores has been proposed in BE 2000-2001. In a subsequent note, the Ministry justified it by stating that the enhanced allocation is required to enable the Missions/Posts to effectively carry out publicity activities. The increased allocation will also serve to counter negative trends in perceptions about government policies and also foster a greater awareness and sensitivity to Indian interests and concerns.

38. During the evidence, it was pointed out that in spite of having modern means of advertising and publicity, India's image in the outside world has not changed from that of an ancient country of saints. It was further pointed out that apart from lack of proper utilisation of funds meant for advertising and publicity, our missions and posts do not possess requisite professional skills, training and experience of handling the media abroad. The representative of the Ministry responded by stating that India's Missions and Posts abroad are being headed by Minister level Officials in certain prominent countries.

39. It was mentioned by some Members, during the evidence that the circulars and other printed material being issued by the Indian Missions and Posts abroad are so monotonous and full of unreadable statistics that they do not attract anybody's attention and are straightaway sent to shredders and waste-bins. The Press and the Media of the outside world is looking for something much more presentable, vibrant, communicative, comprehensive and persuasive. As regards circulating of printed material being issued by our missions and posts abroad it was suggested that high-quality journals, like those being produced by France, Russia, China and the US, should be brought out by the Ministry, which the people abroad would like to keep and not throw away. Another suggestion was that the information may be provided region-wise, e.g., some of the western countries interested in the Indian handicraft may be provided details of the Indian hand-crafted products. Similarly, Islamic countries may be provided with information like that India is the second largest country represented in Haj pilgrimage and so on. Responding to the comments, the Foreign Secretary emphasised that the image of India has certainly moved away from that of a poor developing country in need of concessional assistance to that of a self-reliant and self-confident nation, which is counted amongst the leading countries of the world. He also mentioned that the

Government is not oblivious of the information revolution and had performed well in situations like the Kargil war. He further stated that the website set up by the Ministry on Internet normally receives around 2.2 million hits on an average per month.

40. On being pointed out that the lobbying firms hired by the Indian Embassy in Washington are not as effective and well connected as compared to those belonging to the Pakistani authorities despite the fact that the Indian Government is spending Rs.4.5 crores approximately every year on the lobbying firms, the Ministry disagreeing with the idea informed the Committee that many favourable developments took place in the US Congress to which our lobbyists, viz., M/s Verner Liipfert and M/s APCO Associates, have contributed substantially. They further stated that while India takes every opportunity to counter anti-India propaganda, in lobbying efforts are not country specific and are more in support of a broad based, mutually beneficial relationship between the United States and India. Answering a query, it was also informed by the Ministry that both the firms are registered companies under the Foreign Agents Registration Act of the US and are considered among the topmost lobbying firms. Referring to the large amount of money involved in lobbying efforts in the US, the Committee suggested that the lobbying should be done in a more cost-effective way. The Committee also advised the Ministry to deal more strongly with the cases of mis-reporting insofar as the activities of the lobbying firms are concerned.

41. The Committee have, time and again, emphasised upon the importance of projecting India in an effective manner to promote international understanding and win support for our national interests, priorities, aspirations and concerns in the context of wide ranging changes taking place in the world. The Committee note that the Government have taken steps in this direction through acquisition and use of most modern equipments, setting up of a website on Internet, upgradation of communications system keeping pace with the rapid developments in information technology, production of print and audio-visual publicity material and distribution thereof by Missions/Posts etc. The Committee feel that it is imperative to have a professional approach and trained personnel to handle the matters of external publicity, both at Headquarters and in Missions/Posts. The Committee further desire that the publicity material, journals and CD-ROM, supplied to the foreign Missions, media and opinion-makers should be more imaginative and comprehensive. The Committee also strongly feel that setting up an expert group to deal with various publicity-related issues would immensely help in presenting India's stand on various issues in correct perspective thereby lessening the impact of negative propaganda.

42. The Committee feel that India's external publicity must not be substituted by lobbying efforts alone and suggest that apart from the lobbying firms which are being hired to promote India's cause, the missions and posts must have the ability to communicate with the media, think-tanks and policy makers abroad independently. The Committee also suggest that the lobbying should be done in a more cost-effective way. The Ministry should deal more strongly with the cases of mis-reporting insofar as the activities of the lobbying firms are concerned.

Passport and Emigration

BE 1999-2000	Rs.68.87 crores
RE 1999-2000	Rs.87.57 crores
BE 2000-2001	Rs.88.41 crores

43. According to the Ministry, the allocation in BE 2000-2001 is proposed to meet the normal functioning of the Passport Offices such as payment of salaries, additional instalments of dearness allowance and other establishment costs. The expenditure of the Headquarters of the Central Passport Organisation on the printing of passport booklets, comprehensive computerisation of Passport Offices etc. is also met from the above allocation. No major expenditure has been incurred on the computerisation project in the current financial year. However, if expenditure increases on account of the computerisation project, increased requirement would be projected in RE 2000-2001.

44. According to Annual Report of Ministry of External Affairs for 1999-2000, the Ministry is considering a proposal to create a Central Passport Authority (CPA) with a view to granting greater autonomy to Passport Offices. Elaborating further, the Ministry stated that it had been felt that an autonomous Central Passport Authority would have greater functional autonomy to enable the Passport Offices to achieve greater efficiency and higher productivity. The other major objective behind the proposal was to make the proposed new entity as financially autonomous as possible.

