# CULTURE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY: A CASE STUDY OF INDIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 1980s

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of*

## MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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# CERTIFICATE

Certified that dissertation entitled **"Culture as an Instrument of Foreign Policy: A Case-Study of Indian Cultural Diplomacy in the 1980's"** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University and is my own work.

*Naveen Kumar.*
Signature of the Student

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

**Dr. Varun Sahni**

**Chairperson**

**Prof. Surjit Mansingh**

**Supervisor**

*Dedicated*

*to*

My Father

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# INTRODUCTION

After the end of the second world war and the emergence of many new states, they started to be viewed as political cultural units too. The literature on national culture, nationalism and national identity was expanded. The study of national identity has been linked to ideology and norms in international politics. Cultural forces have been studied in international politics to observe the stability or instability of world order. More recently in the 1990's, the fault lines between civilizations are theorized to study inter-state conflict in the post-cold war period.

This study considers the importance of culture as an influence on foreign policy decision making. The main rationale for this study is the possibility that culture influences organisational and leadership behaviour in the process of formulating and implementing foreign policy. Hence, the cultural milieu has become a factor in which the nation-state and its foreign relations have been viewed. Foreign relations can not only be built up by a decision of policy-makers, but is also a product of the position of a nation-state in the international cultural milieu. The milieu may be region, sub-region, religion or ethnic identity. Thus, culture is an important factor in international relations and, it is used by nation-states as an instrument to make and strengthen foreign relations.

In international relations, political relations are not adequate and durable without a base of functional relations. Functional relations often are made on the basis of cultural understanding of each other. Political cooperation is either founded on or results in cultural relations or functional cooperation between peoples and nations. Cultural relations ensure multilateral cooperation, and in turn helps a better political and economic atmosphere. The noble aspiration of cultural relations is "nation speaking unto nation" (Mitchell, 1986), totally free from mechanisation, pressure or coercion.

Forging cultural relations requires intense cultural activities and exchanges. In this task, cultural diplomacy plays a primary role at the governmental level. The basic presumption of diplomacy in cultural relations is that the relations are not only political. The basic goal of cultural diplomacy is the building of new constituencies of knowledge and sensitivity in other countries for the sake of more stable relationships. Cultural diplomacy meshes in with the wider goals of building external relationships because cultural affinity serves as useful platform for actions in other areas.

This study focuses on the role of culture and cultural diplomacy in the foreign relations of India. This role is primarily one of making and strengthening the political and economic relationships within the broader framework of foreign policy. This study will examine to what extent culture is an instrument of foreign policy. In particular, the study

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takes the case- study of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's when a number of activities were undertaken with the purpose of gaining leverage in the political and economic fields of foreign relations. The overall aim of this study is to see the effectiveness of cultural diplomacy as an instrument to ensure strong ties with specific foreign countries. This study will show the importance of cultural diplomacy in general and Indian cultural diplomacy in particular as an ongoing process for effective conduct of foreign policy.

The study hypothesizes that cultural diplomacy enhances political and economic cooperation with some countries. Systematic measures were adopted by India to use culture as an effective diplomatic instrument in the 1980's. The methodology combines descriptive and analytical methods. This study tries to establish the interrelationship of cultural relations with political and economic relations at the functional and theoretical levels. Through the case study method, it examines Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's.

This study is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. The Chapter 1 deals with the role of culture and cultural diplomacy in the foreign policy of countries in general. At the theoretical level, it tries to explore the influence of cultural factors in the domestic context on foreign policy. The principles and objectives of foreign policy are formulated under the common cultural milieu of a state. At the operational level of foreign policy also, a state takes into consideration

the cultural values and norms of the targeted country in the process of trying to influence the policy of that state. In addition to this, foreign policy uses culture as an instrument to improve understanding about itself in the outside world. This exercise in the form of cultural diplomacy helps in achieving the broader political and economic objectives of foreign policy.

