

13

**STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(2016-17)**

SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**‘INDIA’S SOFT POWER DIPLOMACY INCLUDING ROLE OF INDIAN
COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR) AND INDIAN DIASPORA.’**

THIRTEENTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

November, 2016/Kartika, 1938 (Saka)

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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR) AND INDIAN DIASPORA.’**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 23rd November, 2016

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 23rd November, 2016



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

November, 2016/Kartika, 1938 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2015-16)

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Name of Members</u>
1.	Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson Lok Sabha
2.	Shri Sirajuddin Ajmal
3.	Prof. (Dr.) Sugata Bose
4.	Shri Ranjit Singh Brahmputra
5.	Shri Arka Keshari Deo
6.	Shri Feroze Varun Gandhi
7.	Shri Rahul Gandhi
8.	Prof. Richard Hay*
9.	Shri Anant Kumar Hegde
10.	Shri Raghav Lakhanpal
11.	Shri Venkateswara Rao Magananti
12.	Shri Jose K. Mani
13.	Shri Chhedi Paswan
14.	Shri A. Anwar Raajhaa
15.	Shri Vishnu Dayal Ram
16.	Shri Mohammad Salim
17.	Prof. (Dr.) Mamta Sanghamita
18.	Shri P.R. Senthilnathan
19.	Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
20.	Smt. Supriya Sule
21.	Shri Sharad Tripathi
	Rajya Sabha
22.	Shri Raj Babbar [§]
23.	Shri Satyavrat Chaturvedi
24.	Shri Swapan Dasgupta [^]
25.	Shri Chunibhai Kanjibhai Gohel
26.	Smt. Kanimozhi
27.	Shri Ram Kumar Kashyap
28.	Shri Amar Singh [@]
29.	Shri C.M. Ramesh
30.	Dr. Karan Singh
31.	Shri D. P. Tripathi

*Prof. Richard Hay has been nominated *w.e.f.*13.04.2016 *vice* Smt. Raksha Khadse who has been nominated to the Committee on Agriculture

[§] Shri H.K. Dua retired on 17.11.2015 and Shri Raj Babbar has been nominated *w.e.f.*20.05.2016.

[^]Shri Swapan Dasgupta has been nominated *w.e.f.*20.05.2016.

[@] Shri Pavan Kumar Varma retired on 07.07.2016 and Shri Amar Singh has been nominated *w.e.f.* 25.7.2016.

COMPOSITION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2016-17)

1. Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Chairperson

Lok Sabha

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Rajya Sabha

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26. Smt. Kanimozhi
27. Shri C.M. Ramesh
28. Shri Amar Singh
29. Dr. Karan Singh
30. Shri R.K. Sinha
31. Shri D. P. Tripathi

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Shri Cryil John | — | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai | — | Director |
| 3. | Smt. Jyochnamayi Sinha | — | Additional Director |
| 4. | Shri Janmesh Singh | — | Under Secretary |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on External Affairs, having been authorized by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Thirteenth Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs (2016-17) on the subject 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy including role of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Diaspora.'

2. The Committee selected the subject 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy including role of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Diaspora' for detailed examination during the year 2015-16. The Committee were briefed by the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on 23rd February, 2016. The Committee took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Human Resource Development on 27th July, 2016.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 16th November, 2016. The Minutes of the sittings of the Committee are appended to the Report.

4. The Committee wish to express their gratitude to the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Human Resource Development for placing before them the material and information as well as tendering evidence and placing their considered views before the Committee.

5. For facility of reference, the observations/recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the Report.

NEW DELHI
21st November, 2016
30 Kartika, 1938 (Saka)

DR. SHASHI THAROOR
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on External Affairs

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Our world has witnessed vast changes in the manner and conduct of international relations and diplomacy since the end of the Cold War. Overreliance on military supremacy and ‘hard’ power is no longer adequate, and countries must exercise their influence through soft power. After all, it is not always the country with the bigger army that always wins, but that which tells the better story. Seen from this perspective, soft power is something of an instrument of persuasion, to bring the world around to our perspective, not by force but by ‘selling’ them a compelling story.

1.2 The term “soft power” was coined in the late 1980s by Joseph Nye. It is the ability of a country to persuade other nations of a line of thought in consonance with its goals. Soft power is derived from three resources i.e. a country’s culture, its political values and its foreign policy. India enjoys a wealth of soft power resources, from its rich culture of spiritualism, yoga, its cuisine, art and entertainment; classical and popular dance and music; its discourse of non-violence, its strong democratic institutions, and its pluralism, all of which have attracted people from across the world for centuries.

1.3 India’s global influence has had a long and complex history, from the dissemination of Hindu and Buddhist ideas across Asia, to the welcoming of Arab and Islamic thought on mathematics, astronomy and other physical and metaphysical sciences, to the more recent export of human and intellectual capital to Western universities, transnational corporations and multilateral organizations. However, it has only been in the last two decades that India has begun to actively promote and enhance its soft power effectively. Besides setting up a Public Diplomacy Division within the Ministry of External Affairs in 2006 and expanding the role of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) worldwide, the Ministry of Tourism has been roped into develop the ‘Incredible India!’ campaign. However, there remains a widespread feeling that we are yet to fully harness our soft power potential, to achieve which efforts and greater focus are necessary.

1.4 Cultural diplomacy is the lynchpin of public diplomacy because cultural activities demonstrate the best of what our country has to offer the world. Cultural diplomacy is

also a long-term strategy and, unlike traditional diplomacy, does not expect immediate returns—it aims to “tell a story” over time, and establish what a nation stands for in the world. India has a rich culture and the Government must facilitate its expression abroad to foreign audiences in order to build long term international influence. Cultural diplomacy has the potential to enhance national prestige and garner support for policies abroad on a sustained basis.

1.5 The Committee is aware of the role of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in this direction. Since its establishment in 1950, the ICCR has made concerted efforts to promote Indian culture, India’s democratic ideals, its values, traditions literature, languages, philosophy, and art forms, through a variety of mediums, including electronic and print publications, live performances etc. The activities of ICCR are serviced and supported through its headquarters in New Delhi along with 20 Regional Offices located in various parts of the country and 37 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad.

1.6 In furtherance of its objectives, ICCR carries out a range of art and culture related activities which include exchanging culture troupes of dance and music with other nations, conducting exhibitions, theatre and puppetry shows as well as organizing academic and intellectual activities, endowing scholarships and fellowships, setting up India Studies chairs, arranging conferences and seminars, etc. Other activities for the project of our soft power include visiting programmes by distinguished scholars, supplying statues/busts of our leaders, organizing and celebrating Indian festivals and days abroad, and so on.

1.7 In addition to the Ministry of External Affairs/ICCR, other line Ministries and Departments of the Government are also involved in the mandate of dissemination of India’s culture abroad and the projection of our soft power. Therefore, it is imperative that there is proper coordination between the Ministry of External Affairs/ICCR and the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of AYUSH, Ministry of Tourism, and other line Ministries within various State Governments.

1.8 The diaspora is critical in promoting a country's soft power. India is fortunate in its influential diaspora spread across the globe. Over the years, this has played an important role in popularizing Indian culture abroad. Diaspora reflects the multiplicity and variety of the rich social, ethnic, religious, and cultural tapestry that constitutes India and the Indian experience. The deep-rooted affection the diaspora feels for its motherland is an intangible asset that forms one of the foundations of our soft power. In recent times the Government has engaged constructively with the diaspora, but it is necessary to make them important stakeholders in projecting our soft power abroad in the long run.

CHAPTER II

SOFT POWER AND ITS DETERMINANTS

The concept of soft power has largely been understood as Joseph Nye's definition of 'the ability to achieve goals through attraction [rather] than coercion'. Nye employed the term largely to discuss the decline of the United States in the world and strategic options available to the country in light of its decline.

2.2 Though the expression did not exist before Nye, India has been projecting its 'soft power' for decades. ICCR, founded in 1950, has been the nodal point for India's cultural engagement with the world and it is the preeminent organization of the Government to project our soft power. It is a registered society funded by the MEA and is autonomous in its functioning.

2.3 The Foreign Secretary elaborated upon India's soft power resources and their use in diplomacy during a sitting of this Committee:-

"...The Committee's questionnaire recalls Joseph Nye's definition of Soft Power as the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than coercion. Attraction itself is a mix of affinity and persuasion and it is the pursuit and projection of these two concepts that is the core of diplomacy. Obviously, in doing so, every nation draws on its particular national personality and practices. While culture and history are at the centre of this reservoir, there are today many other factors – political, economic and technological – that form part of the mix. There are parts of the world where India is deeply respected for its enduring culture, but equally, there is a growing admiration for the achievement of building a credible democracy under very challenging conditions. In the last two decades, the widespread perception of India as an IT power is perhaps the most effective achievement of our soft power. While Indian diplomacy reflects this broad spectrum, some salient aspects of this include the following things. One, projection of our cultural vibrancy through arts, crafts and other intangible heritage, noting that many other nations have seen them erode very substantially in the process of modernization. Two, promotion of traditions such as yoga, meditation and holistic medicine that lead to a stronger appreciation of our history and heritage. Three, underlining our pluralistic and diverse lifestyle that is expressed through the peaceful co-existence of multiple faiths, languages and identities. Conferences, exhibitions and exchanges in these fields help us bond with other nations that share different aspects of this pluralism. Four, utilize the power of Indian cinema that has been a particularly effective tool over many

decades in shaping a positive view of India abroad. Five, develop and enhance a more contemporary picture of India that is digitally driven, whether in terms of our skills and capabilities or in our projection efforts. National flagship programmes, that further reinforce this message of modernization underway, also help in this regard. Six, leverage the influence of the world's largest Diaspora to advance our interests and improve our global standing. In recent times, this has been a conscious element in our interactions abroad. As a larger strategy, it may be noted that India's future lies in its emergence as a human resources power. It is, therefore, important we display an ability to support the Diaspora whether under stress or in distress, individually or collectively....”

2.4 According to the Ministry, over the past decade, India has increasingly come to be recognized as something of a “soft power superpower”, with some of the constituents commonly identified spanning a very broad spectrum, including recognition of our country as the world's largest democracy. The visible impact and influence of Bollywood and Indian popular culture across the globe, the attractions across the world of holistic health alternatives such as yoga and the ideas of leading personalities from the Buddha to Mahatma Gandhi, some of whom have, in fact, gone beyond being seen as exclusively Indian, are all measures of India's soft power.

2.5 When asked about the conceptualization of soft power and its relevance in diplomacy, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“Ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction, using non-coercive means *i.e.* by using ‘*Soft Power*’ continues to be relevant in Indian diplomacy, wherein the three dimensions of Soft Power namely – Culture, Political values and Foreign Policy are important tools. India has been exercising ‘*Soft Power*’, well before the term was coined. For instance, ICCR was established way back in 1950 precisely for this purpose. In Ministry's view, there is both need and scope to go beyond Nye's original formulation of Soft Power, by shifting focus from ‘*tools*’ in hand to ‘*approaches and methods*’ of using the power in hand. Judicious blend of Soft power with other dimensions of hard power –military might shall make India a Smart power.”

2.6 The Ministry, furthermore, states that democratic and secular values, peaceful co-existence, friendly relations with neighbours and the strengthening of regional

cooperation have been the tenets of Indian culture, and our political values and foreign policy. These have been the principles by which India has traditionally constructed its strategy of using soft power. Our parliamentary, democracy, multi-party political system and stable political system have all enhanced India's standing and image.

2.7 When asked about its conceptualization of culture of India, the Ministry submitted the following through a written reply:-

“ ‘Culture’ is a dynamic concept characterizing the Indian society and manifested in our collectively held attributes, which include teaching and learning (*socialization, language, literature*), ideas (*identity, Philosophy and way of thinking*), value system (*democratic and secular*), norms (*economic systems, traditions, varied art forms and sports*) and India's institutional structures (*family, Constitution and political systems*). ICCR's tool-kit to project diversity of Indian Culture to the external world broadly has two sets of tools – (i) its structures and (ii) activities conducted. The structures include ICCR's (i) Culture Centres, (ii) Indian studies Chairs and, (iii) teachers of languages, music, dance and Yoga etc. deployed abroad and (iv) scholarship programme for foreign students to study in India. The activities include dynamic exchange of intellectuals, academicians, experts, authors, scholars and artists at bilateral and multilateral level throughout the year, organizing seminars and conferences and bringing out publications and periodicals in prominent international languages. India's performing arts including music and dance, visual and fine arts, architecture, culinary art and Bollywood have been traditional tools to showcase India's long, rich and diverse cultural heritage.”

2.8 According to the Ministry, the ICCR (and MEA) recognise “*Indian Culture*” as a dynamic concept and have therefore diligently align our soft power strategies with an evolving foreign policy, which in turn is a constituent of the broader idea of “*Indian Culture*”. ICCR has, over time, emerged as an important organization at the national level for extensive cultural engagement with the world and for promoting India's culture in all its forms and flavours abroad. It has evolved and adapted its requirements as well as adjusted its emphasis on the activities it undertakes, keeping in view India's soft power needs and our evolving diplomatic relationships. These efforts have contributed to an improved understanding of India in foreign countries and in the enhancing of our prestige internationally.