45. Later, however, the Ministry stated that a more in-depth examination of this proposal has revealed that it may not be possible to achieve full financial autonomy including autonomy for creation of posts etc. even if an autonomous Central Passport Organisation is created. The Ministry stated that it is coming around the view that all the other desirable objectives for improving the working of the Central Passport Organisation such as creation of strong units for inspection, cadre management, vigilance, public grievances, etc. can be met within the present administrative set-up. Therefore, the effort now is to improve the overall functioning and efficiency of the existing Central Passport Organisation before any decision is taken to create an autonomous Central Passport Authority.

46. On being enquired about the progress regarding computerisation of the Passport Offices, the Ministry stated that computerisation of the Passport Offices has been going on since 1986. 20 Passport Offices have so far been computerised which include Offices at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Bareilly, Bhopal, Calcutta, Chandigarh, Chennai, Cochin, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jalandhar, Kozhikode, Lucknow, Mumbai, Pune, Trichy, Trivandrum and Vishakhapatnam. Other Passport Offices are also in the process of being computerised in a phased manner. At the remaining Passport Offices site preparation work is to be completed before hardware can be installed. The Ministry stated that work has already begun and is expected to be completed by the end of year 2001.

47. A new scheme for issue of out-of-turn passports, namely the Tatkaal Scheme was launched by the Government w.e.f. 1.1.2000. Under this scheme, for an additional fee, passports are issued on an out of turn basis to eligible applicants who have a valid reason for urgent travel abroad and include minors up to fifteen years of age, cases of re-issue and duplicate passports where there is no change in address of the applicant, all cases where a verification certificate from an authorised official is available and all employees of Central/State Government, Public Sector Undertakings, Armed Forces and their spouses where 'No Objection Certificate' from the Head of the Department is available. The list of twenty categories covered under the Tatkaal Scheme has been reproduced

as per Annexure-1. The Ministry further informed that the number of Tatkaal passports issued in January & February 2000, as per available information, is 9497 and the revenue earned was Rs. 1,23,09,400/-. The Ministry also informed that new passports under the Tatkaal Scheme can be issued within seven working days of the date of application on payment of a fee of Rs. 1500/- in addition to the applicable passport fee. For new passports to be issued between 8 to 28 working days, the additional fee is Rs. 1000/-. For the issue of duplicate out of turn passports within five working days of the date of application in lieu of ordinary passport whether it has been stolen/damaged or destroyed, the additional fee is Rs. 2500/- in all re-issue cases after expiry of 10/20 years validity where the passport is issued within five working days of the date of application, the additional fee is Rs. 1500/-. As per the Ministry these details are being refined based on the experience of the last three months and a category for out of turn issue of Additional Passport Booklets is being added.

48. During the evidence, the Foreign Secretary informed that the total expenditure on the Central Passport & Visa Division is Rs. 52.7 crores and that on the Passport Offices is Rs. 27.28 crores. The Committee pointed out that much variation exists in the per capita cost of passport in each of the 28 Passport Offices, for instance, on an average, a passport costs Rs. 50/- in Mumbai, Rs. 119/- in Delhi, Rs. 61/- in Chennai and Rs. 382/- in Calcutta. The Foreign Secretary explained that in Mumbai and Delhi, the buildings of Passport Offices are owned by the Government and in Calcutta, the Passport Office is housed in rented premises. He further informed that though there is no uniform rule about this, the cost of passport depends upon the rent of the building, payment to the staff, cost of transportation etc.

49. The Committee discussed at length the situation prevailing in some of the Regional Passport Offices particularly with regard to immediate redressal of grievances and also the cases of delay and corruption in some of the Passport Offices. The Ministry responded by stating that Passport Adalats are being held now for immediate redressal of public grievances.

50. The Committee appreciate that considerable improvement has been brought about insofar as the issue of passports and the functioning of Passport Offices are concerned. The Committee also commends efforts of the Government to expedite the issue of passports to certain deserving categories through the Tatkaal Scheme. However, the Committee would like the Ministry to submit an evaluation report on how the Scheme is functioning over a period of time.

51. The Committee express their dissatisfaction over the issue of variation in the per capita cost of passport in each of the 28 Passport Offices and recommend a closer look on the issue of such a sharp and radical variation and means of reducing it. With regard to corrupt practices prevalent in some Passport Offices, the Committee feel that it is very important to eradicate such practices by entrusting this responsibility to officers of known integrity who may keep a strict vigil over persons of dubious character and effectively deal with them through administrative control. So far as the computerisation of Regional Passport Offices is concerned, the Committee are not satisfied with the slow progress of the project and desire that the efforts should be made to complete the project during the current year.

Minor Head

00.800 Other Expenditure

08 Expenditure on Haj

08.01 Haj Goodwill Delegation

Actuals	1998-1999	Rs. 39.09 Crores
BE	1999-2000	Rs.14.93 Crores
RE	1999-2000	Rs. 22.02 Crores
BE	2000-2001	Rs. 22.50 Crores

09.01 Mansarovar Pilgrimage

Actuals	1998-99	Rs. 1.46 Crores
BE	1999-2000	Rs. 3.50 Crores
RE	1999-2000	Rs. 3.50 Crores
BE	2000-2001	Rs. 3.50 Crores

52. During the evidence, Members of the Committee referred to the fact that every year India sends the second largest contingent consisting of over one lakh Muslims to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj Pilgrimage. However, this year some of the Hajis are reported to have faced a lot of inconveniences due to lack of proper accommodation as well as inadequate number of flights to reach India. It was mentioned that several thousands of Haj Pilgrims were stranded at the Haj terminal and the Ministry must take appropriate steps to obviate the problems of Hajis.