Since the case-study of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's has been taken, Chapter 2 explains cultural diplomacy and its role in India's foreign policy overall. It defines Indian culture in terms of its vastness and rich heritage which are the basic content of Indian cultural diplomacy. The broader account of Indian culture and its influence on the leadership and political system explains the role of cultural factors in India's foreign policy. The richness and diversity of Indian culture also indicates the reason d'être of using culture as an instrument by which it could be possible to attract the attention of other countries to Indian developments and concerns.

In the last chapter, the effectiveness of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's is examined. This chapter is divided into imperatives, workings, and results of Indian cultural diplomacy. In the decade of the 1980's, India used all possible means of cultural diplomacy. The purpose was the necessity of overcoming difficulties in foreign relations at the time. Hence, in the 1980's Indian leadership felt the imperative for better conduct of cultural diplomacy on a large scale.

On the basis of this case study, the role of Indian cultural diplomacy has been critically evaluated in the conclusive chapter of the study. The shortcomings in the working and lacunae in the institutional framework of Indian cultural diplomacy are shown. Some practical suggestions are given for making Indian cultural diplomacy more effective in future in order to create a conducive environment for the better conduct of India's foreign policy.

# Chapter 1

# THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN FOREIGN POLICY

The phenomena of historical changes in the colonial order and the balance of power in the post-world War II era have been paralleled with the resurgence of national identity and cultural factors in the international arena. Broadly, the traditional theories of international relations have been mainly concerned with the balance of power, statesmanship and force. The most influential forms of inquiry have analyzed interactions among states that rest upon power and wealth. The prevailing realist interpretations of international relations, even as softened by neorealist emendations, are preoccupied with issues of conflict and capabilities treated as matters of "security" or "political economy" on the basis of the primacy of sovereign state actors.[1]

Moreover, the cultural creativity and normative aspirations have been sacrificed in the inquiries of international relations for the supposedly more enduring determinations of survival or supremacy. But, gradually culture is identified as the domestic factor which affects foreign policy choice. This dimension got currency mainly because of

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[1] Richard A. Falk, "Culture, Modernism, Postmodernism: A Challenge to International Relations", in Jongsuk Chay, (ed.), *Culture and International Relations*, (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 267.

more and more cultural assertions expressed by newly independent states. In the course of time, the international theorists like F.S.C. Northrup, Adda Bozeman, R.B.J. Walker, Ali A. Mazrui and others have recognized culture as an expression of national identity. This expression certainly affects international relations. Now, it is a fact that nations whether weak or powerful, define national interest as much in terms of particularistic domestic motivations and imperatives as in terms of international balance of power considerations. The purpose of this opening chapter is mainly to explain the role of cultural factors in formulating and implementing the foreign policy. The analysis of cultural diplomacy in the task of achieving the objectives of foreign policy is also a purpose of this chapter.

### The Concept of Foreign Policy

In the interplay of international relations, sovereign states, in order to achieve their interests, often come into conflict with one another, and as a means to achieve their ends, power is generally used. Hans Morgenthau views, all politics is a struggle for power. He derives this dictum from the assumption that the desire to dominate is a constitutive element of all human associations. F.S.C. Northrup observes, "the most fashionable theory of foreign policy has been

power politics".[2] More specifically, the term power denotes the quantity of influence which the nations exert on the minds and actions of the people of one another. In the processes of international politics, the behaviour of every state affects the behaviour of other states in some form or other, either favourably or adversely. But every state tries to minimize the adverse effects and maximize the favourable effects of the actions of other states. It is anadjustment of the actions of states in favour of one's own state. This involvement is generally systemic and based on some well-defined principles. These principles and the purpose of a state are reflected in the foreign policy.