2.9 On the ways of assessing the effectiveness of soft power capabilities and their tangible foreign policy outcomes, the Ministry submitted the following through a written reply:-

“India’s soft power capabilities are plentiful and multifaceted. When seen in perspective, one can see there have been significant achievements since India’s independence, in terms of how India is perceived by the outside world. This can be witnessed in (i) clichéd ideas about India being replaced by image of country producing brain power, (ii) India becoming a nation of (computer) mouse charmers from being a nation of snake charmers; (iii) India emerging as one of the leading economies – BRICS and G-20; (iv) greater acceptability for Indian popular culture including Bollywood and *Bhelpuri* abroad and (v) mass-media revolution, within India connecting people abroad. How India overcame Japan’s bitterness after Pokhran-II through a sustained Cultural campaign and charms it once again to become a valued friend and partner is one such example to site. However, it is worthwhile to explore devising an objective method of assessing effectiveness of soft power capabilities and their tangible foreign policy outcomes, such as developing a “*Soft Power Matrix*”. ICCR is currently conducting a performance review of its own functioning to understand how its efforts over the years have translated into tangible Foreign Policy returns and how a framework of an integrated strategy, resource base could and tool kit could be formulated to be more effective.”

2.10 On being asked about its views on ‘*Smart Power*’, the Ministry submitted the following through a written reply:-

“In Ministry’s opinion, ‘*Smart Power*’ is the most representative of India’s current interaction with the world, where the emphasis is on building capacities to be able to choose right forms of power to employ in relation to a particular context. MEA’s policy of ‘Neighbourhood first’, ‘Act East Asia’, ‘Link West Asia’, ‘Indian ocean outreach’, ‘Cooperation with Pacific Islands’, ‘Fast track diplomacy’, ‘Engagement with Overseas Indians’ *etc.* enhanced engagement with North and South America, European nations, Eurasia and Africa are manifestations of how Indian Foreign-Policy making is being conceptualized and formulated, where ‘*Power*’ as Nye says is being treated as a resource, and focus is on using context specific approach and method.”

2.11 On being asked about tangible gains from soft power, the representative of the Ministry during the sitting submitted as under:-

“I think the effective deployment of soft power is probably the fact that we represent India is an advantage that we get. I will tell you just why. It is anecdotal. It has happened to me more than once that when you are outside and you are asked which country you represent when you say you are representing India, people say, ‘Oh that is my favourite country!’ I say thank you very much and ask when you were there last? They say, ‘I have never visited India’. I think that is the most dramatic reflection of soft power that one can encounter that it is the image of India which is our greatest asset and resource. This is something that I say to all my young colleagues. When we go abroad as representatives of India for the first time, this is something we recognize that one has an automatic advantage over other diplomatic colleagues and peers. When one says one represents India, one starts off with a positive. So, it is only the fact that there are people who may have visited India, and then we may have encountered some ugly Indians, who may have had some negative experiences, who have to actually counter a negative bias. Most of us start off with a positive sentiment. So, I think that in itself is the most effective example of soft power that I could cite.”

2.12 When asked whether soft power can be employed in India’s dealings with China, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting of the Committee submitted as under:-

“On NSG, China and whether soft power engagement can have a role at this time, the soft power has a value. But I do not think it is a substitute for some serious hard power arguments. I do not think we should be in denial of what is the problem that we are having with China right now.”

2.13 He further added:

“So, at this time what is required with China is a sensible pragmatic conversation about how not accommodating each other’s aspirations is not beneficial to the relationship. We need to have that conversation and we will have that conversation. But we cannot find a fix for a terrorism problem or a PoK problem or a NSG problem in soft power engagement, which is not to detract from soft power engagement *per se*. I do believe, particularly in China, we need to do more to improve our image there. I did two postings there back to back. I think an average American has an image of India which is much superior to what an average Chinese has of India. Therefore, clearly there is work to be done, there is soft power deficiency there which needs to be remedied.”

2.14 On being asked about impediments in projecting India’s soft power, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting of the Committee submitted as under:-

“.....about the impediments of projecting soft power, the answer I would give in a way is that soft power is probably most effectively projected when you do not do it in a conscious and visible manner. I would draw to

your attention and observation which Lequan once made. He contrasted the rise of China which is obviously at a much higher level with rise of India and asked a question why is it that the rise of China was threatening to its neighbours where the rise of India was not. He answered the question himself, which he said that it is part of it. It is in the Indian personality. The very lack of assertiveness, the diffusion of the personality, somehow the pluralism of India which sometimes looks much more fuzzy because it does not have the sharp edges, it actually makes people more comfortable, at least, less threatened. A part of it was also because a democratic country with a culture of tolerance, a culture of acceptance seems to be intellectually less domineering than China. So, my sense is that when it comes to soft power, in a sense it is good to keep. I am not suggesting, I mean this is not a Narasimharaoean answer that the strategy is a non-strategy. But, there is some element of that that it has to be kept very loose, very, sort of, effective but disaggregated for it to work.”

2.15 According to the Ministry, on average only about 60 Missions send Annual Action Plans to the ICCR. Soft power projections need to be mainstreamed and each Mission should be obligated to submit plans. Besides, at annual HoMs Conference as also Regional HoMs conferences, soft power projections ought to be included as an agenda item to enable better planning and implementation, to craft regional initiatives, learn from best practices, share creative funding ideas and learn from efforts of other countries. The XP Division has now absorbed the erstwhile Public Diplomacy Division, which projects soft power, ICCR should work with all concerned divisions and departments, including XP, the Akademies and State Governments in order to deliver better, with the allocation of adequate resources – both financial and in terms of personnel. This would itself prove be a worthwhile investment.

2.16 On being asked about parameters determining ways and means for developing our soft power in different countries and regions of the world, the Ministry submitted the following through a written reply:-

“Parameters/ consideration for determining the ways and means for projecting soft power in various countries/ regions of the world largely depend on the Foreign Policy of the day. These are diligently calibrated, in tune with the evolving policy priorities in close coordination with the GOI.”

2.17 On the short-term, mid-term and long term goals of the ICCR in regard to these parameters, the Ministry submitted the following through a written reply:-

“ICCR’s vision is to foster cultural relations with all the countries of the world and emerge as a brand organization in India providing “*Smart Power*” solutions and strategies for enhancing these relations further. As far as short term goals are considered, ICCR prepares Plan of Action (POA) every financial year. Mid-term and Long term-goals based on the Foreign Policy initiatives focus on institution building – that is institutionalizing processes involved in Smart Power projection. ICCR’s statutory bodies (General Assembly, Governing Body and Finance Committee), with the completion of tenure in October 2015 were recently reconstituted on March 28, 2016. Reconstituted General Assembly would be soon be convened and ICCR’s Short term, Mid-term and Long term goals would be worked out accordingly.”

2.18 The Ministry has stated that the celebration of the International Day of Yoga on the 21st of June last year globally was assessed as a very effective manifestation of our soft power outreach. The XP Division and the ICCR worked very closely with each other and also with AYUSH in this effort, and this was marked in 144 countries through ICCR centres and Indian Missions. As a follow up to this effort, the ICCR has established the India-Turkmen Centre for Yoga and Traditional Medicine in Ashgabad in July last year and the India-China Yoga College at Yunnan Minzu University in November last year.

2.19 The Ministry has also stated that the growing profile and influence of Bollywood is a very important factor in our soft power, and an on-going effort is underway to acquire non-commercial rights of quality Indian feature films and TV series, with the proposal to make these available to our Missions to reach out to young people, potential viewers and film lovers globally. Another aspect related to soft power is the projection of our culture through Embassy buildings. We have made a conscious decision to increase Indian motifs and architectural features and this is visible in many of our new projects, notably in Bahrain, Shanghai, Beijing and Kuwait.

2.20 The Foreign Secretary during the sitting of the Committee made the following point in describing development partnerships as a means of soft power projection:-

“The Committee may also wish to note that our development partnerships have been a very effective way of projecting soft power. Fifty-four per cent of the Ministry’s budget is actually allocated to developmental assistance. Whether it is the Parliament in Kabul, a Hospital in Kathmandu, Housing in Sri Lanka, or a Sports Stadium in the Caribbean, we have earned enormous goodwill through these efforts. While this could

be a subject for a separate discussion, the Lines of Credit abroad, especially to Africa, projects in neighbouring countries, particularly of a connectivity relevance, and the training and capacity building that we offer in India and abroad are all key elements of our soft power enhancement. These are areas that occupy increasing attention within the Ministry and much of our energies are devoted to effective monitoring and speedier implementation.”

2.21 While elaborating upon the appeal of Gandhian values as a soft power resource, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...so, we are actually looking at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra which we have taken over with the merger of the Overseas Indian Ministry. We want to see if actually, when we get it going, we can have a major Gandhi exhibition there because probably the best way of raising consciousness is to begin at home. For our own people and for the Pravasis who come to India and who would be coming to the Centre, whether we can enhance their understanding of Gandhi. It is certainly a theme which can be focused upon. During the Prime Minister’s visit to South Africa, you would notice that he actually took one day off actually to visit Pietermaritzburg and to go to the Phoenix Settlement. The fact that he did it and it got a lot of play, itself was raising that consciousness. But, in the process of doing this for the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, we have actually today found or are tracking a lot of resources relating to Gandhiji which we hope over a period of time to more effectively present. Certainly the point is well taken. I think we could look and maybe October 2 is a good occasion to ask Embassies all over the world also to promote that.”

2.22 When asked whether any comparative study has been made to determine the ways in which different countries leverage their soft power, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...yes, actually this is an issue we have just asked PP Division to do some sort of first cut of what are other people doing, give us a comparative model but again I would submit in many ways this is very unique. Large countries have unique soft power. We will have a mix which would be very different though we are Asian countries, say from China, though we are democracy say from Europe or the United States. I think we are in a curious way a mix of western liberal tradition with an Asian culture but an Asian culture which is different from other Asian cultures. So, there can be some comparisons. At the end of the day, I think the uniqueness really wins out...”

2.23 Soft Power is the ability of a country to achieve foreign policy objectives through cultural attraction rather than through force, coercion or indeed large deployments of money. While culture and history are at the centre of this approach, various political, economic and technological factors are equally significant. India is endowed with enormous soft power resources in the form of a vibrant culture, our art, artifacts, tangible and intangible heritage, practices like Yoga, meditation, Indian TV and cinema, information and technology exports, our democracy, our pluralism and a thriving diaspora. In spite of having vast soft power resources at its disposal, it comes as a matter of regret for the Committee that we have not been able to put them to adequate use in matters of foreign policy. The Committee are aware that the Government and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has made concerted efforts to promote India's soft power, its values, traditions, literature, languages, philosophy, art forms through a variety of mediums including electronic and print publications, live performances etc. Through these efforts, the image of India overseas has seen a major overhaul from that of a land of snake charmers to one of an emerging knowledge hub and IT superpower. Still, there are missing links regarding India abroad, and in certain cases there is the prejudice of prevailing stereotypes. The Committee find that in all these decades we have been lagging behind in cultural diplomacy and this lacuna should be removed at the earliest. It is widely believed that India's soft power until now has functioned independently of Government policies and the world's reckoning of our soft power is by default rather than design. The Committee are of the view that the Government has been able to leverage our country's soft power only in a

fragmented way without the backing of a cohesive policy or commensurate financial resources. The Committee would, therefore, recommend that the Ministry formulate a comprehensive and well-structured policy delineating India's soft power resources and their articulation abroad. The Ministry of External Affairs and the ICCR should extensively and in a sustained manner employ the resources at their disposal to propagate an image of India that augments our natural historical appeal, empowering our diplomacy and foreign policy.

(Recommendation No.1)

2.24 Today the concept of soft power has acquired currency not only in the field of academics but also in the field of international relations and diplomacy. Though soft power is an intangible component of a State's power and it is difficult to measure its definite impact, a study could establish the linkages between our soft power and tangible outcomes in the field of diplomacy. Such a study could point towards the ways in which India could leverage its soft power. Without such a linkage, soft power will remain a mere non-operational concept in India's diplomatic doctrine. The Ministry has also conceded that it is worthwhile to explore devising an objective method of assessing effectiveness of soft power capabilities and their tangible foreign policy outcomes, such as developing a 'soft power matrix'. The Committee are of the opinion that soft power, while very useful in itself, is only one possible instrument for enhancing our global role, along with appropriate use of hard power, and it should where possible be used in conjunction with the latter. The Committee would deem it desirable for the Ministry to study the tangible foreign

policy outcomes of soft power and to devise, thereafter, a blue print for deploying it looking ahead. In itself, soft power carries no currency unless it is contextually driven and guided by certain objectives. The Committee would also recommend that the Government should come out with a 'soft power matrix' at the earliest, in order to measure the effectiveness of India's soft power.

The Ministry states that there is substantial scope for the improvement of India's image in neighbouring States. Even while fully endorsing the idea that we cannot fix all our problems with neighbours through soft power engagement alone, the Committee feel that some amount of soft power may be beneficial in improving our relations with our neighbours. Going by India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, the Committee would also recommend that India should selectively exercise its soft power in neighbouring states for better diplomatic traction.

(Recommendation No.2)

2.25 The Committee observe that apart from using conventional means of soft power in the form of culture and heritage, India has started importing new elements into its repertoire of soft power. It is an articulation of the Ministry's conceptualization of Indian culture as a dynamic concept. The Committee are pleased to note that the Ministry has been trying to go beyond Nye's formulation of soft power by shifting focus from the 'tools' in hand to 'approaches and methods' of using soft power. The Government's initiative to showcase India's soft power to the world by successfully organizing the International Yoga Day on 21st June across the globe was an expression of this approach. Such an approach will definitely go a long

way in stamping India's enduring image in the minds of people across continents. With the changing nature of global engagements, the manner in which we present our image overseas should also be flexible.