53. With regard to the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra, the Committee, in their First Report (12th Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants of Ministry of External Affairs for the year 1998-99, had recommended that necessary measures should be taken by the Ministry for making suitable arrangements and providing more facilities for the Pilgrims going to Kailash Mansarovar. The Committee had also desired that the possibility of providing an alternate and easier route to the Mansarovar Pilgrimage through Nepal may be explored. The Ministry, in their reply, had stated that this suggestion of the Standing Committee was being examined by them and the feasibility of the route through Nepal, including costs, duration, availability of infrastructure and logistical facilities, was being evaluated.

54. The Committee desire that efforts should be made to further facilitate Haj Pilgrims. The Committee would also like to be apprised about the progress in the matter of opening of an alternate route to Kailash-Mansarovar through Nepal.

Grants to Institutions

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

BE 1999-2000	Rs.37.00 crores
RE 1999-2000	Rs.37.00 crores
BE 2000-2001	Rs.39.00 crores

55. It was informed by the Ministry that for BE 2000-2001, the proposed allocation is Rs.39.00 crores which is in tune with the expanding activities of the ICCR and increase in costs such as establishment of new Cultural Centres/Chairs abroad and increase in the cost of scholarships provided to foreign students.

56. During the evidence, the Members of the Committee stressed upon the importance of cultural projection of India abroad and the role of cultural diplomacy. It was felt that ICCR, as an institution, requires greater sympathy and compassion and more funds. Members of the Committee further appreciated the excellent journals being brought out by the ICCR. With regard to the issue of selection of artists for sending them abroad by the ICCR, the Members of the

Committee enquired about the criterion for the same. It was also mentioned that most of the cultural troupes being sent abroad are from prominent cities only that inadequate attention is being paid to the representation of some of the regional art-forms. The Foreign Secretary stated that the ICCR has a just and fair system of selection as a Committee of Experts selects artists for trips abroad. He also accepted that certain unique artists of international repute were repeated for major festivals.

57. On being asked about the Chairs and Professorships in foreign universities sponsored by the ICCR, the Committee were informed that the ICCR had a large number of Chairs for which Professors were deputed in countries of Eastern-Europe where there was a tradition of Indian studies in various universities. However, in the US and the UK, where setting up a Chair was an extremely expensive affair, the Chairs were financed by the NRI community and not the ICCR.

58. With regard to the purchase of building to house the Indian Cultural Centre in Washington and the functioning of Purchase Committee of ICCR, the Ministry informed that since the year 1997, twelve properties have been inspected but none of them could be purchased either due to the fact that really good properties did not stay in the real estate market for a long or because the Ministry was taking necessary precautions to avoid hasty decision. It was further informed that the property would cost the Government around 3 million dollars.

59. The Committee express satisfaction over the fact that the ICCR is maintaining a high standard in its publications and other activities with regard to cultural projection of India abroad. However, with regard to the selection of artists, the Committee desire that regional art forms and artists must be given a fair chance to get selected for presentations abroad in order to give impetus and recognition to them. The Committee hope that the selection process would be such so as to give fair representation to the deserving artists and art performers from all over the country. The Committee strongly feel that the delay in selecting a building to house the Cultural Centre in Washington is a matter of serious concern and desire that instead of sending the Purchase Committee every time to inspect a property, the Ministry may explore the possibility of empowering the Indian Ambassador to the US along with a few experts to take an early decision in the matter.

Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS)

Actuals 1998-99	Rs.7.75 lakh
BE 1999-2000	Rs.10.32 lakh
RE 1999-2000	Rs.10.32 lakh
BE 2000-2001	Rs.65.00 lakh

60. According to the Detailed Demands for Grants (2000-2001), the Government provide grants to the Institute of Chinese Studies for research and advanced studies on China. On being enquired about the reasons for a steep enhancement of Rs. 54.68 lakh in the budgetary allocation under this Head for the year 2000-2001 as compared to RE 1999-2000, the Ministry informed that the ICS is an institute of great value to the Ministry of External Affairs because it consists of experts in the field of Chinese Studies, scholars who have been studying China and former diplomats who have served in China. The Ministry would like the ICS to evolve into a premier centre for the study of East-Asia and is being encouraged to expand its scope to include Japan and Korea also. The Ministry informed that the projected expenditure to fund the expansion of annual programme of the

ICS is Rs.30 lakhs. It is further informed that the ICS wish to acquire a building at 29, Rajpur Road, Delhi on long term lease basis to accommodate its expanded activities, on which the estimated expenditure is Rs.25 lakhs. Another amount of Rs.10 lakhs would be required for purchase of equipment/furniture to furnish the office space. This is a one time expenditure and annual recurring expenditure would be Rs.30 lakh.

61. During the evidence, the Foreign Secretary informed that India is celebrating 50 years of its diplomatic relations with China. The President of India will also be going on a State visit to China shortly. Therefore, there is an increased interest in Chinese studies and the Ministry need to have expertise outside the Government to give them advice like think-tanks in foreign countries. When asked about the Ministry's evaluation mechanism with regard to activities of ICS, the Ministry, in a subsequent note, stated that their East-Asia Division maintains regular contact with the ICS. The ICS is required to submit a plan of its activities in advance at the BE stage. Thereafter, a proposal for budgetary support is made to the Finance Division after due evaluation. Furthermore, the grant is released in instalments at periodic intervals to facilitate various activities, which, subsequently, are closely monitored. ICS also submits an annual report on its various activities every year.

62. During the evidence, it was observed that it is of utmost importance to have regional studies, and that the Indian Universities are yet to develop the requisite high level of expertise in terms of country/region studies. It was felt that there is an urgent need to develop a comprehensive perception of country studies and regional studies, particularly insofar as Latin America and Europe are concerned. With regard to the Government assistance to various academic institutions and NGOs, it was further felt that such academic bodies must have their freedom while ensuring that the funds are not misused under any pretext.