The nation-states have defined goals to pursue outside their territory in the light of geographic, political, economic and strategic situations. These goals are adopted in the interest and finally for the survival of a nation. For the purpose of defining and executing goals, there is a need to have well-defined principles, plans and actions. Therefore, a state constructs a policy which deals with foreign countries in order to achieve its goals. In simple words, the defined goals on the basis of principles, plans to achieve the goals and actions to execute the plans constitute a broader policy which is called foreign policy. George Modelski defines foreign policy as "the

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[2] F.S.C. Northrup, "The Cultural Basis of Foreign Policy", in Bruce L Sanderes, and Alan C Durbian, *Contemporary International Politics: Introductory Readings*, (New York: John Wiley & sons, 1971), p. 84.

system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment".[3] The foremost task of foreign policy analysis in his view, "must be to throw light on the ways in which states attempt to change, and succeed in changing the behaviour of other states".[4]

Foreign policy is concerned with both the change and status quo in so far as they serve national interests. Hence, if a state decides not to have any relations with some country, that is also a part of foreign policy. Its impact is both negative and positive. Therefore, in the aggregate sense, foreign policy is a collection of particular policies and solutions to specific problem situations. However, it is generally perceived that foreign policy requires a deliberate attempt to use or affect entities outside one's own political jurisdiction.

Foreign policy consists of the development and conscious pursuit of some preferred goal or goals of an actor through the selective use of foreign policy behaviour. Foreign policy behaviour is purposeful action resulting from the implementation of a political-level decision to act so as to attempt to influence attitudes, beliefs and

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[3] George Modelski, *A Theory of Foreign Policy*, (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), pp. 6-7.
[4] Ibid, p. 7.

actions of one or more other actors where entities external to political jurisdiction.[5]

**Factors in Foreign Policy**

The foreign policy of a country is influenced by many factors. Broadly, these factors fall into two categories, viz., domestic and external. External factors like international power structure, international organisations, reaction of other states, alliances and hostilities exercise considerable influence on the foreign policy of a country. Brian White has rightly maintained that foreign policy is made within the frontiers of the state but is directed at and must be implemented within the environment external to the state.[6] Since the foreign policy of a state is implemented in the process of dealing with other states, the socio-cultural conditions of those states must be deeply considered by policy-makers. Therefore, at the level of implementation of foreign policy, the culture of one's own and other states plays a prominent role. For instance, when India deals with China, it has to take notice of the Chinese value system and cultural influences on Chinese decision-makers, and these may be completely different from those of the United States.

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[5] Charles F. Hermann, "Foreign Policy", in Stuart S. Nagel, (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Policy Studies,* (New York: Marcel Dekher, Inc., 1983), pp. 274-275.
[6] Michael Clarke and Brian White, (ed.), *An Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis,* (Ormskirk; G W & A. Hesketh, 1981), p. 4.

At an other level, among the domestic factors like size, geography, economic development, social structure, political conditions, leadership and others, culture deeply influences foreign policy choice because an effective foreign policy requires the support of people, from all sections of society, who share the same values and norms. Besides, some policies are evolved with the unanimous support of all sections in the historical course of a state. These evolved policies are continued in operation to suit with the peoples' past and historical commitments. For instance, in India some external policies like anti-imperialism, anti-racialism, etc. were evolved during the freedom struggle, and continued with the same fervour in independent India. In the case of India, the principles and objectives of foreign policy clearly exhibit cultural influences and colour. Hence, policies aimed at the outside world have their roots embedded in the socio-cultural context of a state. This is why, it is widely recognized fact that particular types of culture have their own characteristic types of foreign policy.[7] Because culture determines the ideals and values within which a foreign policy is shaped. It is also true that only with the knowledge of ideology and values of a given nation, one can know what that nation is and what it is most likely in any given set of circumstances to do. The principle of "effective foreign policy has the

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[7] Chris Farrands, "The Context of Foreign Policy", in Michael Clarke, and Brian White, (ed.), *An Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis*, (Ormskirk: GW & A., 1981), p. 36.

merit of being idealistic, since it proceeds from the assumption that no nation is understood unless its ideals are grasped from within".[8]

## THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE

The individual's physical traits are determined by the race, parents and the heredity of the individual. The individual's social and cultural behaviour is determined by his environment, group and culture. He learns the language, food-habits, customs, values, practices and the etiquette of the group in which he is born and the environment in which he lives. Human life also has an inner aspect that is self. This self is developed by the social-cultural environment such as the group, the family the parents, kinship, religion and so on. It is amid these groups that the individual becomes a social person.