But in order to achieve this, a great deal of ground work will need to be done and a mere change in phraseology will not be adequate. It is informed that at present, on an average, only 60 Missions are sending Annual Action Plans to the ICCR. In the Committee's opinion, this is a major handicap in adequate planning and in the leveraging of our soft power resources. The Committee would, therefore, recommend that in order to mainstream soft power projections, each Mission should necessarily submit its Annual Plan to the ICCR and soft power projections should be a definitive agenda item at annual HoMs/Regional HoMs Conferences.

The Committee note that the Ministry has considered Development Partnerships as an effective means to project soft power. But in a number of cases, while announcements are made at the highest levels, funds are not available in time. The Committee in earlier Reports had expressed anguish over such delays in disbursements, in project execution and in the lack of effective monitoring, and here again the Committee would strongly reason that Development Partnerships should be handled carefully because they have the potential to create a favourable image of India overseas.

The Committee would, therefore, recommend that these partnerships should be handled with utmost diligence along with the expeditious release of funds for the equally expeditious execution of projects.

The Committee also recommend that India being the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, we should propagate his values and philosophy through embassies in all parts of the world in a sustainable manner in the long term. In a world divided by strife and conflict, the path of non-violence and peace lit by Mahatma Gandhi decades ago could awaken nations around the globe to India’s message once again. In addition, Gandhian values of environmental consciousness, “small is beautiful” and moral living have once again become relevant to global public discourse. There could be no better time to revive interest in the Father of our Nation.

(Recommendation No.3)

CHAPTER III

ROLE AND FUNCTIONING OF INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

According to the Ministry, since its establishment in 1950, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has made concerted efforts to promote India's soft power abroad, celebrating, inter alia, Indian culture, our democracy, its values, traditions, literature, languages, philosophy and art forms through a variety of mediums, including electronic, publications, live performances, India Studies Chairs, seminars and conferences, exchange programmes, scholarships and through Indian Cultural Centres (ICC) abroad. The ICCR has emerged as an important organisation for cultural engagement with the world and for promoting India's culture abroad in all its magnificence. It has evolved and adapted its requirements as also adjusted its emphasis in the activities it undertakes keeping in view India's soft power requirements and evolving diplomatic relationships. These efforts have contributed to helping develop a better understanding of India in foreign countries and in the enhancing of our prestige.

3.2 The aims and objectives of the ICCR's as enunciated in its Memorandum of Association, are as follows:-

- To participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's cultural relations with other countries;
- To foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries;
- To establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture.
- To take such measures as may be required to further these objectives.

3.3 The ICCR's activities are serviced and supported through its Headquarters in New Delhi, 20 Regional Offices located in various parts of India, and 37 Indian Cultural Centres abroad.

3.4 The ICCR is headed by a President. Its activities are overseen by its statutory bodies – the General Assembly, Governing Body and Finance Committee. These bodies provide overall guidance and direction and approve the ICCR’s budget and Annual Plan of Action. The last three year tenure of the General Assembly, Governing body and Finance Committee expired on October 16, 2015, and all three bodies have now been reconstituted. The Council draws up a Plan of Action (POA) before the start of the financial year listing out the activities it proposes to undertake and projected expenditure involved, which are approved by its statutory bodies.

3.5 While delivering a brief account of the activities undertaken by the ICCR, the representative of the Ministry during the sitting submitted as under:-

“The promotion of Indian performing arts and fine arts is an important part of the ICCR’s work. In the current financial year, the Council has presented 120 performances in about 100 countries. It has taken 18 exhibitions overseas, received and arranged three exhibitions in India, and organised an art residency programme for women artists in Shanghai. The ICCR has also organised major cultural festivals in Russia, in the CIS countries, in Singapore and in Egypt. The participation in these activities is with the help of empanelled experts artists and scholars in the relevant fields; and in the Ministry’s view, the Council has played a major role in helping create a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of India and of our fabled scholastic and intellectual strengths through specifically 19 conferences and seminars which, as an example, have been organised in the current year. I would like to mention, about the two international conferences, in particular, which were held. One was the World Indology Conference that was organised at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in November last year and the second was the recently held International Conference on the Roma Community.”

A. ICCR’S EXPENDITURE AND BUDGET SITUATION

3.6 As per the Detailed Demands for Grants, a budget of Rs. 192 crores has been allocated in BE 2015-16 and it was retained at the same level in RE 2015-16. During BE 2016-17, the budgetary allocation was enhanced to Rs. 215.80 crores which is higher by 12.40%.

3.6 As per the Ministry, at RE stage of 2015-16 it has sought Rs.202.80 crores. Under BE 2015-16, it asked for Rs.250.48 crores. The details of BE, RE and expenditure of ICCR are as follows:-

S.No.	Year	BE	RE projected By ICCR	RE allotted	Actual expenditure
1	2010-11	150.00	176.41	150.00	148.36
2	2011-12	121.00	197.02	140.00	175.75
3	2012-13	150.00	253.50	157.30	181.08
4	2013-14	160.00	194.82	160.00	165.45
5	2014-15	176.00	193.19	167.20	160.29
6	2015-16	192.00	202.80	192.00	--

As can be seen from the budgets for the last six years, not only were there cuts at the BE stage but the ICCR was also asked to plan more realistically at the RE stage, perforce requiring ICCR to cut down on programme outreach. With an adequate budget and funds, the ICCR will be better equipped to project and leverage India's Soft Power.

3.7 The details of the budgetary allocations and activities carried out by the ICCR are as under:

S.No.		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2013-14
1.	Budget (in Crores)	86.75	139.00	150.00	140.00	157.20	160.00	167.20
	Expenditure (in crores)	88.28	130.00	148.36	175.75	81.08	165.45	160.29
Activities								
1.	International Scholars	3432	3987	4375	4268	4721	5178	6095
2.	Indian Cultural Centres abroad	21	26	34	37	37	39	35
3.	Outgoing Cultural Delegations	94	101	125	146	157	61	86
4.	Outgoing Visitors Programme	85	54	72	35	51	15	18
5.	Festivals abroad	5	2	4	7	2	1	3

S.No.		2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2013-14
6.	ICCR Chairs abroad & Hindi Teachers	32	42	84	91	95	76	77
7.	Outgoing Exhibitions	22	24	46	42	52	35	36
8.	Distinguished/Imp visitors programme	19	19	19	11	18	3	4
9.	Fellowship to Foreign Scholars	--	9	14	3	4	3	4
10.	Academic Visitors Programme	--	--	5	10	6	NIL	10
11.	Busts/Statues	1	11	3	26	13	6	12
12.	Incoming Cultural Delegations	48	35	29	36	17	11	61
13.	International Festivals in India	4	3	9	8	11	4	11
14.	Indian Cultural programmes in India (Horizon)	NIL	18	403	435	521	332	336
15.	Conferences & Seminar	1	4	8	12	11	2	13
16.	Incoming Exhibitions	13	5	3	4	4	2	2

Note: Out of RE of Rs. 167.20 Cr, a sum of Rs. 9.58 Cr was deducted by the O/O PrCCA/MEA towards previous liabilities.

3.8 On being asked about the reasons for a decline in the number of activities undertaken by the ICCR, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“Resource/Financial crunch is the sole reason responsible for decline in the number of ICCR’s activities over the last few years. Budget situation described above may please be referred to once again. Another important factor responsible for decline in ICCR’s activities is the growing Agency work (for administering various scholarship schemes) and untimely release of funds for implementing the same. Of the 24 Scholarship schemes that ICCR is currently administering, 16 schemes are being administered as Agency. All these schemes are primarily goodwill generating projects. If the funds are not released in time to the foreign students studying in India, purpose of these schemes is defeated. Due to non-release of Agency funds in time, ICCR has been bona fide spending

its own allocation for smooth implementation of Scholarship schemes. For example, ICCR spent Rs. 28 Crores in FY 2014-15 and Rs. 57 Crores in FY 2015-16 from its allocation. In the past few years, fund spent by ICCR on Agency work was given back as reimbursement in next FY. However, this was made part of ICCR's budget allocation of next FY and not reimbursed as an additional amount that was spent. As a result, the net BE would further come down. In some years, part of Agency funds would be released to ICCR towards the end of the financial year, which could not practically be spent by ICCR and had to be surrendered. In a situation when ICCR has to spend its allocation for Agency schemes, in the absence of liquidity, it is left with no choice but to cut down its own activities and outreach.”

3.9 It is clear that there is a massive gap between the ICCR's wide and ever-expanding mandate and the budgetary support granted it to fulfill this mandate. As per the Ministry, in order to maximize outcomes within limited resources, the ICCR has already taken a number of initiatives, which include:

- a) Synergizing its efforts with related line Ministries to converge funds,
- b) Initiating partnerships with State Governments and sharings costs incurred,
- c) Initiating negotiations with its foreign counterparts for establishing institutional partnerships. It is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC),
- d) Initiating the running of Indian Culture Centres abroad under a PPP model,
- e) Exploring possibilities for establishing Regional Culture Centres abroad to cover more than one country in the region,
- f) Negotiating a cost-sharing model for establishing chairs in Universities abroad, maximizing the use of Indian Chairs and teachers, and
- g) Establishing a panel of multi-talented teachers to minimize costs incurred on sending many teachers to a centre/Mission.

3.10 The Ministry has submitted that adequate, if not generous, budgetary support to the ICCR's expanding mandate would go a long way in assisting it in producing quality outcomes.

3.11 On the financial delays created on account of agency work, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting submitted as under:-

“On the agency work which ICCR does, again what you have said is very valid. It is a problem, it has been a problem and there have been complaints from ICCR about not receiving payment in time for agency

work. When I spoke about the irregular flow of finances, frankly that was what I was partly referring to and at least from the MEA side for the work that they do for us, we are very conscious of it and we are trying to ensure that does not continue to be a problem.”

3.12 On the same matter, the DG, ICCR during the sitting submitted as under:-
“.....mentioning about our problems regarding collecting money on account of work done as an agency. That, in fact, has been crippling on top of the lack of adequate financial reserves. The present Foreign Secretary has taken a view that wherever ICCR is given agency work, 75 per cent of that money should be paid in advance so that it does not impinge upon our limited money available for programming activities. I am glad that it has been released so far in the first quarter and I hope, this will continue. Other Ministries should also follow this. This is the practice within the Ministry....”

3.13 On the issue of State support to cultural activities, the representative of the Ministry during the sitting submitted as under:-

“You also made a point about the kind of cultural exchanges that used to be very popular up to the 70s and into the 80s but are not longer as visible. This is part of an overall tendency that funding for culture on all side, institutional funding by Government for culture on all sides, has dwindled. This is a pattern that used to happen at the time when there was State financing of culture. We find that now even when we suggest to foreign partners that we should have a Government-to-Government cultural exchange programme there is very little receptivity to the idea because Western industrialised countries in particular feel that culture is something that should be self-supported. Notwithstanding the fact that at least in Europe very large public funding is provided for local cultural activities. But providing subvention to foreign cultural groups is not something that they think of automatically. So, it takes a fair amount of diplomacy with local and regional Governments, with other bodies or with private foundations to try to get them to support our groups. That is the reason why, there is also not so much funding available for cultural groups to visit India. Notwithstanding that, ICCR nonetheless does sponsor and support a fair number of foreign cultural performances in our country but not as much as we would like.”

3.14 While spelling out budgetary requirements, the DG, ICCR during the sitting submitted as under:-

“You asked about the quantum of funding..... Actually I have taken over after the last RE projection was made. But I think notionally at least Rs. 500 crore would be required which, in fact, the hon. Minister of External Affairs has also been mentioning so that that gives us a reasonable flexibility because when we take the regional offices, one-third of them are manned at Under Secretary level officers. So, based on that projection, in fact, the hon. Minister of External Affairs mentioned this a couple of times. This time, we missed the bus at the RE stage. This can only happen at the BE stage next year. I had a conversation with the Finance Secretary and Foreign Secretary. Last time when the Foreign Secretary attend the Governing body meeting, he had advised ‘realistic planning’.

3.15 On the matter of realistic planning for the ICCR, the Financial Advisor to the Ministry of External Affairs during the sitting submitted as under:-

“What we call realistic planning, if you have to do the time series analysis of the fiscal year 2014-15 and 2015-16 which have just gone by, ICCR’s demands at the BE level in 2014-15 was Rs. 217.68 crore and which was reduced to Rs. 193 crore at the RE level. That was a realistic planning given the institutional capacity. In 2015-16, the demand was Rs. 250.48 crore which at the RE stage was brought down to Rs. 202.80 crore. We as the finance people tried our best to satisfy their demands. In 2014-15, the BE allocated was Rs. 176 crore *vis-à-vis* the RE wish-list of Rs. 193 crore and in 2015-16 Rs. 192 crore was allocated *vis-à-vis* the demand for Rs. 202.80 crore. Between the RE demand and allocation in 2015-16 the gap was only Rs. 10 crore. For the coming fiscal year, though our Budget Estimates have been squeezed by 2 per cent, we have actually proposed an enhanced Budget Estimate for ICCR. So, we are going to budget for 2016-17 an amount of Rs. 215.80 crore, which is an increase of 12.4 per cent despite our overall Budget Estimates being reduced by 2 per cent.”