Special Grants to Missions

Propagation of Hindi through Missions abroad

BE 1999-2000	Rs.1.75 crore
RE 1999-2000	Rs.2.85 crore
BE 2000-2001	Rs.75 lakh

63. As per the detailed Demands for Grants (2000-2001), the Budgetary allocation this year for propagation of Hindi through Missions abroad is merely Rs. 75 lakh while the amount under RE 1999-2000 for this Head was Rs.2.85 crore. The Ministry informed that normal annual expenditure under this Head was of the order of Rs.14.59 lakh in 1997-98 and Rs.39.76 lakh in 1998-99. The increased provision in BE and RE 1999-2000 was mainly to cater to the expenditure on the holding of the VI World Hindi Conference in London from 14 to 18 September, 1999. The provision of Rs.75 lakh in BE 2000-2001 is for catering to the normal activities under this Head.

64. The Committee was informed that the Ministry of External Affairs successfully organised the VI World Hindi Conference in London in 1999, despite shortage of time. During the evidence, it was mentioned that the work regarding propagation of Hindi in Britain has been commendable and Ministry might appoint one Committee to oversee the arrangements being made for the next World Hindi Conference in Fiji in November, 2002. It was also suggested that recently developed Hindi Software must be made available to Missions/Posts of those countries where Hindi is used in correspondence owing to the presence of a large number of persons of Indian origin and that the distribution of publications in Hindi by our Missions/Posts abroad, must also be encouraged.

Regarding the work done by Missions in teaching of Hindi, the Committee were informed by the Foreign Secretary that Rs.15 to 20 lakh were spent every year in organising the teaching of Hindi in our Missions abroad, which included not only the Members of the Mission but also those interested outside.

65. The Committee note that the Ministry is making efforts for progressive use of Hindi and its propagation in India and abroad and are happy that the VI World Hindi Conference in London was well organised despite shortage of time. The Committee desire that the Ministry should make all endeavours for successful organisation of next World Hindi Conference in Fiji in November, 2002. The Committee desire that Hindi and Sanskrit scholars belonging to various European countries may also be associated actively with the propagation of Hindi abroad.

Technical and Economic Cooperation with other Countries

Aid to Bhutan

Actuals	1998-1999	Rs. 357.78 Crores
BE	1999-2000	Rs. 436 Crores
RE	1999-2000	Rs. 436 Crores
BE	2000-2001	Rs. 545 Crores

66. The Budget of Ministry of External Affairs, traditionally and primarily, is non-planned. From the Financial Year 1996-97 onwards, "Plan" Budget Head was created with the approval of Union Cabinet, for meeting the large expenditure outlay on the Tala Hydro Electric Project, Kurichu Hydro Electric Project and Dungsam Cement Plant in Bhutan, which are being executed with Government of India assistance. (Performance Budget MEA 2000-2001) According to the Ministry, BE 2000-2001 envisages increase over the RE 1999-2000 projection due to increase in the requirements as a result of physical progress achieved in various projects under implementation.

67. Bhutan has considerable deposits of limestone and offers good scope for manufacturing cement and other allied products. The Government of Bhutan had decided to set-up Dungsam Cement Plant near Nganglam in Samdrup Jongkhar district of the South-Eastern region of Bhutan bordering Assam to generate economic development in the backward and underdeveloped areas of Bhutan.

68. The Committee were informed that since the early 1980s, GOI assistance to Dungsam Cement Plant was under consideration. Despite various efforts, till 1990 there was no suitable arrangement in this regard. However, in 1990, the Bhutanese authorities expressed fresh interest in this project. Cement Corporation of India (CCI) then proposed the project as a joint venture with majority participation by Bhutan and minority participation from an Indian company. M/s Associated Cement Companies (ACC), a leading cement manufacturing company of India agreed to participate in this project. In March 1996, an Agreement had been signed by the two governments for financing the project with a grant of Rs. 400 crores (Rs. 300 crores for the main project + Rs. 100 crores for infrastructural facilities). Given the special ties between the two countries and the importance of the project for the two governments, Cabinet had accorded its approval in April 1996 for the bilateral Agreement to undertake the project with Indian assistance on 100% grant basis.

69. The Committee were further informed that M/s ACC Ltd., which had earlier agreed to participate in the project, formally withdrew in October, 1998 from the project, citing security reasons. Following the withdrawal, the project management made intensive efforts to identify new

Joint Venture (JV) Partner but, till date have failed to elicit anadequate and positive response from the Indian companies on account ofthe prevalent security situation at the project site. According to theMinistry, a short-term consultant for the project, viz., M/s Holtec Consultants,are working on identification of JV Partners for the project and the finalreport is expected to be submitted in the next Project Authority Meeting.

70. The Committee note that the Dungsam CementPlant (DCP) in Bhutan is being executed with 100% Government of India assistance.The Committee further note that although the GOI Assistance to DCP wasunder consideration since the early 1980s, the project was finally startedin the 1990s with the GOI commitment of Rs. 400 crores. The Committee aresurprised that so far an amount of Rs. 8.074 crores only has been releasedfor the project which denotes that even the infrastructural facilitiesare yet to be provided fully for the project. The reason cited by the Ministryfor the delay in the project is that M/s ACC Ltd., a JV Partner, withdrewfrom the project and so far the Ministry have been unable to identify anotherJV Partner for the project. The Committee feel that the reason is unconvincingand that the Ministry should make whole-hearted efforts to identify a JVPartner so that the project could progress satisfactorily. The Committeefeel that inordinate delay would lead to massive cost and time overrunsand thus desire that the priorities in the proposed project be identifiedby the Ministry and executed under a strict time - bound programme.