Thus, the social system of a group or a nation has some value system by which thinking, behaving and interacting modes of an individual is determined. This value system as a cultural aspect of human life shape the consciousness and ideas of an individual. When cultural values are commonly shared by a large proportion of a society, it can influence all the other aspects of that society. Therefore, culture has a bearing on people in all walks of life and plays a significant role in the political system, too.

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[8] F.S.C. Northrup, op.cit., p. 87.

culture refers to a set of values and codes of behaviour held in common by people who share a distinctive way of life. According to famous anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski, "it obviously is the integral whole consisting of implement and consumer's goods, of constitutional charters for the various social groupings, of human ideas and crafts, beliefs and customs. Whether we consider a very simple or primitive culture or an extremely complex and developed one, we are confronted by a vast apparatus partly material, partly human and partly spiritual, by which man is able to cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him".[9] In this way, culture manifests itself in all those things which are associated with the day-to-day life of human beings.

According to Clyde Kluckhohn, "culture consists in patterned ways of thinking, feeling and reaction, acquired and transmitted mainly by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values".[10] Therefore, culture is that complex system whereby a people lives and pursues the way of life. Marco Verweij observes that

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[9] Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944), p. 36.
[10] Quoted in Valerie M Hudson, (ed.), *Culture and Foreign Policy*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p. 3.

national cultures are seen as (temporary) hybrids of the various ways of life.[11]

In a most concrete and precise manner, Malinowski defined culture as "an integral composed of partly autonomous, partly coordinated institutions. It is integrated on a series of principles such as the community of blood through procreation; the contiguity in space related to cooperation; the specialization in activities; and the last but not least, the use of power in political organisation. Each culture owes the competitiveness and self-sufficiency to the fact that it satisfies the whole range of basic, instrumental and integrative needs".[12] Broadly speaking, culture of a particular society is comprised of three distinct elements: ideas, aesthetic forms and values.

Ideas are reflected in the habits and beliefs of the people. Through social institutions, the perpetuation of these habits and beliefs provides stability to society. Aesthetic forms reflect the artistic expression of a culture in its visual arts, music and poetry as well as the sense of beauty manifested in the everyday living of individuals. Finally, values of a culture consist of both elements, ideas and

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[11] Marco Verweij, "Cultural Theory and the Study of International Relations", *Millennium*, vol. 24, No. 1, Spring 1995, p. 96.
[12] Bronislaw Malinowski, op.cit, p. 40.

aesthetic forms. They provide norms of conduct, standards of behaviour and source of vision and faith.

There are some values by which the culture of a society is clearly differentiated from the culture of an other society. These values are the foundation of political or economic ideologies which may exist in the common forms in a society. These ideologies have also their roots in the historical course of society's culture. In this way, through ideas, beliefs, faiths and ideologies, culture influences the political, economic and finally, the whole social system. Among these systems, there is prime importance attached to political system and its institutions or machinery by which culture of a society is manifested in the outside world.

## CULTURAL FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Cultural factor plays an important role in international relations either for clash or cooperation. Cultural differences among nations make the ground for distrust and finally, conflict. According to R.B.J. Walker "culture dissolves into culture; culture translates into value; values bring on the problem of relativism; and relativism reduces everything to an irreducible clash of power politics".[13] Samuel P. Huntington predicted, "the great divisions among humankind and the

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[13] R.B.J. Walker, The Concept of Culture in the Theory of International Relations in Jongsuk Chay (ed.), *Culture and International Relations*, (New York: Praeger, 1990), p. 11.

dominating source of conflict will be cultural".[14] But cultural proximity and mutual understanding between each others different cultures enhance the possibility of better political and economic relations. The relationships established in cultural field bring the people come closer. It makes associations among non-governmental and social organizations of different cultural states. All this gives endurance and vitality to the relationships. In this way, the relationships based on cultural ties become somewhat independent from the vagaries of politics. Thus, in both the senses of clash and cooperation, cultural factor affects the dynamics of international relations. Sammuel P. Huntington emphatically maintains, "in the new world order, cultural identity is the central factor shaping a country's associations and antagonisms".[15]