3.16 He further submitted that:-

“Similarly, when I look at ICCR dispassionately and we are here to deliberate on the road map ahead, there are basically two gaps, the human resource gap and the foreign exchange gap. In my humble opinion, the finance gap is not as critical as the human resource gap. The above analysis clearly shows that they were forced to do realistic planning because of the lack of institutional capacity to spend. I do know whether this is a chicken egg story. I think, first we have to put the right people in the right slot, built up institutional capacities – I do not know whether they will agree with me or not but we will try out best that money will flow.”

3.17 According to the information made available by the Ministry, the British Council enjoys a budget of 800 million (about Rs. 8000 crores) of which it receives about 160 million (Rs. 1600 crores) from the UK Government while the rest is raised through its activities like English language courses etc. China commenced establishing Confucius Institutes in 2004 and has already established 300 such Institutes in various universities . In comparison, the ICCR has a budget of Rs. 192 crores and 35 Indian Cultural Centres abroad, which is manifestly inadequate in attaining its goals and objectives as stated above.

3.18 The Foreign Secretary during the sitting of the Committee submitted as under:-

“New institutional partnerships have been initiated both abroad, for example, in Iran and China recently, and with State Governments at home, equally important. ICCR is synergising with other Ministries including Culture, HRD, AYUSH, Tourism and Textiles.”

3.19 Elaborating on the issue, the representatives during a sitting submitted as under:-

“Another thought is establishing institutional counterpart mechanisms. For example, the Chinese Federation of Artists and Writers are interested to collaborate. We pay airfare and provide hospitality on reciprocal basis. So we are pursuing this kind of line, so that we can make the resources stretch.”

3.20 On being asked to provide a comparison between the ICCR and the Confucius Institute of China, the representatives during a sitting submitted as under:-

“Shri Sharad Tripathi ji made a point that we had made a comparison between Confucius Institute and ICCR. Sir, we know that those people are very active. They have opened their centres in great number. Point is that there is no such restriction on their budget as we have. They are self-generating. It is also one of the points as I have told that we are experimenting that thing. If it is successful we will anticipate moving ahead regarding that model. To the best of my mind there are more than hundred Confucius Centres in America. It means that they have two hundred or two hundred and fifty Centres in the world. Sir, they have a budget of 20 billion dollars for cultural diplomacy.”

B. MANPOWER STATUS

3.21 As per the Ministry, the ICCR is headed by a President. The Director General (DG) is an officer drawn from the Foreign Service (MEA) and heads the executive of the ICCR. The DG is supported by a team of three Deputy Director Generals (DDGs) at the executive level; three Directors, Special Programme Directors (SPDs), and Programme Directors (PDs) at the management level and Programme Officers (POs), Assistant Programme Officers (APOs) and other staff at the support level. Posts of DDGs are filled by Foreign Service officers drawn from the MEA. Posts of Directors are filled by ICCR Cadre officers. In terms of sanctioned strength and posts actually filled – the Post of Director General is filled. Against the three posts of DDGs, only one post is currently occupied. All the three posts of Directors are vacant in the absence of eligible officers. Against 251 sanctioned posts of the ICCR cadre at various levels, only 178 posts are filled. This covers the Head Quarter (HQ) in Delhi, Regional Offices (ROs) and Indian Culture Centres (ICC) abroad.

3.22 When asked about the steps taken to tide over manpower shortage, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“To cope with the growing mandate and volume of work at all levels of ICCR’s structure and serious manpower crunch, ICCR has engaged 96 personnel at various level as outsourced support and 8 consultants. This covers HQ, ROs and ICCs abroad. However, these means are not proved of great help. In 2009, Finance Ministry had sanctioned 44 posts for ICCR cadre, which was to be filled by direct recruitment. These posts could not be filled within a period of one year since the date of their sanctioning as ICCR did not have its recruitment rules in place and was in the process of formulating them. In the meantime ICCR had requested SSC and UPSC to recruit officers/officials on behalf of ICCR, which could not materialize. Now ICCR has its recruitment rules in place. Proposal to permit ICCR to recruit personnel against 44 posts mentioned above has been submitted through MEA to Finance Ministry for its approval. Filling up of the sanctioned posts; greater leverage to engage experts in the form of Consultants; engaging specialized agencies to assist in functioning of ICCR would enhance ICCR’s output (in quantity) and outcome (in quality) substantially.”

3.23 The Ministry has submitted that the ICCR intends to seriously invest in training and generating the right attitude in the minds of its personnel, especially on ‘Culture Management’. In order to implement India’s Soft Power Diplomacy it is important that our personnel are trained and well equipped with necessary tools and strategies. For this purpose, the ICCR has taken initiatives which include (i) orienting every Director ICCs, teachers and professors being deployed abroad on their role as missionaries for India’s soft power abroad, (ii) activating ICCR’s alumni, (iii) and initiating talks with leading management institutes to design courses for ‘Cultural Management’ for ICCR officers at all levels.

3.24 Broadly, the ICCR’s activities could be divided into (A) Academic and Intellectual; (B) Cultural; and (C) Other Activities.

C. ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

3.25 As per the Ministry, the ICCR provides 946 scholarships of its own to foreign students from various parts of the world for graduate, postgraduate, doctoral and post-doctoral courses in various fields annually which are funded by its budget. Besides ICCR’s own scholarships, ICCR also manages scholarship schemes funded by the MEA and the Department of AYUSH. For the academic year 2015-16, of the 3339 scholarship slots available, ICCR received 3880 applications and helped secure admissions for almost 90% of the slots. For the Afghan scholarship scheme, under which 1000 slots are offered annually, all slots have been utilized. Total number of ICCR scholars currently in India has increased from 6,252 in 2014-15 to 6,518 in 2015-16. The reasons for non-admission of some of the applicants are mainly linked to applicants not being able to meet the qualification requirements for the universities/institutions to which they applied or due to a lack of seats in government universities / university affiliated colleges. At present, the ICCR has scholars from over 120 countries studying subjects covering dance and music, the humanities, commerce, science and engineering, and management as also research in various fields. ICCR scholars are studying in 18 States in India in over 120 institutions, including in IITs and NITs.

3.26 The details of the scholarship schemes being administered by ICCR are as under:-

Sl.	Name of the Scholarship Scheme
A	ICCR Scholarship Schemes
1	General Cultural Scholarship Scheme
2	Scholarships under bilateral Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP Scholarship/EEP/MOU) only where valid CEPs are operational
3	Scholarships for students from Commonwealth Countries (ICCR's commonwealth Scholarship Plan)
4	Special Scholarship Scheme for Mauritian nationals (TC Division)
5	Scholarship Scheme for Training in Indian Music and Dance (ICCR Scholarship Scheme)
6	Global Studies Programme
7	Scholarship Scheme for Bangladeshi Nationals – Bangladesh Scholarship Scheme
8	Scholarship Scheme for Sri Lankan Nationals – Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme
B	Scholarships Schemes being administered by ICCR on behalf of Agencies
9	Scholarship for students from SAARC Countries – SAARC Scholarship Scheme
10	Scholarships for students from African Countries – Africa Scholarship Scheme
11	Scholarships for students from Mekong Ganga Co-operation (MGC) Countries – (Mekong Ganga Co-operation Scholarship Scheme)
12	Scholarships for Afghan nationals – Afghan Scholarship Scheme
13	Scholarship for Nepalese nationals (also known as Silver Jubilee Scholarship Scheme)
14	Scholarships for Mongolian nationals – Aid to Mongolia Scholarship Scheme
15	Scholarships for Bhutanese nationals – Aid to Bhutan Scholarship Scheme
16	Scholarships for Maldivian nationals – Aid to Maldives Scholarship Scheme
17	Scholarships to Bangladeshi nationals – India Scholarship (Bangladesh) Scheme
18	Nehru Memorial Scholarship Scheme
19	Maulana Azad Scholarship Scheme
20	Rajiv Gandhi Scholarship Scheme
21	Scholarship for students from IOR - ARC Countries (IOR-ARC Scholarship Scheme) not valid 2014 onwards
22	Ayush Scholarships to study Indian Traditional Medicine Systems such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy (available for students from all Countries, though priority is given to those from BIMSTEC Countries)
23	Ayush Scholarship Scheme for Non Bimstec countries on behalf of Ayush Department to study in Indian Traditional Medicine System such as Ayurveda, Yoga Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy
24	AYUSH Scholarships to study Indian Traditional Medicine Systems such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha & Homeopathy (for Malaysian nationals)

3.27 The Ministry has furnished the following information with regard to its scholarship scheme:-

Given the large financial outlay of its scholarship programme and its long-term impact, the ICCR is giving special attention to the welfare and wellbeing of its scholars while they are in India, including, inter alia, arranging talks and meetings with eminent experts and prominent personalities, arranging discourses/participation at cultural events to expose them to Indian culture, taking them on summer and winter camps and to places of historical and cultural importance, and so on. In order to provide them a superior understanding of our political system, the ICCR is also planning on organizing meetings for groups of students with members of State Legislatures and of Parliament. It has plans to extend welfare programmes from such tours to exposing foreign students to all aspects of Indian society, from its culture and science to its political system and economics. The ICCR's endeavour is to provide foreign students a comprehensive experience of India so that they return to their respective countries as lifelong friends of our country.

3.28 It was further stated that over the decades, the ICCR has created a pool of scholars around the world many of whom have distinguished themselves in various walks of life. It is working with Indian Missions to ensure that India's engagement with these scholars continues after their return to their countries. Towards this, at the ICCR's initiative, Indian Missions are in the process establishing ICCR Alumni Groups, and so far 34 Missions have established such groups. The ICCR is also in the process of creating a database of its alumni.

3.29 According to the Ministry, in order to promote studies pertaining to various aspects of India in universities and institutions abroad, the ICCR has established India Studies Chairs. At present, it has 64 operational Chairs and 8 new Chairs are likely to be operationalized soon, for which MOUs have been signed. These Chairs are in about 50 countries covering a variety of subjects, including Indian culture, languages, polity, history, contemporary India, Buddhist Studies, philosophy and intellectual history, humanities and social sciences, international relations, Tagore studies, cinema and film studies, corporate governance, and strategic management and they also engage with young audiences and local intelligentsia host countries in various ways such as through research guidance/collaboration, conferences, public lectures, publications etc. To

increase its portfolio of Chairs, the ICCR has recently begun seeking partners under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. EXIM Bank of India funds one Chair and sponsorships have been raised by Universities abroad for a few more for meeting about half of ICCR's cost for Chairs. Amongst its Chairs, ICCR currently has 20 for Hindi, 3 for Sanskrit, 2 for Tamil and 1 for Bengali. In addition, it has deployed 9 Hindi teachers abroad, some of whom serve in Indian Cultural Centres.

3.30 On the ways of financing these India Studies Chairs, the representative during the sitting stated as under:-

“The academic Chairs you had asked for, one is we are trying to look for more cost sharing models. More prestigious universities like Harvard and others, they would like to go the endowment way. They want us to put in millions of dollars which we do not have. Instead, what model we are looking at is – we are looking to the host university to offer residential, office accommodation, health insurance and a part of the salary so that we can supplement the rest. We have been able to do a few arrangements like that.”

3.31 The Ministry has stated that the ICCR regularly organizes international seminars and conferences, by itself or in partnership with other like-minded institutions, on themes relevant to its mandate. During 2015-16, 19 conferences and seminars were organised, including the first International Conference of Indologists which was inaugurated by the Hon'ble President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan and the International Roma Conference 2016, which was inaugurated by the Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, at Azad Bhavan, ICCR. An International seminar on Vietnam was also arranged. The Council also organizes international conferences in India, preferably in collaboration with academic institutions. The Kalinga-Lanka Conference was organized in collaboration with Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, while the Conference on Kashmir's Rishi-Sufi traditions was organized in collaboration with Kashmir University in Srinagar. A seminar on the forms of soft power was organized with the Indian Institute of Advanced studies, Simla. In addition to these, the ICCR also extends support to various Universities and organizations for international conferences/seminars.

3.32 The Ministry has furnished details on other academic and intellectual engagements that the ICCR undertakes:-

(a) Under the Academic Visitors Programme (AVP), the Council invites international academicians holding positions of eminence in their respective countries with proven credentials, including PIO/NRIs, on the recommendation of the HOM for a period of 7-10 days. The scheme has helped widen strategic cooperation between India and various other countries. During the year 2015-16, as of December 2015, the Council invited five (05) eminent Academicians/Scholars from Argentina, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Poland and Tanzania to India.

(b) As a part of its effort to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries, the Council facilitates visits of Indian scholars, intellectuals, academicians and artists to foreign countries under the Outgoing Visitors Programme (OVP) to attend and present papers on culture, literature, Indology, Buddhism, Sufism etc. in major conferences and to deliver lectures at reputed universities abroad. The Outgoing Visitors help the ICCR maintain and develop collaborations with various organizations/institutions abroad. During the period from April to December 2015, the Council sponsored visits of 21 eminent scholars to various parts of the world i.e. Bhutan, Canada, France, Japan, Mauritius, Srilanka, Thailand, USA & UK.

(c) The ICCR awards Junior and Senior Research Fellowships to international scholars specialising in Indian studies in the fields of culture and social sciences. Under this programme, the selected Fellow is affiliated, on the basis of mutual consent, to an academic institution in India. Six (06) Fellows visited India between April and December 2015. On behalf of the Ministry of External Affairs, the ICCR also administers the SAARC Fellowship.