Embassies and Missions

Rents, Rates and Taxes

Actuals	1998-99	Rs.145.97 crore
BE	1999-2000	Rs.149.85 crore
RE	1999-2000	Rs.163.34 crore
BE	2000-2001	Rs.165.00 crore

71. It is evident from the figures of budgetaryallocation of last three years, furnished by the Ministry on Rents, Ratesand Taxes of its Embassies and Missions, that a major chunk of the allottedfunds is being utilised to pay Rents, Rates and Taxes. The Committee wereinformed that with a view to reducing the rental liabilities abroad, Ministryhas initiated several steps during the past few years, these includes acquisitionof properties for housing Chanceries and residence of India based officersand staff through purchase of ready built properties and undertaking constructionafter acquisition of land on purchase basis or getting land on reciprocalbasis. The Committee were further informed that in response to the recommendationsmade by the Standing Committee during the discussion on Ministrys Demandsfor Grants for the year 1994-95, a comprehensive plan for purchase/constructionof properties abroad, was made, which was to be implemented over a tenyear period from 1995-96 onwards.

72. According to the Ministry, 11 propertiesin total were purchased during the last three years, which include, Chancerybuilding for CGI, Johannesburg (Rs.3.24 crores), Head of Posts residencefor CGI, Johannesburg (Rs.1.31 crores), Ambassadors residence in Berlin(Rs.13.15 crores and renovated at the cost of Rs.6.49 crores), ChanceryBuilding for Consulate General, Frankfurt (Rs.18.98 crores), Chancery Buildingfor Embassy of India, Panama (Rs.3.35 crores and estimate repair cost Rs.17,43,567),Ambassadors residence in Prague (Rs.3.95 crores), Ambassadors Residencein Port Moresby (Rs.2.60 crores), Chancery building for Consulate

General in Sao Paulo (Brazil) (Rs.3.06 crores), Chancery building for Consulate General in Edinburgh (Rs.7.56 crores and estimate repair cost Rs.7,26,400), Residential Unit for Counsellor/Minister level officer in Budapest (Rs.2.25 crores) and Five residential units for staff members of Embassy of India, Seoul (Rs.4.66 crores). According to the Ministry, the above purchases resulted in annual rental savings of Rs.3.51 crores approximately. The Ministry was also expecting an additional saving of Rs. 92 lakhs and Rs.9.51 crore annually following the completion of Abu Dhabi and Berlin Projects. However, it is informed by the Ministry that savings accrued by the above investments are offset by the opening of six new Missions and two new Posts in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea), Sao Paulo (Brazil), Zagreb (Croatia), Gaza (Palestine), Yerevan (Armenia), Baku (Azerbaijan) and Suva (Fiji). The annual rental liability in Missions/posts at present is approximately Rs. 100 crore.

Capital Section

Major Head "4059" and "4216" Capital Outlay on Public Works and Public Housing

BE	1999-2000	Rs.100.00 crores
RE	1999-2000	Rs.80 crores
BE	2000-2001	Rs.100 crores

This provision caters to the expenditure on purchase of properties both built-up as well as construction in countries where rentals are high.

73. When enquired about the progress regarding the construction of Videsh Bhavan, the Ministry informed the Committee that the construction of Videsh Bhavan is being undertaken to house the offices of Ministry of External Affairs presently located in several different Government buildings in New Delhi. The building is proposed to be constructed on a 7.785 acre plot of land on Janpath Maulana Azad Road crossing. Since the plot of land was acquired way back in the year 1992, the Committee inquired about the inordinate delay in the matter. The Ministry stated that the main reason for the delay in the implementation of the project was that the encroachment on the land could only be removed after an order of the Supreme Court in September, 1999. Besides, the Ministry was also attempting to obtain the permission for a higher floor area ratio (FAR) from the Ministry of Urban Affairs and Delhi Development Authority. The Ministry further informed that the design/plan of the building was yet to be finalised. A design competition was proposed to be held in August, 2000 for selection of the winning design and award the contract to the architect of the selected design. It was estimated that the work on project was likely to start by April 2001 and completed by April 2004.

74. During the evidence, it was felt that a huge sum of money was going to be spent on Videsh Bhavan project. It was suggested that the Ministry of External Affairs might explore the possibility of taking over a prominent hotel of ITDC, particularly Hotel Ashok, if proposed to be leased out in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism and converting it into an office of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Ministry responded by saying that while the proposal was tempting, the Ministry already had an experience of moving into a hotel and an enormous amount of money had been spent in refurbishing that building to convert its rooms into office space. In a subsequent note, the Ministry after consulting the Ministry of Tourism informed that the Disinvestment Commission has recommended that the ITDC hotels situated in prime locations in Delhi and Bangalore might be handed over to established hotel chains through a competitive bidding process to be run on a long

term structured contract on lease-cum-management basis. The recommendations of the Disinvestment Commission had been accepted by the Government. Further action in that regard was being taken by the Ministry of Tourism, Department of Disinvestment etc.

75. The Committee note that the Ministry have envisaged an expenditure of Rs.165 crores during the current financial year to cover Rents, Rates & Taxes under the Head Embassies and Missions. This is despite the claim of the Ministry to have initiated several steps to reduce the rental liabilities abroad during the past few years. On the other hand, the Ministry have acknowledged that the property market conditions, increased rental rates in the last three years and the increased exchange rate of the rupee against hard currency have added to their rental liability. This has led the Ministry to project their budgetary requirements as Rs.100 crores under the Capital Outlay on Public Works and Housing for the purchase of built-up properties, major repair and renovation of GOI owned properties abroad and initiation of construction projects. The Committee feel that the Ministry should give due and expeditious consideration to cutting down the rental liability further by having a cost-benefit analysis in each case especially where the rentals are very high. With regard to Videsh Bhavan project, the Committee desire that while work on the project should continue expeditiously and in right earnest, the Ministry may also, in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Finance, explore whether any of the various ITDC units, particularly Hotel Ashok, if leased out may be taken over to set up offices of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee desire that the Ministry may apprise them of the action taken in this regard.