Culture, through influencing the human minds, determines the mode of behaviour and response of nation-states in international relations. The United States' different response from communist China to any international event is not only determined by power-politics but also by its democratic norm, social aspect of production system and open society value system. In this context, Ali A. Mazrui's analysis of seven functions of culture[16] is noteworthy. First it helps to

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[14] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilization", *Foreign Affairs,* Summer, 1993, p. 22.
[15] Sameul P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order,* (New Delhi: Viking, 1996), p. 125.
[16] Ali A Mazrui, *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, (London: James Currey Ltd., 1990), pp. 7-8.

provide lenses of perception and cognition. How people view the world is greatly conditioned by one or more cultural paradigms to which they have been exposed. The second function of culture lies in providing motives for human behaviour. What makes a person respond behaviourally in a particular manner is partly cultural in origin. The third function of culture lies in providing criteria of evaluation. What is deemed better or worse, ugly or beautiful, moral or immoral, attractive or repulsive, is partly a child of culture. The USA condemns 'terrorism' when it is committed by Palestinians, but has been known to subsidize it in the case of UNITA in Angola or the Contras in Nicaragua. One man's 'terrorist' is often another's 'freedom fighter' - partly because one culture's hero is another's villain. The fourth function of culture is to provide a basis of identity. Ethnic nepotism is itself a product of culture in this identity sense. Religion and race are often a basis of solidarity or a cause of hostility. Fifthly, culture is a mode of communication. The most elaborate system of communication is language itself. The sixth function of culture is as a basis of stratification. What type of personality is elected president in France or how influential bishops are in another country is partly a function of culture. The seventh function of culture lies in the system of production and consumption. These seven functions of culture influence international relations through their penetration in all societies. Ali A. Mazrui went to the extent of

observing, "culture is at the heart of the nature of power in international relations".[17]

When nation-states have learnt to find ways of living together and to cope with cultural differences so as to cooperate within a modernity, these differences should be taken modestly. Firstly, in international relations, cultural differences reflect only the value preferences which are based on high societal norms of nation-states. Therefore, nation-states try to influence others with their moral and value system of society. For instance, the US government is usually justifying its stand in international relations on the basis of value and morality of democracy, liberty and human rights like in the case of Iraq.

Secondly, though there is no doubt of existence of different cultures within a nation-state, administrative system somewhat takes the commonality of national culture. All actors within a nation-state whether they be politicians, diplomats or other professionals, have a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, shared causal beliefs, shared notions of validity, and a common policy enterprise. These features respond to international relations in the way of interpreting a situation differently in a issue-area, e.g. in the case of global warming. Leaders of a nation-state have the deep awareness of

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[17] Ibid, p. 8.

cultural beliefs of their own nation. They set the nation's role in world affairs corresponding to these beliefs. Hence, leaders from a particular nation on basis of cultural influence on political system are expected by the world community to work in a particular way which may be in the form of mediator, revolutionary and so on. The expectations from the leaders of Iran are different from the leaders of Indonesia. Though both these countries are Islamic, the degrees and kind of cultural influence on political system and leaders vision shaped by cultural beliefs are different.

The cooperation ensured by cultural understanding feeds the possibility of durable economic and finally, political relations. Such type of mutual understanding in cultural or social field by each other between two countries can replace the bottlenecks by durable political relations.

The relevance of cultural factor in international relations can be judged by role of cultural understanding between nation-states in multilateral or bilateral cooperation. The relations in all fields with better understanding of socio-cultural system between countries and, between peoples across the boundary are called functional relations. If the contacts between peoples, the relations in the fields of art, sport or music, interactions of non-governmental organizations and the economic cooperation are absent, the political relationship will also

be bleak. Because, "political cooperation is either founded on or results in functional cooperation between peoples and nations". So, the political relations become adequate and durable with the support of functional relations and in this functional relations, culture helps.