D. CULTURAL EXCHANGES

3.33 The Ministry states that exchanges with other countries, particularly for the promotion of Indian culture abroad-- including various performing arts such as dance, music and theatre; visual arts such as paintings, artifacts, handicrafts, textiles, pottery and promotion of Yoga and traditional practices-- is an important aspect of ICCR's work. This is accomplished through three key mediums – Indian Cultural Centres abroad; the sending of Indian cultural troupes, teachers, scholars and experts abroad; and by organizing Indian cultural festivals.

a. Indian Cultural Centres

3.34 In order to promote awareness and appreciation of India's rich cultural heritage, the ICCR currently operates 37 Indian Cultural Centres across the globe. These Centres are instruments of India's cultural outreach abroad and project our soft power through a wide range of cultural, academic and intellectual activities, promoting knowledge, information and greater understanding of various aspects of Indian culture including, Indian dance, music, yoga, languages, food, festivals, history, ethos and traditions and contemporary issues.

3.35 It has been informed that these Centres are located in countries where we have significant strategic, economic, political and cultural interests as also countries with a large community of Indian origin. This includes countries in India's immediate neighbourhood, in Southeast Asia, P5 countries as well as countries in Central Asia, West Asia, Africa and Latin America. Following announcements at the highest level to open Cultural Centres in Sydney and Hanoi, new Culture Centres were operationalized in these cities by initiating teaching activities. Existing Centres have made a significant contribution in strengthening cultural relations and fostering mutual understanding between India and other countries. Their activities are not restricted to the capital cities where they are located but cover other regions of the country as well.

3.36 On being asked about constraints faced by the ICCs and efforts taken to make them financially self sustainable, the Ministry through a written reply stated as under:-

“Most important constraints being faced by the ICCs abroad pertain to manpower and financial resource crunch. As far as manpower is concerned constraints faced are also in terms of numbers and quality of manpower available. ICCR is entering into PPP model to address both resource and manpower crunch wherein both are pooled by the partnering agencies for example, in case of Casa-de-la India, ICCR provides grant to the Centre for promotion of Indian Culture in Spain.”

3.37 As per the Ministry, in order to maximize returns on the ICCR's limited financial resources, the ICCR has entered into Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to operate ICCs abroad, with the cost of cultural promotion shared with local institutions committed to Indian culture. *Casa de la India* in Spain and the Culture Centre in Cardiff, for instance,

are examples of this arrangement. Another initiative taken by the ICCR includes deputing teachers (dance, music, Hindi and Yoga) to Missions that can provide venues for operating classes either in a property occupied by it or at a local institution. To further utilize limited resources without compromising on expansion plans, the ICCR is currently exploring possibilities of establishing Regional Culture Centres abroad in select cities, which could cover a group of countries rather than the single host country alone.

3.38 The Ministry has maintained that while existing Centres have been functioning satisfactorily, in order to improve their capacity and to empower them with appropriate means to ensure greater, more effective promotion of Indian culture abroad, the ICCR has constituted a Performance Audit team. The team is currently studying the functioning of ICCs and was expected to submit its recommendations by the end of March 2016.

3.39 On its plans to open new cultural centres abroad, through a written reply it was noted:-

“Yes, the Ministry is contemplating opening up of more centres. At present, work is on to establish new centres in Washington, Paris, Sydney and Hanoi. However, in the absence of sufficient resources the Ministry and ICCR may not be able to open new Culture Centres commensurate with the vision of the Government.”

3.40 On being asked whether ICCs are adequately staffed, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“None of the Centres is adequately staffed. ICCR and MEA are currently seeking revival of ICCR’s 44 posts which could not be filled in 2009 as ICCR did not have recruitment rules then. These are now in place. Along with these 44 posts, ICCR is planning to engage domain experts in the field of Culture as Consultants/ Outsourced Managers to be sent as Directors at ICCs abroad as well as Directors of its Regional Offices within the country.”

3.41 On being asked about lessons learnt from inordinate delays in acquiring property for the Cultural Centre in Washington, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“Acquiring property abroad, whether it is for establishing a Culture Centre or other GOI offices is a complicated exercise as it involves legal and extralegal factors when it comes to dealing with foreign governments. Under the present system while our Missions abroad are involved in identifying suitable properties, MEA’s Projects Division is entrusted with the responsibility of developing these in a “Fast Track” mode and make them suitable for use as soon as possible. In case of new Chancery projects, Project Division is factoring in the demand for establishing a Culture Centre in advance. ICCR comes at a later stage of making use of these facilities, after providing the initial input as to the space requirement specifications.”

3.42 On being asked about the status of construction of new cultural centres of the ICCR abroad, the Ministry furnished the following information:-

1) Washington – After going through multiple hurdles in identifying properties to establish the Indian Culture Centre in Washington, a property at 1438 U Street, NW, Washington DC was identified and was finally purchased by the Government of India in August, 2015. Our Mission proposed that this property could accommodate offices of the Chancery including the Cultural Wing, following which a team comprising the DG, ICCR, AS (FA), JS (Projects) and Sr. Architect (Project) visited Washington in April 2015 to examine the Mission’s proposal. The team recommended that the Mission may go ahead with minimal and appropriate renovations to the property located at 1438, U Street, NW, Washington DC and relocate Chancery annex offices to this property after conclusion of the renovations. The targeted deadline, to complete this and to make the building functional, is the end of 2016. Designs for the proposed renovation have been finalized. So far the project is well within the target of completion by the end of 2016.

2)

3) Paris – ICC Paris is a case study in the number of factors involved in acquiring property in a foreign country, where issues such as reciprocal commitments, perception of proportionate reciprocity, market concerns vis G-to-G cooperation, Federal vs Capital city administrations, legal and extralegal constraints, local heritage laws etc. play their role. The Indian Culture Centre (ICC) Paris was a long pending project ever since India offered a piece of land on concessional rates to the French Government for establishing its first branch of Alliance Française in New Delhi. This property was offered on the basis of a reciprocal commitment from the French government to provide a property on similar terms – that is on concessional rates (not at market rate) – for establishing an ICC in Paris. The French had difficulty in recognizing this reciprocal commitment until 2007 when renewed efforts were put in by the Mission to persuade them to honor their commitment. Following this, between 2007 and 2009 over two dozen properties were identified and surveyed in prominent districts of Paris for establishing the ICC, including

properties proposed by *France Domaine* (French Government's Federal body dealing with consolidation of Government properties) on concessional rates and not at market price. Considering the directives from GOI to negotiate for a property costing upto Euro 5 million and not beyond, of the properties proposed by *France Domaine*, the Mission recommended one at 3 Avenue du Lowendal in District 7, which met both the space specifications as indicated by the ICCR as well as permissible limits of cost as indicated by the Ministry. DG, ICCR and the finance team paid a visit in 2009 to examine the property and finalized the transaction. This property required redevelopment to make it suitable to carry out functions of the ICC. There was also an issue concerning a Fire Exit Gate which had to be resolved with the adjoining building of the Ministry of Agriculture. The Sale & Purchase agreement and cooperation papers were signed in 2011 between the two sides. In January 2015, our Mission signed an order of service with M/s Cle Millet appointing them as consultant architects assisting in implementing the agreement, also signed in January, 2015. After negotiations with the French side, the French Ministry of Agriculture has finally agreed to allow a Fire Exit from its premises. The Indian side will have to bear the expenditure on installation of automatic gates exists and the associated control and alarm systems. The French side will soon be sharing a draft legal document with our Mission containing the agreement between Embassy of India, Paris and the MAAF regarding the operationalization of the fire exist. Once the document is signed, it will be publically notified and actual work will commence thereafter. The above-mentioned works were originally intended be completed by September 2016 to coincide with the formal opening of the "Namaste France" Festival in September, 2016.

4) Hanoi – Our Mission has identified a suitable property for establishing the ICC and sought sanction from the MEA/ICCR to lease it. As far as the ICCR is concerned, the Mission has been authorized to hire the proposed property for which ICCR would pay rent. The Mission will execute a formal lease with the local government once the latter completes mandatory renovation work. The Mission will, thereafter, carry out additional renovations to make the property useable for the Cultural Centre. The ICCR is pursuing its proposal for the sanction of additional funds with the MEA/MoF. Meanwhile, it has deputed an India-based Yoga Teacher to the Mission as a Resource Person to conduct Yoga classes there and at other venues in Hanoi. Five Posts for ICC, Sydney have been sanctioned recently.

5) Sydney – ICC, Sydney started functioning on a floor within the Chancery building. Two local teachers for Yoga and Hindi were deployed in March 2015. Five Posts for ICC, Sydney have been sanctioned recently.

6)

3.43 Elaborating upon the new model for ICCs, the representative of the Ministry during the sitting submitted as under:-

“I should like to speak about the fact that we are experimenting with different models of cultural centres. There are 37 centres as you mentioned. I think, the number should perhaps be more. I should like to speak about one which is run by an extremely imaginative partnership that was developed in Spain, which is North of Madrid where the local government has provided the building and facilities. We have contributed in cash to some of the establishment costs and we also provide a certain sum of money annually but the activities are being undertaken through other resources that are raised locally through the provincial government, the local government and the central government. An extra-ordinary range of activities are generated from this centre which is also physically a delight to visit since it is an old Castilian house into which features from India have been transposed including *jaali* from Ahmedabad and furniture from India.”

3.44 She further submitted that:-

“Over time, the ICCR has continued to expand its outreach by establishing new Culture Centres abroad and building new forms of partnerships. Two new Culture Centres have been operationalized in the current financial year in Sydney and Hanoi, and work on establishing eight other new centres is ongoing; a Centre in Paris is proposed to be inaugurated with the inauguration of the Namaste France Festival in the second half of this calendar year. New institutional partnerships have been initiated with the ICCR’s counterparts and other organizations. While the ICCR is expanding its network of Culture Centres outside India, a need to review their functioning, of how they have been performing has been felt. Accordingly, a review process has been initiated to undertake a comprehensive performance review of the Culture Centres so that these may be further strengthened, empowered and recalibrated in order to secure more effective outcomes. The performance audit underway is expected to be completed during the current financial year as things stand. This audit is also expected to evaluate the different aspects of the India Studies Chairs that have been established outside India.”

b. Indian Cultural Troupes

3.45 As per the Ministry, the ICCR regularly sends cultural troupes—dance, music, and theatre-- abroad to various countries to perform. In the last financial year, up to December 2015 it has sponsored 86 groups to about 91 countries to present varied forms

of Indian performing arts. Emphasis was also accorded to participation in major international festivals so as to generate interest in India's cultural accomplishments. By the end of the financial year the ICCR would have sent a total of 120 groups abroad. The dance and music troupes include a wide range of Indian forms from various parts of the country to depict our range and repertoire in the performing arts. In addition to organizing performances, the ICCR from time to time deputed experts for lecture-demonstrations and workshops abroad. As part of its scholarships programme, it also has over 50 foreign scholars learning Indian dance and music in India under *Guru-shishya parampara*.

3.46 On the issue of Indian artists travelling abroad to perform, the representative of the Ministry during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...the diversity of Indian artists abroad now is very great. Not all Indian artists travel on behalf of or through the sponsorship of ICCR or any other Government institution. There are again a very large number of artists who are travelling through the efforts of impresarios both in India and abroad. I think that is a very valuable asset and resource which is available to Indian embassies abroad to be able to partner in collaboration with private impresarios and entrepreneurs....”

3.47 She further submitted that:-

“...For the ones who are sponsored by ICCR, I believe the selection process is through a mechanism which is established. There is an empanelment advisory committee which is formed from amongst the members of the statutory bodies of the council and one of the three vice presidents of the ICCR chairs that committee. The empanelment advisory committee has tenure of three years and sub-committees are constituted to evaluate the applicants who represent different streams or different art forms. In most cases, when a group or an artist or a performer is sent abroad, the local mission sends advice about what sort of performance, what genre, what demographic in a sense are we trying to appeal to or reach out to.”

3.48 On being asked about steps taken to address the backlog in applications for the empanelment of artists, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“Fresh round of empanelment process for upgrading the status of existing empanelled artists and empanelling new artists was initiated last year. Empanelment of performing artists is concluded. Process of empanelling vocal artists has been initiated.”

3.49 On various financial constraints faced in sending troupes abroad, the representative of the Ministry during a sitting of the Committee submitted as under:-

“I have to say that though the exercise may be on a shoestring budget, it is such an expensive one that we do try and arrange that the said artist or group can travel to neighbouring countries and regions as well. So, rather than sending someone or requesting someone to travel to a single country for a single performance, we try and request them to use their time for other performances elsewhere. These performance outside India tend to be either gratis for invited audiences or they tend to be for very low cost, just to cover the expenses locally of the performance itself, not even of stay and hospitality. Even that is either covered through reaching out to corporate sponsors or through a variety of means ideally starting with local governments providing the local hospitality. So, the entire operation is as low cost and budgeted for as frugally as possible. It may be that the entire exercise tends to be very economical and therefore may not be of the highest quality but these are the genuine constraints within which we work.”