April 13, 2000 Chairperson,
External Affairs
Chaitra 24, 1922 (Saka)

NEW DELHI KRISHNA BOSE,
Standing Committee on

APPENDIX I

Eligible categories of Tatkaal Scheme (i) patients requiring to go abroad for medical treatment or consultation (*without any enhanced fee*) ;

(ii) close relatives of a person residing abroad who is seriously ill or is in maternity confinement.

(iii) in case of death abroad of a close relative (spouse, father, mother, children, children's spouse, grand children, brothers and their spouses, and sisters and their spouses of applicant (*without any enhanced fee*);

(iv) businessmen wishing to travel abroad urgently for trade conferences, trade fairs/exhibitions, export/import or seminars.

(v) students requiring a passport for appearing in examinations such as SAT (*without any enhanced fee if the earnings of the parents/guardian of the student applicant is less than Rs.2,000/- per month*) ;

(vi) students going abroad to join foreign universities (*without any enhanced fee if the earnings of the parents/guardian of the student applicant is less than Rs.2,000/- per month*) ;

- (vii) spouse, parents, parents-in-law, children, brother, sister, brother-in-law and sister-in-law of individuals working abroad ;
- (viii) winners of promotional awards and schemes where foreign travel is a prize/incentive ;
- (ix) spouses of officials/passport holders going abroad and availing of companion ticket ;
- (x) pilgrims and journeys for religious purposes ;
- (xi) for marriage or honeymoon after marriage ;
- (xii) individuals wishing to go abroad to attend marriage of relatives such as children, grand children, brother, sister, niece or nephew.
- (xiii) for employment, project work, interviews, training, conferences, seminars and any other work in their professional capacity, e.g., journalists, employees of public/private sector, air/ship crew, charity workers, film persons ;
- (xiv) Cultural troupes for performance abroad.
- (xv) Individual as well as groups on Study Tour ;
- (xvi) All infants/minors accompanying their parent(s)/guardian ;
- (xvii) Businessmen and their spouses for incentive tours and Dealers Conferences;
- (xviii) Sports persons and accompanying officials, managers, trainers, doctors etc. going abroad to participate in an international event or for training ;
- (xix) employees and their dependents who get free passage tickets ; and
- (xx) other cases approved by JS(CPV)

APPENDIX II

MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 4 APRIL, 2000

The Committee sat from 1100 hrs. to 1340 hrs. and 1530 hrs. to 1715 hrs. PRESENT

Smt. Krishna Bose - Chairperson **MEMBERS**

Lok Sabha

2. Shri E. Ahmad
3. Shri R.L. Bhatia
4. Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi
5. Shri Bhim Dahal
6. Shri Bikram Keshari Deo
7. Shri K. Francis George
8. Adv. George Eden
9. Shri Suresh Kurup
10. Dr. Prasanna Kumar Patasani
11. Shri Amarsinh Vasantrao Patil
12. Smt. Prabha Rao
13. Shri Saiduzzama
14. Shri Dileep Sanghani
15. Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde
16. Shri Thirunavukarasu
17. Shri Dinesh Chandra Yadav
18. Shri Kolur Basavanagoud

Rajya Sabha 19. Shri Ranganath Mishra

20. Ms. Mabel Rebello

21. Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma

22. Shri Triloki Nath Chaturvedi

23. Dr. L.M. Singhvi

24. Smt. Sarla Maheshwari

25. Shri N. Thalavai Sundaram

26. Shri Swaraj Kaushal

27. Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma

28. Dr. Karan Singh

Secretariat

1. Dr. A.K. Pandey - Additional Secretary

2. Shri Harnam Singh - Joint Secretary

3. Shri A.K. Singh - Deputy Secretary

4. Shri R.K. Saxena - Under Secretary

Witnesses (Ministry of External Affairs)

1. Shri Lalit Mansingh - Foreign Secretary

2. Shri S.T. Devare - Secretary (ER)

3. Shri P.L. Goyal - Additional Secretary (AD & CPV)

4. Shri M.M.K. Sardana - Addl. Secretary (FA)

5. Shri Himachal Som - Director General (ICCR)

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs to the sitting of the Committee.

The Committee then discussed with the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs the various points arising out of the Demands for Grants (2000-2001) of the Ministry. The representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs replied to the queries made by the Members. A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

MINUTES OF THE SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HELD ON 13 APRIL, 2000

The Committee sat from 1130 hrs. to 1230 hrs.

PRESENT

Smt. Krishna Bose - Chairperson **MEMBERS**

Lok Sabha

2. Shri E. Ahmad

3. Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi

4. Shri Bikram Keshari Deo

5. Shri K. Francis George

6. Shri Suresh Kurup
- 7 Shri Saiduzzama
8. Shri Dileep Sanghani
9. Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde
10. Shri Thirunavukarasu
11. Shri Ganta Sreenivasa Rao
- Rajya Sabha** 12. Ms.Mabel Rebello
13. Dr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma
14. Shri Triloki Nath Chaturvedi
15. Smt. Sarla Maheshwari
16. Shri N. Thalavai Sundaram
17. Shri Swaraj Kaushal
18. Dr. Arun Kumar Sarma
19. Dr. Karan Singh

Secretariat

1. Shri Harnam Singh - Joint Secretary
2. Shri A.K. Singh - Deputy Secretary
3. Shri R.K. Saxena - Under Secretary

At the outset, the Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on the Demands for Grants of Ministry of External Affairs for the year 2000-2001. The Chairperson invited Members to offer their suggestions for incorporation in the Draft Report.