Cultural factors as a catalytic force enhances the possibility of political and economic cooperation. In the late twentieth century, the commonality of culture and its realization somewhat resolved the political dilemmas in Europe. The mutual distrust among France, Germany and Britain, three major powers of Europe, were softened not only by the political or strategic compulsions but also by new realization of cultural commonality among them. This resulted into the historic economic and political alliance in the form of European Union. At the same time, the United States came closer to Europe with better political, economic and strategic understanding. In strategic field, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), established in 1949, can be seen as an example of this understanding. The United States' closeness to Europe should not be judged only in the context of cold-war euphoria before the 1990's and of new technological modernity after the 1990's. The commonality of culture strengthened cooperations or alliances between the United States and Europe, and among the nations of Europe. The existence of 'Organization of the Islamic Conference' (OIC), established in 1971, also indicates the

alliances on the basis of cultural commonality. On the other hand, larger cultural diversity within an alliance may reduce the chances of achieving structural coherence and aspired results. The difficulties inherent in the successful functioning of G-15 or G-77 partially indicate the lack of cultural commonality among constituent of organization. Thus, the absence of some shared cultural values may weaken political or economic alliances to a great extent.

## ROLE OF CULTURE IN FOREIGN POLICY

Cultural factors are relevant to the internal and external effectiveness of a political actor as well as shaping the style of government and leadership. In this way, culture not only becomes, "the explanation of last resort" but the factor of explaining the continuous activities in international relations. In the words of Lucian Pye, "explanation of last resort (e.g., "the Chinese act that way because this is the Chinese way") are virtually never explanations at all".[18] If the acts of Chinese foreign policy are taken as an example, the values of Chinese society and at least Confucian traditions must be taken into account then the scientific explanation of the cause behind the acts can be understood.

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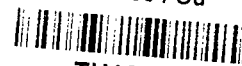
[18] Valerie M Hudson, (ed.), *Culture and Foreign Policy*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p. 2.

Since culture is the "software of the mind",[19] it can be simply perceived that to what extent culture influences the decisions of leadership. The study of leadership in determining foreign policy should not only be concerned with personal characteristics, ambitions and interests but should also include the study of cultural or social structures in which leadership works and of the factors that influence it. In this context, theories like reflectivist not only take into account the impact of structures on social and political life but also analyse the political actors' different perceptions and preferences which affect decision-making process. Reflectivist approaches may apply either to the group level or the level of the individual.[20] In the latter case, the focus is on the impact of perceptions, preferences, and norms of individual decision-makers on political processes. At the group level, "large number of individuals are assumed to share either a single perception, preference, value of a system or (mutually related) perceptions, preferences and norms".[21] In the case of latter assumption, it is certain that interpersonally shared system of meanings, perceptions and values of political or professional actors have their definite role in foreign policy decision-making.

The social relations in which people live give them their cultural biases, and serve as a basis of action. Though there are different

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[19] Ibid, p. 2.
[20] Marco Verweij, op.cit., p. 89.
[21] Ibid, p. 90.

cultural values and beliefs in a nation-state, some values of people are consistent with each other and tend to be based on some ultimate preferences which are structuring the social life. These common values are called cultural biases. The preferences of foreign policy decision-makers should also be seen within the context of cultural biases. Because, the behaviour of individual actors is shaped and constrained by the social structures and institutions in which they operate.

## Culture at National and Sub-national Levels

A national culture is the set of norms, standards, rules or collective mental programming. Martin W Sampson explores the properties of national culture.[22] First, these socially created and learned factors exist across a variety of institutions within a single nation-state. Second, these factors are not rigidly binding upon all people of that society at all time. Cultural norms are typical and common within the population, but they are not deterministic in the sense of being equally binding upon all relevant people at all time. One expects them in a probabilistic fashion; certain tendencies are more likely in one culture than in another. Third, these norms and practices are familiar to people in that particular culture. Those

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[22] Martin W. Sampson, "Cultural Influences on Foreign Policy", in Charles F. Hermann, Charles W. Kegley and James N. Rasenau, (ed.), *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 385.

people routinely encounter and deal with respond to and act upon these particular norms, whether their own behaviours are accurately described by the norms or not. Fourth, as sets of rules these aspects of culture can be appropriately regarded as incentives which have the effect of organizing or structuring behaviour.