3.50 As per the Ministry, the ICCR regularly sends abroad exhibitions on various themes connected to India which include paintings, photographs, textiles and garments from its existing collection as well as in collaboration with other organizations. It also curates new exhibitions to add to its collection. From time-to-time it also supports the presentation of art by Indian painters, sculptors and photographers abroad. In 2015-16 it sent 18 exhibitions out, of which 16 were from its own collection for display in various countries. The ICCR also supports exhibitions by foreign artists in India. It received three exhibitions from abroad-- one each from Russia, Montenegro and Vietnam. At the same time, it also organizes Artists’ Residencies with individual or groups of countries where Indian and foreign painters and sculptors are brought together for about a week or so to create a work of art each which is then exhibited in various parts of India and abroad. An India-China Artists’ Residency called ‘Maitri with women painters from Shanghai in was organised in Jaipur last year and a reciprocal India-China Women Artists’ Residency

called 'Maitri-II' was arranged in Shanghai, China this year. The ICCR also plans to host Artists' Residences with ASEAN, IORA and SAARC Member States and in Africa.

E. OTHER ACTIVITIES

3.51 According to the Ministry, the ICCR regularly supplies busts and statues of eminent personalities from India for installation abroad at prominent locations which helps disseminate our national message as well as the individual contributions of these figures abroad. In the financial year 2015-16, as of December 2015, the ICCR sent four busts including that of Mahatma Gandhi's to Almaty, Turkmenistan, Malaysia, Haiti, the Hague, Malta and Mexico city; of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's to Singapore and Malaysia; and Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's to Tajikistan and Argentina. A total of nine (09) busts/statues including Aryabhata to France, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to Sri Lanka, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to Australia and Hungary, Lal Bahadur Shastri to Uzbekistan, Swami Vivekananda to Brazil were also set out.

3.52 Under the Distinguished Visitors Programme, distinguished dignitaries of other countries are invited to India for about 10 days for an interaction with Indian dignitaries, media persons and academics and to familiarize them with the economic, political, social and other developments here. Under this programme, the ICCR hosted 23 visits during the financial year 2014-15 and financial year 2015-16 (till February), including a visit by Sheikh Rashid Ghannouchi, President of Ennahada Party, Tunisia; Shri Khil Raj Regmi, Former Chief Justice of Nepal; H.E. Dr. Sam Najuma, founding President of Namibia and a 14 member delegation of distinguished visitors from the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). Apart from DVP, ICCR has introduced a new visitors' programme called the 'Important Visitors' Programme' (IVP) administering visits of guests who cannot be covered under DVP or AVP but who are nevertheless important to us. ICCR has so far hosted one visit under IVP.

Regional Offices of ICCR in India

3.53 As per the Ministry, the ICCR's responsibilities are not limited to promoting Indian culture abroad, but also include the provision of all assistance to incoming foreign students, scholars and artists within the country. This calls for decentralized functioning and close cooperation with State Governments. The Council has 20 Regional Offices

(ROs). In order to realize close cooperation with State Governments, the ICCR initiated cooperation agreements with State Governments in 2014-15, which was continued in FY 2015-16 as well. It has so far signed Memoranda of Understanding with nine (09) State Governments. Activities of ROs include coordination with State authorities, local bodies, cultural organizations, universities and colleges as also with artists, scholars and students. The primary functions of ROs include providing assistance to foreign students studying under the Council's scholarship schemes in universities located in various States. ROs also extend logistical facilities to incoming and outgoing cultural delegations and to any visitors hosted by the Council under its Distinguished Visitors Programme (DVP)/Academic Visitors Programme (AVP)/ Important Visitors Programme (IVP). Besides, they regularly organize cultural programmes under the ICCR's Horizon series.

3.54 The ICCR is the nodal organization for the projection of India's soft power abroad, and ever since its establishment in 1950, it has emerged as the principal governmental organization for our cultural engagement with the world and for promoting our culture in all its magnificence through various activities. The Committee are, however, disappointed to note that budgetary support granted to the ICCR has not been adequate. A budget of Rs. 192 crores has been allocated to ICCR in BE 2015-16, a sum that was retained at the same level in RE 2015-16. During BE 2016-17, the budgetary allocation has been enhanced to Rs. 215.80 crores. Despite an increase of 12.40%, the amount is still insufficient if the allocation is compared to the other Government supported organizations world over which are engaged in the dissemination of culture for their respective countries. By the Ministry's own admission, ICCR is being forced to resort to juggle its limited resources to make do with the meagre budget and it will notionally require at least Rs. 500 crore to help it meet its expanding mandate. The Committee, therefore,

recommend that the budget of the ICCR should be sufficiently increased as such a move will go a long way in assisting us in leveraging our country's soft power and all its vast potential.

The Committee have also noted that during the budget exercise, the gap between RE demand and allocation is not much. It points to the fact that at present there is no institutional capacity within the ICCR for ingesting huge funds. Such a situation does not sit well with the continuous (and necessary) demands for enhanced budgetary allocations. The Committee would therefore, recommend that in the interests of more realistic planning, the ICCR should also ramp up its institutional capacity to utilise in the best possible manner any enhanced allocation.

(Recommendation No.4)

3.55 The ICCR faces massive shortages in manpower at present and clubbed with inadequate budgetary support, the organization's role and work is hugely limited. The Committee are surprised to note that seats are lying vacant both at the level of the headquarters and field offices-- against three posts of Deputy Directors General (DDGs), at present only one post is occupied. All the three posts of Directors are vacant. Similarly, against 251 sanctioned posts of ICCR cadre at various levels, only 178 posts covering the Headquarters (HQ) in Delhi, Regional Offices (ROs) and Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) abroad are filled. Even when the ICCR has engaged 96 personnel at various levels as outsourced support and 8 consultants, this has proved to be inadequate. It sounds ironic that at a time when the ICCR has

embarked upon an expanded mandate, it remains handicapped in terms of manpower. It is the Committee's contention that without adequate human resources, the demands of the ICCR for enhanced budget will not be adequately justified. It is not reassuring that when the Finance Ministry sanctioned 44 posts for the ICCR, these posts could not be filled as the Council did not have its recruitment rules in place. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the ICCR should expedite steps to fill already vacant posts and only thereafter seek sanction for more post from the Finance Ministry.

The Committee urge the ICCR to take exceptional care in ensuring that the most appropriate persons are appointed to head the cultural centres overseas. Their ability to connect with the countries in which they are located is imperative.

The Committee are aware that work in the ICCR requires a person's ability to handle culture and asks for attendant skills and aptitude along with knowledge. It should, therefore, be ensured that not only are the most eligible candidates selected to various posts, but also that they are given the right orientation and training to handle their work responsibly and productively. The Committee also recommend that the ICCR should set up a search panel to suggest names of eminent persons from various fields of culture who are eligible to fill the vacant seats of Directors at ICCs.

(Recommendation No. 5)

3.56 The ICCR provides 24 scholarships annually in various fields to students from various parts of the world for graduate, postgraduate, doctoral and post-

doctoral courses. Out of these, 8 scholarships are funded through its own budget and 16 scholarship schemes are being managed by the ICCR under funding from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of AYUSH. The Committee have noted that this growing agency work (for administering scholarship schemes) and untimely release of funds for implementing the same is an important factor in crippling the ICCR. The Committee are distressed to note that in the past few years, funds spent by the ICCR on agency work were reimbursed in the following Financial Year. However, this was made part of ICCR's budget allocation for the next FY and not reimbursed as an additional amount that was spent. The Committee do not approve of such an approach on the part of the Ministries concerned as they add to the financial woes of an already fund starved ICCR. The Committee would, therefore, desire that the Ministry of External Affairs abide by the view taken by the Foreign Secretary regarding advance payment of 75 percent of the money to the ICCR on account of Agency work. The Committee would also desire that other Ministries should accept the same arrangement as a pre-condition to any agency work.

Given the large financial outlay under its scholarship programme and its long term impact for India's soft power, the Committee are of the opinion that special attention should be paid to the welfare and well-being of foreign scholars while they are in India. Incidents like the one which took place involving attacks on African students should not be allowed to be repeated through better coordination with the concerned State Governments. It is also imperative that the culprits behind these attacks should be brought to book.

By virtue of awarding scholarships to a wide array of foreign students, the ICCR has managed to create a pool of scholars around the world, many of whom have distinguished themselves in various walks of life. In the Committee's opinion, these individuals can prove to be long term assets in promoting our image abroad as India's de facto cultural brand ambassadors in their own countries. The Committee would, therefore, recommend that the work related to establishment of ICCR Alumni Groups should be expedited and a status report in this regard be furnished to the Committee. (Recommendation No.6)

3.57 The Committee are aware of budgetary constraints faced by the ICCR and its crippling effect on desired outcomes. It is, therefore, imperative that some fresh thinking outside the box should be invested in making the programmes of the ICCR financially sustainable. Across the world, the trend has been for Governments to withdraw from direct spending on culture. The Committee are pleased to note that ICCR has started entering into Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in some of our Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) to address resource and manpower crunches. The Committee desire that the ICCR should enter into institutional partnerships with reputed and select cultural organizations from across the world in order to avail of reciprocal arrangements related to hosting of troupes and programmes. Such partnerships would go a long way in easing the logistics of the ICCR in the face of growing budgetary cuts.

(Recommendation No.7)

3.58 In order to promote the awareness and appreciation of India's rich cultural heritage abroad, the ICCR currently operates 37 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) across the globe. The ICCs are a principal instrument of India's institutional cultural outreach abroad and project our soft power in a wide number of ways. These Centres are located in countries where we have significant strategic, economic, political and cultural interests as also countries with large communities of Indian origin. The Committee are surprised to note that despite these parameters in place we still do not have a Cultural Centre in the entire Gulf Region. The Committee, therefore, recommend that a Cultural Centre should be opened in the Gulf in view of India's strong and sustained strategic and cultural ties with the region. The Committee also recommend that stalled projects in Washington, Paris and Hanoi should be executed without further delay. While the Committee fully understand that acquiring Government property abroad is a complicated exercise involving legal and extra-legal factors, the type of inordinate delay as in Washington cannot be countenanced. It should, therefore, be ensured that a mechanism be established so that such delays do not hamper future projects.

It has been stated that the ICCR is currently exploring the possibility of establishing Regional Cultural Centres abroad in select cities which could cover a group of countries in the region instead of any single country alone. The Committee ask the ICCR to tread with caution in this regard, given the serious limitations of manpower in the organization. So far, human resources have proved to be an issue when it comes to the ICCs, both in terms of quality and quantity. Catering to a wider geographic region involving several countries and cultures would not be an

easy proposition in these circumstances. The Committee would, therefore, desire that such a decision should not be implemented in haste and proper consideration should be given to all relevant factors. The Committee would also desire that the findings of the Performance Audit of the ICCs should be communicated to the Committee at the action taken stage. (Recommendation No.8)

3.59 Sending Indian Cultural troupes outside the country is an important part of the activities of the ICCR. These troupes perform in countries across the world and such performances play a significant role in projecting our soft power. It is, therefore, important that artistes of quality and distinction in any art form should be given opportunities to showcase their talent overseas. The Committee have observed during visits to Regional Offices of the ICCR that empanelment of artists was often not guided by pronounced policy, particularly in terms of the inclusion of unique art and dance forms on the verge of extinction. It was also noted that a large number of empanelment applications were pending both at the level of the Regional Offices (ROs) and the Headquarters. Such a trend is not reassuring for long term soft power ambitions and therefore, the Committee desire that all matters related to the empanelment of artists should be resolved expeditiously and the entire system made more transparent. The Committee also recommend that a performance audit of the functioning of ICCR's Regional Offices (ROs) should be undertaken by the Ministry urgently in order to ensure that the quality of the artists who get empanelled and seek to perform outside India is of the highest order. (Recommendation No.9)

3.60 Cultural diplomacy should also embrace the culture of ideas, showcase India's democracy and diversity and avoid being seen as propaganda. For this reason it is imperative that speakers and experts from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines be identified to be sent abroad to address foreign audiences, thereby showcasing India's pluralism and freedom of expression, including freedom of the press. In addition to music and dance, India's soft power should also embrace the attraction of words and ideas, including contemporary and classical literature, thereby projecting India to those wishing to know more in depth about the country and its culture.

(Recommendation No.10)

CHAPTER IV

ISSUES RELATED TO COORDINATION AND ROLE OF INDIAN DIASPORA

A. COORDINATION WITH OTHER MINISTRIES/DEPARTMENTS

As per the Ministry, the ICCR has been working closely with the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Human Resource Development and AYUSH. Along with the MEA's External Publicity Division, the ICCR was a key partner of the AYUSH Ministry in implementing the first Yoga Day celebrations across the world last year. Similarly, most of the food festivals abroad are organized with the assistance of the Ministry of Tourism. The ICCR closely works with the Ministry of Culture for the Festivals of India (FOIs) abroad. It is in talks with Ministry of HRD for similar such cooperation.

4.2 When asked about the correlation between the role and functioning of the ICCR and the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“ICCR has traditionally been the designated nodal organization to leverage India's Soft Power, besides PD (now part of XP) division. Ministry of Culture (MOC) has also been implementing programmes some of which overlap with ICCR's mandate. MOC's primary mandate in terms of bilateral cultural relations is in the context of formulating Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) that it enters into with countries abroad and ensuring its implementation with the help of various implementing agencies (ICCR being one of the implementing agencies) and framework mechanisms such as holding regular Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings for CEPs. MEA has faithfully been assisting in implementing CEPs with the help of ICCR in India, its Culture Centres and Ministry's network of Missions abroad. Duplication can be avoided through better defining of roles and coordination. This is visible for instance in the context of implementing Festivals of India (FOIs) abroad. To bridge this, the two are at present in the process of working out an arrangement wherein both the agencies would pool its strengths for better implementing FOIs abroad.”