2. The Members suggested certain additions/modifications/amendments and desired that those be suitably incorporated into the body of the Report.

3. The Committee then authorised the Chairperson to finalise the Report in the light of verbal and consequential changes and for presentation of the Report to Parliament. The draft Report was then adopted.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX III

STATEMENT OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Sl. No.	Para	Ministry	Observations/Recommendations
1.	21	External Affairs	The Committee note that the
		Budget Estimates for the	financial year 1999-2000 was
		Rs. 2209.47 crores.	At the RE stage, it was
		augmented to Rs. 2249.44	crores. The total additionality
		between RE 1999-2000	

39.97 crores. The proposed Budget for 2000-2001 compared to BE the Ministry that Expenditure (SDE) primarily due to the routine maintaining establishment, Passport Offices and the and Loan to the Bangladesh. However, the austerity measures by reducing cost on transfer means of communication.

2. 22 -do- that available funds

the Ministry keeping in objectives, expenditure be discipline be enforced

Committee, however, feel proposed to be for instance, abolition of

and BE 1999-2000 was Rs.

Committee also note that the allocation of Rs. 2625.68 crores shows 18.84% increase as 1999-2000. It was informed by barring the Special Diplomatic component, the increase is increase in the costs of increase in allocations for increase in provisions for Aid Government of Bhutan and Ministry also claim to implement abolishing 18 vacant posts, passages and use of modern The Committee are of the view should be prudently utilised by view our foreign policy monitored closely and financial to observe austerity. The that certain austerity measures implemented by the Ministry

transfer passage do not

Ministry should implement

 in terms of cost benefit ratio. In

Committee have been

should undertake an

activities which can be done

Headquarters. Such activities

modern means of

E-Mail, Satellite Phones

technology to speed up

also between the

3. 23 -do-
over the fact that

Research Division and

Cadre have not been

they deserved. The

Historical and Research

established soon where

could be kept not only

but also for the use of

students and others

posts and cutting cost of

seem to be realistic. The

 economy measures

their earlier report the

emphasising that the Ministry

exercise to identify the

more economically at

could be a proper utilisation of

communication, for instance,

and use of latest computer

links within the Ministry and

Ministry and the Missions.

The Committee express concern

winding up of Historical and

also the revival of Research

handled with the seriousness

Committee strongly feel that

Division should be re-

Historical documents/records

for the benefit of the Ministry

academicians, researchers,

interested in the subjects.

4. 24 External Affairs The Committee note that due to neglect of the Legal and Treaties Division, it is not providing the kind of service, that is required. It is, therefore recommended that the Legal and Treaties Division must be strengthened further to enable it to render excellent advice and provide competent service. The Committee also desire that the revival of Research Cadre should be given high priority and all the required formalities for Government approval should be completed urgently. 5. 29 -do-

The Committee note that the Policy Planning and Research Wing of the Ministry of External Affairs examines the depiction of India's International Boundaries in foreign publications. The Committee express their concern over the fact that certain cases have come to light wherein publications belonging to UK, China, Vietnam, Dubai, Sri Lanka and Maldives have incorrectly depicted India's External Boundaries particularly those in Jammu & Kashmir, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The Committee feel that the corrective measures taken by the Ministry in such cases are not sufficient. The Committee desire that the matter should be taken up not only with the concerned Indian Missions abroad but also at a higher level with the concerned Foreign Government. Further, the Committee desire that the Ministry may remain in touch with the concerned authority on a regular basis to ensure that all such Maps showing wrong Indian External Boundaries are invariably stamped as "incorrect" so that students, researchers and others consulting such Maps are not misled by inaccuracies. 6. 33. External Affairs

The Committee feel that the NRIs and PIOs are national reserve of India and are extremely valuable for the country in many ways. However, the Government have so far shown a lack of sensitivity and shortsightedness in their approach towards them, which is evident from the fact that there is a total dearth of data on their economic strength, their cultural concerns, their potentialities and contribution towards their motherland and on many other related issues. Therefore, in the first instance, the Committee desire that a meaningful data-base must be created in the Ministry of External Affairs to formulate an acceptable blueprint of ideas dealing with this issue. Moreover, a comprehensive holistic approach, greater sensitivity and political will is required to effectively deal with NRIs and PIOs for the country's benefit. The Committee further note that there is a lack of coordination among various Ministries/Departments and also complexities in the procedures dealing with the problems of NRIs and PIOs. However, the Committee hope that the Department being created by the Ministry to exclusively deal with the problems of NRIs and PIOs would adequately be equipped to improve coordination among various Ministries/Departments to derive optimal benefits of policies of the Government directed towards the NRIs and PIOs and deal with their problems in an integrated manner.

7. 34. External Affairs The Committee feel that the Ministry should explore the possibilities of setting up Information Centres or Public Relation offices at each of important Missions particularly in Gulf Countries, where there is a large concentration of Indian workers to provide them all possible assistance in times of distress, specially in terms of providing shelters for the hapless workers who are forced to flee due to ill-treatment of their employers. 8.