4.3 While elaborating upon the coordination between various line Ministries in the field of culture, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs during the sitting submitted as under:-

“In addition, the ICCR is engaged actively with several related line Ministries including the Ministries of Culture and Education and Human Resource Development with which the ties are, in a sense, almost symbiotic. But there is a larger group of Ministries including AYUSH, Tourism, Textiles, Information and Broadcasting, whose resources, the ICCR supplements. I would like to mention the cooperation received by us from the Ministry of Culture in implementing cultural festivals abroad and in arranging the International Yoga Day celebrations with the support of the AYUSH Ministry.”

4.4 According to the Ministry, Cultural Festivals, Year of India, India Week, Days of India etc. are mechanisms by which, typically, a range of Indian cultural offerings are presented to world audiences. Since these mechanisms call for large-scale budgetary provisions these have been kept under Ministry of Culture’s domain. The ICCR actively participates in planning and executing these events. In organizing these, some events mark special occasions in bilateral relations. The ICCR plans and designs cultural festivals to cover academic and intellectual dialogues, performing arts, visual arts, theatre, handicraft, yoga, cuisine etc. For executing Cultural Festivals/ Week/ Days it works closely with other relevant organisations and Ministries including the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Ayush, Human Resource Development, Textiles, National Museums, Sangeet Natak Academy, Lalit Kala Academy, Sahitya Akademi. It is worthwhile to mention here that the related line Ministries, especially the Ministry of Culture, play a substantial role in rge promotion of India’s soft power abroad by collaborating with the ICCR.

4.5 While underlining the work being done by the Ministry in the field of culture propagation, Secretary, Ministry of Culture during the sitting submitted as under:-

“.....we have the cultural agreements with various countries, and under those agreements we have the cultural exchange programmes with a large number of countries. With this umbrella type cultural exchange programme, our institutions keep collaborating with their institutions on

equal sharing basis. That is one element of bonding between our country and other countries. We have the Festivals of India abroad where the troupes from India, from various facets of culture, be it music, dance, drama or even literature go there and perform. That is organised with the help of our Missions abroad. We have a memorandum of understanding with the ICCR where certain activities are also given to the ICCR. There is a Standing Committee to plan and coordinate these Festivals of India abroad. That Standing Committee is chaired by Secretary (Culture) where DG, ICCR is also a Member and representatives of various Ministries are also members. In Standing Committee meeting on a view is taken on finalization of the events / performances for festivals of India abroad in consultation with Indian Missions abroad to project India and our constant endeavour has been to get in touch with our Ambassadors abroad to ascertain, what do they require to project India we try to meet their requirements from whatever resources we have with us....”

4.6 He further submitted that:-

“.....We also have another scheme of Indo-Friendship Societies where we give the money to the Indian Missions abroad authorization through MEA, and they provide the grants to the societies. Presently, it is up to the tune of Rs.5 lakhs per society. Though it is small, yet our budgets have been increasing. We have been trying to cover as many Indo-Friendship Societies as possible so that culture of India gets into the minds of the people who are in that country. Another intervention that we have been doing is in the field of archaeological conservation activities of old temples and other structures in Vietnam, Cambodia etc. They have been more than willing to invite our experts to go there and do the conservation activities because many of these structures are dilapidated and they want them to be conserved for longer duration. We also have been planning certain things like Project Mausam which basically relies on the monsoon routes of trade between countries in the Arabian Sea and the country in the South East India. We have been trying to move a trans-national nomination to UNESCO for its inclusion and inscription as one of the heritage sites. This is somehow being countered by China by saying that they have a maritime silk route. So, we have to do some kind of things. We have been getting into this, trying to move a trans-national nomination. We have also finalized a proposal to send our Director General, ASI from Kashi to Kashgar in China, tracing the routes of spread of Buddhism from India to China and Myanmar and other countries. So, that will help establish how Buddhism spread and how various things in

the trade travelled from India to China or other countries. What was the route? That will also throw some light on how we all were bonded together in early days. We have also been trying to take at least the due position that India should in the field of Buddhism. The Buddhist institutions are part of the Ministry of Culture and we do want to say that Buddhism has been nurtured here and the Buddhists across the globe should also come together and use Buddhism as an instrument of peace. So, there is International Buddhist Confederation which has organised global conference in which our Prime Minister also participated. But we do know that even doing this has counter-pressures and other countries are trying to get the entire credit of Buddhism, saying that Buddha was born in so and so country or the entire teachings of Buddha were absorbed by such and such country and are now being exported. So, there is some kind of competition wherever we are trying to see but we do want to ensure that the proper credit of whatever has happened in Buddhism in India is coming to us. Similarly, we have been trying that our institutions also participate in the festivals of other countries in their country so that we actually get that kind of footfall and that kind of presence is registered that yes, India came and participated. So, we have been trying to get into these areas and the ICCR is a strong partner with us and we have been working in that direction.”

4.7 On the issue of coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs, the Secretary, Department of Higher Education during the sitting of the Committee submitted as under:-

“...we work very closely with the Ministry of External Affairs in very key areas. We are guided by them, especially in the agreements that we have. We have 54 bilateral agreements in varying forms, from framework agreements to more specific agreements that go country to country. We are also guided by them in our multilateral activities which include UNESCO but there are others as well. We work very closely, partly with the Diaspora and its concerns, partly in the provision of seats and in facilitating the movement and mobility of students, either from India to countries abroad or from students from other countries to come to study in India.”

4.8 On the issue of coordination with other line Ministries, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting submitted as under:-

“... some things have improved and this is one of them. But the serious point underlying it is well taken which is that we have to find ways of working together, we are not making the best use of the limited resources we have and that is something we will all be conscious of...”

4.9 On the issue of coordination with the ICCR, Secretary, and Ministry of Culture during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...One is regarding the coordination with the ICCR. I think the ice has either melted or started melting because what used to happen about two years ago, is happening now that in the last two six months, at least once in every week we are on telephone and exchanging note about what has happened. We also have a Memorandum of Understanding how they will collaborate with us in the Festival of India, etc...”

4.10 While elaborating upon the synergy achieved with the Ministry of Culture, the Director General of the ICCR during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...we have been consciously meeting regularly and in fact, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for closer collaboration in the month of May. As a result, we are going to do the Festival of India in Australia, perhaps for the first time, with closer collaboration, which will be inaugurated by the Hon. Minister of Culture. Also, I am regularly attending the Steering Committee meetings so that the inputs are closely coordinated for organizing the Festivals of India abroad. They have a very ambitious plan of about 18 festivals coming up for rest of the remaining year.”

4.11 He further elaborated that:-

“...Certainly, there can be closer collaboration and periodic consultation because, as you rightly observed, the projection of soft power overlaps various Ministries. Today, we are joined by HRD and Culture Ministries, but this subject also covers MHA for propagation of Hindi language, AYUSH for projection of yoga and Indian medicine and Ministry of Textiles for khadi and handicrafts and handlooms. So, a closer coordination will certainly help optimize the limited resource that we deploy to get better results.”

4.12 When asked about ICCR’s collaboration with various State Governments, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs during the sitting submitted as under:-

“Within the country, the ICCR has signed MoUs with nine State Governments to establish Regional Centres and to implement wider cooperation and promoting the culture of these States as also in partnering

these States in offering a platform to groups and artists from other countries when they visit India.”

B. MERGER OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND EXTERNAL PUBLICITY DIVISIONS

4.13 As per the Ministry, the External Publicity Division and the Public Diplomacy Division have been merged *w.e.f.* 24 January, 2014 recognizing the need to craft a uniform communication strategy, keeping in view both the requirement to reach out to the Indian public and media, as well as audiences abroad through our Missions. It may be kept in mind that prior to 2006, these separate divisions did not exist. Looking back, over the past, this has proved to be an important decision, as this seamless integration has helped the new entity, the XPD Division, enhance efficiency of our Soft Power projection globally. The merger has resulted in three significant advantages:

- i. A Holistic Communication Strategy: Coalescing the two Divisions into one has helped shape a more holistic perspective of India’s soft power projection and foreign policy narrative that is directed towards either media or our missions/posts. The move has ensured that an officer in charge of Public Diplomacy is also aware of the media angle and therefore, this enhances his capability to address any situation. It has helped fine-tune our communication strategy, in all outreach areas (Soft power projection, Public diplomacy initiatives, media communication, etc.). This integration helps the officer concerned, i.e., JS (XPD), to leverage the power of digital diplomacy at appropriate times for setting the right narrative and putting things in the right perspective for all concerned. For example, during the visit of the Prime Minister to a foreign country, JS (XPD) is aware of what narrative is to be set and is in a better position to present information to the media and public by utilizing the ministry’s social media handles. Information is packaged through attractive infographics, videos, etc. and the appropriate information is highlighted. A case in point is the Ministry’s response to the commercial film, “Airlift” where the Government was projected in not so positive light. Both mainstream media and social media handles were employed to disseminate our official position even as a Google Hangout was conducted which provided a far better perspective of the actual situation as opposed to the very narrow outlook portrayed in the film.
- ii. A Single Point of Contact for Missions: The merging of the two divisions has also streamlined communication between the Division and missions/posts on any media/public diplomacy/soft power projection. It has ensured that the Division has

become the single point of contact for our missions/posts with respect to any outside communication. The media implications of any communication/soft power projection are relayed to the Mission through the Division, ensuring that there is no room for confusion as far as communication strategies for the missions are concerned.

- iii. Efficiency in Human Resource Deployment: The merger has also helped in optimizing human resource deployment. Following the merger, a total of 14 posts were surrendered by both Divisions. This included the post of a Joint Secretary and a Director level officer, thus indicating that what was done with much larger staff strength is now being done with greater efficiency, and providing much greater impact.

4.14 Explaining the rationale for the merger, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...we are just very, very under resourced and we felt that it would be more synergistic to pursue different activities under the same head rather than trying to maintain two establishments which could, in fact, be combined and which could work in a complementary manner.”

4.15 On the same issue, the Foreign Secretary during the sitting submitted as under:-

“As you know, before 2006, there was only one division. It was the External Publicity Division, and Public Diplomacy was very much part and parcel of External Publicity Division. In 2006, a decision was taken in line with, I suppose, international practices that public diplomacy was acquiring a higher profile that we created the new Division of Public Diplomacy, and separated it from the XP Division. XP Division really became the nerve centre for the Spokesperson’s office as also some of the associated activities in terms of inviting foreign journalists to India, etc. But then over the course of the years, in the last eight years the Public Diplomacy Division had its independent profile. The feeling was that, perhaps, there were more synergies to be tapped by having them combined rather than having them separated. In a sense, both XP Division and Public Diplomacy Division are in the business of promoting brand India, and we felt that having two separate sets of officers doing the same kind of a job, well, not entirely same but in a sense they were cross-cutting issues.

The second problem was that many of the Missions were a bit flummoxed with this dual change. There was the PD Division and there was the XP Division, and they did not know whom to approach for what. So, now with the merger, what has happened is, first of all, we have found that a seamless communication strategy has been able to be developed?

The XP Division now knows exactly what the brand India projection is, and is able to utilize the resources of the PD Division for that. Secondly, for our Missions now there is a single point of contact, whether they want funding for a Gandhi exhibition or whether they want funding for a journalist's visit, they approach only one division. Thirdly, because of these overlapping functions which were reduced, we were able to save 13 posts. So, actually 13 posts were surrendered when the two divisions were merged in 2014. So, on the whole, yes, I agree my workload has definitely increased because now apart from doing my spokesman's job, I have to also handle the files relating to public diplomacy. But on the whole, I think the merger has worked well that I am able to now tap the right sources and there is no artificial distinction that you are XP and you are PD. Everybody is basically there as part of one pool and we are able to get the maximum output done from a lesser number of people now."

4.16 He further added that:-

".... there is now an overall perspective planning in the sense that the overall task of XP Division is to project Brand-India and India's Soft Power. Now, we have a holistic sense of which are the kinds of films we need to produce, which are the kinds of books we need to buy. The most obvious example would be the International Day of Yoga which was handled entirely by XP Division with funding part coming from ICCR and the fact that we were able to do it in 192 countries out of 193 member-countries of the United Nations seamlessly, without any difficulty. I think, this testifies to the improved synergies that have come as a result of the merger of the two."

C. ROLE OF INDIAN DIASPORA

4.17 The Diaspora is critical in promoting a country's soft power. India is fortunate to have a large and influential diaspora spread across the globe. Over the years, Indian diaspora has played an important role in popularizing our culture abroad. It reflects the full multiplicity and variety of the rich social, ethnic, religious, and cultural tapestry that is India. A deep-rooted affection among the diaspora for the motherland is an intangible asset and is something that we have to build upon.

4.18 As per the Ministry, the ICCR has encouraged its ICCs and Indian Missions abroad to actively partner with Indians living abroad. Some of the engagements include

(i) the partnership with *Maison de l'Inde* in Paris, and (ii) the running of the Indian Culture Centre in partnership with Dr. Keshav Singhal in Cardiff. New partnerships are being explored with cultural and academic organizations and associations established by Indians abroad. The ICCR has engaged about 30 local teachers from the diaspora in 16 countries for teaching dance, music, the Hindi language and yoga in its Culture Centres or Missions. In the Gulf countries, an 8-million strong diaspora has played a significant role in the promotion of Indian culture and in academic exchange.

4.19 During the recent foreign visits of our Prime Minister, engagement with the diaspora has emerged as a focal point. When asked about concrete initiatives taken by the Ministry to reach out to Indians abroad and to make them stakeholders in our soft power projections, the Ministry through written reply submitted as under:-

“Indian Diaspora has been an important vehicle of India’s “Soft power projection overseas and has played an important role in facilitating Indian culture and values abroad, reason why it is a focal point in Prime Minister’s foreign visits. The Ministry has been organizing several events, programmes and schemes to strengthen its outreach to the overseas Indian community spread across the world. Special focus and attention are given to ensuring welfare and protection of vulnerable sections of the overseas Indian community, especially distressed Indian nationals and migrant workers. Diaspora engagements include programmes such as (i) National Pension Programme for NRIs, (ii) Overseas Citizenship of India scheme, (iii) Scholarship Programmes for Diaspora Children, (iv) Corporate Internships for Young Overseas Indians, (v) Online Services for Voters, (vi) Tracing the Roots, (vii) Indian Community Welfare Fund, (viii) Overseas Indian Youth Club, (ix) Know India programme (x) Study India Programme and (xi) Pravasi Bhartiya Kendras.”

4.20 On the issue of collaboration with the diaspora, the representative of the Ministry of External Affairs during the sitting submitted as under:-

“...The ICCR has been an active collaborator with the Indian Diaspora in multifaceted ways. This has encompassed partnering with established cultural and academic institutions of the Diaspora Indian communities with scholars, eminent Indians, professionals and experts. As we all know, in several instances, Diaspora Indians have preserved Indian customs as living traditions. In some ways, perhaps beyond what is

actually the case in the mother country and ICCR has helped them in performing an important role in promoting and propagating their culture and values. This has made the Indian Diaspora community a valued partner in the overall effort to promote our culture and heritage.”

4.21 When asked about plans to utilize migrant workers as instruments of soft power in the Gulf Region, the Ministry through a written reply submitted as under:-

“Gulf, which has large number of Indian Diaspora especially the migrant workers, is indeed an important region for India both from the economic as well as security point of view. Under its “Link West” policy Ministry is committed to further increase India’s engagement with the countries in its west and the Gulf region. In this context establishment of (i) Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) in Kochi, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, Chennai and Lucknow to provide assistance to the Indian nationals intending to work in the Gulf countries, (ii) 24/7 help-lines in Gulf countries to provide ready assistance to the distressed Indian nationals and migrant workers are important initiatives to mention, (iii) Grievances Management System (MADAD) setup for users to register grievances pertaining to the Consular Services offered by the Indian Missions/Posts abroad, and (iv) Scholarship scheme for NRI and PIOs with special focus on Indian Diaspora in Gulf countries are some initiatives to mention.”

4.22 The Committee understand that culture is a wide field that encompasses a number of Ministries/Departments. In such a scenario it is inevitable that the mandate of one organization will overlap with that of another. At least in the field of culture it is almost impossible to conceive a water tight compartmentalization of responsibilities between the ICCR/MEA and other line Ministries. On various aspects related to culture the MEA/ICCR must work with the Ministries of Culture, Tourism, Human Resource Development, AYUSH etc. For example, the Ministry of Culture’s primary mandate in terms of bilateral cultural relations is in the context of formulating Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEPs) with countries abroad and

ensuring its implementation with the help of various implementing agencies (ICCR being one of them). While the Committee agree with the Ministry's contention that duplication should be avoided through a clearer definition of roles, at times it becomes difficult to define them in isolation with one other. During oral deposition the Foreign Secretary admitted that despite coordinated efforts among Ministries where the DG, ICCR and Secretary, Culture meet and discuss issues, there remain gaps in coordination. It is imperative that all concerned Ministries find ways to work together, particularly in light of limited resources. The Committee would, therefore, strongly recommend that much more emphasis be given to the issue of coordination among various line Ministries in order to achieve the highest order of functional efficiency, and that a Co-ordinating Committee of Ministries dealing with cultural diplomacy be established to meet not less than once in two months. A field like Cultural Diplomacy requires that various Ministries/Departments do not operate in silos. In order to achieve this, the Committee's proposal aims to create a fixed mechanism for effective coordination between MEA/ICCR and other line Ministries involved in the task of dissemination of culture and goodwill to people outside India. All should work together to strengthen the soft power diplomacy of the country.

(Recommendation No.11)

4.23 The Public Diplomacy Division had been merged with the External Publicity Division in January, 2014 to form a new entity called External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division. Before the merger, the erstwhile Public Diplomacy Division

complemented the ICCR in showcasing our soft power resources and in building an understanding and appreciation of India's foreign policy. Following the merger, the functions of the two Divisions have been coalesced to a significant level and the Committee are afraid that the long term requirements of public diplomacy may stand subordinated to the expediency of providing a platform for external publicity and responding to the urgent and immediate requirements of the news of the day. While being in favour of working towards achieving synergy, the Committee would specifically recommend that it should be ensured that the matters related to public diplomacy are not given short shrift under the new entity. In particular, since the Joint Secretary (XP) is bound to be preoccupied principally with urgent matters, a senior official should be appointed under him tasked solely with stewardship of India's public diplomacy activities.

(Recommendation No.12)

4.24 The Diaspora is an indispensable partner in promoting our country's soft power. We are fortunate to have a large diaspora across the globe that has preserved Indian customs as living traditions. As per the Ministry, the ICCR has encouraged its Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) and our Missions abroad to actively engage with the diaspora, which has emerged as a focal point during recent high level foreign visits. It is, therefore, imperative that our soft power of India is projected through these communities. The reach of the diaspora is not only wide in terms of its geographic coverage, but also in terms of its influence in the economy and society of host countries. The Ministry has been partnering with established

cultural and academic institutions of the diaspora with scholars, eminent Indians, professionals and experts. It appears to the Committee that such programmes are largely driven by the initiative of the local Mission or the particular Indian Cultural Centre. Therefore, the Committee would recommend that instead of this short-term approach, the Ministry of External Affairs should make a blueprint for engaging meaningfully with the Diaspora in leveraging our soft power abroad through a broader and more systematic policy.

The Gulf Region is not only important to India from economic and strategic perspectives, but also as home to a large number of Indians, especially migrant workers. Unlike other regions of the world where Diaspora has considerable clout, the position of migrant workers in the West and the Gulf is not strong. This requires better collaboration and coordination in all possible ways as they may be the best messengers of India's soft power in that part of the world. The Committee therefore, consider it essential that special focus should be laid on disseminating soft power under the 'Link West' policy through the diaspora in that region.

(Recommendation No.13)

**NEW DELHI
21st November, 2016
30 Kartika, 1938 (Saka)**

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on External Affairs**

**MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2015-16) HELD ON 23RD FEBRUARY, 2016**

The Committee sat on Tuesday, the 23rd February, 2016 from 1600 hrs. to 1800 hrs. in Committee Room 'E', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Shashi Tharoor – Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Prof. (Dr.) Sugata Bose
3. Shri Vishnu Dayal Ram
4. Prof. (Dr.) Mamta Sanghamita
5. Shrimati Supriya Sule
6. Shri Sharad Tripathi

Rajya Sabha

7. Shrimati Kanimozhi
8. Dr. Karan Singh
9. Shri D.P. Tripathi
10. Shri Pavan Kumar Varma

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Shri Cyril John | - | Joint Secretary |
| 2. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai | - | Director |
| 3. | Smt. Jyochnamayi Sinha | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Shri Janmesh Singh | - | Under Secretary |

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Ms. Sujata Mehta	- Secretary (West)
2.	Dr. Sumeet Jerath	- Additional Secretary & FA
3.	Shri Vikas Swarup	- Joint Secretary (XP) & Spokesperson
4.	Shri Sibi Goerge	- Joint Secretary (Administration)
5.	Ms. Vani S. Rao	- Joint Secretary (OIA-II) Additional Charge of OIS-I
6.	Ms. Nutan Kapoor Mahawar	- Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR)

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Shri C. Rajasekhar	- Director General (ICCR)
2.	Ms. Namrata S. Kumar	- Deputy Director General (ICCR)
2.	At the outset, the Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members of the Committee and the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Council for Cultural Relations to the sitting of the Committee to have a briefing on the subject 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy including role of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Diaspora'. He also drew the attention of the representatives of the Ministry to Direction (55)1 of Directions by the Speaker, Lok Sabha.	
3.	The Secretary (West) briefed the Committee on the various issues pertaining to the subject which <i>inter-alia</i> included various activities being carried out by the ICCR towards promoting India's soft power through the cultural centres and also through collaboration with other Ministries as well as the State Governments, overall functioning of the External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division of the Ministry, use of social media for digital diplomacy and celebration of the International Yoga Day etc.	
4.	Thereafter, the Members of the Committee raised various queries related to rationale for the merger of External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division; budgetary allocation of ICCR and its utilization, lack of clarity about the remit of ICCR and the Ministry of Culture, Project Mausam, appointment of Cultural ambassadors; audit of Regional Centres of ICCR etc. The representatives of the Ministry responded at length to the queries of the Members.	

A verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2015-16) HELD ON 27TH JULY, 2016**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 27th July, 2016 from 1600 hrs. to 1815 hrs.
in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Shashi Tharoor – Chairperson

Members

Lok Sabha

2. Prof. (Dr.) Sugata Bose
3. Shri Ranjit Singh Brahmputra
4. Prof. Richard Hay
5. Shri Raghav Lakhnupal
6. Shri Venakateshwara Rao Magananti
7. Shri Jose K. Mani
8. Shri Chhedi Paswan
9. Shri Vishnu Dayal Ram
10. Mohammad Salim
11. Dr. Mamtaz Sanghamita
12. Shri P.R. Senthilnathan
13. Shri Ram Swaroop Sharma
14. Shri Sharad Tripathi

Rajya Sabha

15. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
16. Dr. Karan Singh
17. Shri Amar Singh

Secretariat

1. Dr. Ram Raj Rai - Director
2. Shri Janmesh Singh - Under Secretary

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Dr. S. Jaishankar	- Foreign Secretary
2.	Shri D.M. Mulay	- Additional Secretary (CPV & OIA)
3.	Shri Vikas Swarup	- Joint Secretary (XP) & Spokesperson
4.	Shri Sibi Goerge	- Joint Secretary (Administration)
5.	Ms. Vani S. Rao	- Joint Secretary (OIA-II) Additional Charge of OIS
6.	Ms. Nutan Kapoor Mahawar	- Joint Secretary (Parl & Coord)
7.	Shri Dinkar Asthana	- Joint Secretary (DPA II)
8.	Shri Manish Gupta	- Joint Secretary (OIA-I)
9.	Shri M.C. Luther	- Joint Secretary (OE) & PGE

- 10. Shri Sanjay Kumar Verma - Joint Secretary (GEM)
- 11. Ms. Neena Malhotra - Joint Secretary (E&SA)
- 12. Shri Anurag Srivastava - Director (Finance)

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS (ICCR)

- 1. Shri C. Rajasekhar - Director General
- 2. Ms. Namrata S. Kumar - Deputy Director General

MINISTRY OF CULTURE

- 1. Shri Narinder Kumar Sinha - Secretary
- 2. Shri K.K. Mittal - Additional Secretary
- 3. Ms. Shefali Shah - Joint Secretary

MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION)

Shri Vinay Sheel Oberoi - Secretary

NALANDA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Gopa Sabharwal - Vice Chancellor, Nalanda University

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

3. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

4. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

5. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

6. Thereafter, the representatives of the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Human Resource Development were ushered in. The Chairperson welcomed the representatives to the sitting of the Committee for furnishing evidence on the subject ‘India’s Soft Power Diplomacy including role of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Diaspora’.

7. The Foreign Secretary gave a brief outline of the work being done by the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in projecting our soft power and he also outlined certain impediments being faced in this regard. The Secretary, Ministry of Culture and the Secretary, Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Human Resource Development) also briefed the Committee about the areas in which they are working closely with the Ministry of External Affairs on issues related to culture and soft power.

8. The Members of the Committee raised various queries which *inter-alia* included lack of coordination between ICCR and the Ministry of Culture, financial burden on ICCR due to Agency work, status of the Cultural Centres at Paris and Washington, imperative of projecting a grand vision of Asia, need for an institutional arrangement between ICCR and Ministry of Culture in order to avoid overlap, tangible gains and outcomes derived from India's soft power, popularizing Gandhian values as soft power, the concept of 'smart power' etc. Thereafter, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretaries and other representatives of the three Ministries responded to the queries of the Members on all these issues.

The Committee then adjourned.

**MINUTES OF THE THIRD SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (2016-17) HELD ON 16TH NOVEMBER, 2016**

The Committee sat on Wednesday, the 16th November, 2016 from 1500 hrs. to 1545 hrs. in Committee Room 'B', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Shashi Tharoor – Chairperson

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Ranjit Singh Brahmpura
3. Prof. Richard Hay
4. Shri Jose K. Mani
5. Shri Vishnu Dayal Ram
6. Prof. (Dr.) Mamtaz Sanghamita
7. Shri Sharad Tripathi

Rajya Sabha

8. Shri Swapan Dasgupta
9. Dr. Karan Singh
10. Shri D. P. Tripathi

Secretariat

- | | | | |
|----|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Dr. Ram Raj Rai | - | Director |
| 2. | Smt. Jyochnamayi Sinha | - | Additional Director |
| 3. | Shri Janmesh Singh | - | Under Secretary |

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

3. Thereafter, the Committee took up for consideration the draft Report on the subject 'India's Soft Power Diplomacy including role of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Diaspora.'

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

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

The Committee then adjourned.