41. External Affairs The Committee have, time and again, emphasised upon the importance of projecting India in an effective manner to promote international understanding and win support for our national interests, priorities, aspirations and concerns in the context of wide ranging changes taking place in the world. The Committee note that the Government have taken

steps in this direction through acquisition and use of most modern equipments, setting up of a website on Internet, upgradation of communication system keeping pace with the rapid developments in information technology, production of print and audio-visual publicity material and distribution thereof by Missions/Posts etc. The Committee feel that it is imperative to have a professional approach and trained personnel to handle the matters of external publicity, both at Headquarters and in Missions/Posts. The Committee further desire that the publicity material, journals and CD-ROM, supplied to the foreign Missions, media and opinion-makers should be more imaginative and comprehensive. The Committee also strongly feel that setting up an expert group to deal with various publicity-related issues would immensely help in presenting India's stand on various issues in correct perspective thereby lessening the impact of negative

propaganda.9. 42. External Affairs The Committee feel that India's external publicity must not be substituted by lobbying efforts alone and suggest that apart from the lobbying firms which are being hired to promote India's cause, the missions and posts must have the ability to communicate with the media, think-tanks and policymakers abroad independently. The Committee also suggest that the lobbying should be done in a more cost-effective way. The Ministry should deal more strongly with the cases of mis-reporting insofar as the activities of the lobbying firms are concerned.10. 50 External Affairs The Committee appreciate that considerable

improvement has been brought about insofar as the issue of passports and the functioning of Passport Offices are concerned. The Committee also commend efforts of the Government to expedite the issue of passports to certain deserving categories through the Tatkaal Scheme. However, the Committee would like the Ministry to submit an evaluation report on how the Scheme is functioning over a period of time.11. 51 External Affairs The Committee express their

dissatisfaction over the issue of variation in the per capita cost of passport in each of the 28 Passport Offices and recommend a closer look on the issue of such a sharp and radical variation and means of reducing it. With regard to corrupt practices prevalent in some Passport Offices, the Committee feel that it is very important to eradicate such practices by entrusting this responsibility to officers of known integrity who may keep a strict vigil over persons of dubious character and effectively deal with them through administrative control. So far as the computerisation of Regional Passport Offices is concerned, the Committee are not satisfied with the slow progress of the project and desire that the efforts should be made to complete the project during the current year.12. 54 -do- The Committee desire that efforts should be made to further facilitate Haj Pilgrims. The Committee would also like to be apprised about the progress in the matter of opening of an alternate route to Kailash-Mansarovar through Nepal.13.

59 -do- The Committee express satisfaction over the fact

a high standard in its that the ICCR is maintaining publications and other activities with regard to cultural projection of India abroad. However, with regard to the selection of

artists, the Committee desire
artists must be given a fair
presentations abroad in
recognition to them. The
selection process would be
representation to the deserving
all over the country.
that the delay in selecting
Centre in Washington
and desire that
Purchase Committee every time
Ministry may explore the
Indian Ambassador to
experts to take an early

14. 65
Ministry is making

Hindi and its

abroad and are happy that

in London was well

time. The Committee

make all endeavours

next World Hindi

-do-

that regional art forms and
chance to get selected for
order to give impetus and
Committee hope that the
such so as to give fair
artists and art performers from
The Committee strongly feel
a building to house the Cultural
is a matter of serious concern
instead of sending the
to inspect a property, the
possibility of empowering the
the US along with a few
decision in the matter.
The Committee note that the
efforts for progressive use of
propagation in India and
the VI World Hindi Conference
organised despite shortage of
desire that the Ministry should
for successful organisation of

November, 2002. The
and Sanskrit scholars
countries may also be
propagation of Hindi
Conference in Fiji in
Committee desire that Hindi
belonging to various European
associated actively with the
abroad.

15. 70 -do-The Committee note that the Dungsam Cement Plant (DCP) in Bhutan is being executed with 100% Government of India assistance. The Committee further note that although the GOI Assistance to DCP was under consideration since the early 1980s, the project was finally started in the 1990s with the GOI commitment of Rs. 400 crores. The Committee are surprised that so far an amount of Rs. 8.074 crores only has been released for the project which denotes that even the infrastructural facilities are yet to be provided fully for the project. The reason cited by the Ministry for the delay in the project is that M/s ACC Ltd., a JV Partner, withdrew from the project and so far the Ministry have been unable to identify another JV Partner for the project. The Committee feel that the reason is unconvincing and that the Ministry should make whole-hearted efforts to identify a JV Partner so that the project could progress satisfactorily. The Committee feel that inordinate delay would lead to massive cost and time overruns and thus desire that the priorities in the proposed project be identified by the Ministry and executed under a strict time-bound programme. 16.

75 -do-The Committee note that the Ministry have envisaged an expenditure of Rs. 165 crores during the current financial year to cover Rents, Rates & Taxes under the Head Embassies and Missions. This is despite the claim of the Ministry to have initiated several steps to reduce the rental liabilities abroad during the past few years. On the other hand, the Ministry have acknowledged that the property market conditions, increased rental rates in the last three years and the increased exchange rate of the rupee against hard currency have added to their rental liability. This has led the Ministry to project their budgetary requirements as Rs. 100 crores under the Capital Outlay on Public Works and Housing for the purchase of built-up properties, major repair and renovation of GOI owned properties abroad and initiation of construction projects. The Committee feel that the Ministry should give due and expeditious consideration to cutting down the rental liability further by having a cost-benefit analysis in each case especially where the rentals are very high. With regard to Videsh Bhavan project, the Committee desire that while work on the project should continue expeditiously and in right earnest, the Ministry may also, in consultation with the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Finance, explore whether any of the various ITDC units, particularly Hotel Ashok, if leased out may be taken over to set up offices of the **Ministry of External Affairs. The Committee desire that the Ministry may apprise them of the action taken in this regard.**