National cultural variables affect the process and content of foreign policy. Traditionally, it is believed that there is a direct link between individuals' characteristics in a national population and the content of that nation's foreign policy. The concern of earlier studies in foreign policy is with the details of the policy choice, not with how the choice was made. [23] But the present study is concerned with policy content largely as a reflection of the policy process. The content of foreign policy can also be analyzed within a framework of political culture. Valerie M. Hudson defines political culture as "all of the discourses, values and implicit rules that express and shape political action and intentions, determine the claims groups may and may not make upon one another, and ultimately provide a logic of political action".[24]

In this political culture, there is a continuous process of value allocation by means of politics. Here, it is in politics that cultural

[23] Martin W Sampson, op.cit., p. 386.
[24] Valerie M Hudson, op.cit., p. 11.

conversations become most explicit: what ends should the nation pursue and by using what means?[25] In this way, national culture with its social and political characteristics determines the contents of foreign policy. For instance, the ends of India's foreign policy like anti-colonialism and anti-racialism were determined by the stream of social and political culture evolved during the freedom struggle. Akira Iriye links the isolationalist and exceptionalist impulse in US foreign policy to the importance in American culture of private initiative and the equation of power with commercial and economic development.[26] Hence, cultural settings have distinctive characteristics which explain the prominence of certain values in the content of foreign policies and affects policy processes as well.

## THE CONCEPT OF DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy is only one part of foreign policy. It is an instrument by which the policies decided upon are put into effect. Diplomacy is fundamental to the success of foreign policy. There are at least two senses in which the term "diplomacy" is used: the first and more narrowly defined refers to the process by which governments, acting through official agents, communicate with one another; the second, of

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[25] Ibid, p. 11.
[26] Quoted in Martin W Sampson, op.cit., p. 386.

broader scope, refers to the mode or techniques of foreign policy affecting the international system.[27]

Sir Ernest Satow wrote, "diplomacy is the application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the governments of independent states".[28] Hamilton and Langhorne refer to diplomacy as "the peaceful conduct of relations amongst political entities, their principals and accredited agents".[29]

Harold Nicolson points out that in current language the word "diplomacy" is carelessly taken to denote at least five different things. Of these, the first four convey the ideas of foreign policy, negotiation, the machinery by which such negotiation is carried out and a brand of the foreign service. He further argues, "a fifth interpretation which this unfortunate word is made to carry is that of an abstract quality of gift, which, in its best sense, implies skill in the conduct of international negotiation, and in its worst sense, implies the more guileful acts of tact".[30] However, he finally accepts the definition given by the Oxford dictionary which is as follows: "Diplomacy is the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these

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[27] See, International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 3 (New York: The MacMillan Company and the Free Press, 1972), p. 187.
[28] Ernest Satow, *Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, (London: Green & Co., 1957), p. 1.
[29] Keith Hamilton, and Langhorne Richard, *The Practice of Diplomacy: Its Evolution, Theory and Administration*, (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 1.
[30] Harold Nicolson, *Diplomacy*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 4.

relations are adjusted and managed by ambassadors and envoys, the business or art of the diplomatist".[31]

The foreign policy of a state, as J.R. Childs has said, is "the substance of foreign relations", whereas "diplomacy proper is the process by which policy is carried out".[32] Hence, it s the purpose of diplomacy to provide the machinery and the personnel by which foreign policy is executed. The basis of diplomacy is peaceful method like negotiation, for the promotion of national interest. Therefore, there are two points inherent in the analysis of diplomacy. Firstly, diplomacy, in the popular sense, is negotiation carried on through methods of persuasion. Secondly, in the special sense, diplomacy implies devotion on the part of its practitioners to the national interest. Efficient diplomacy would not only ensure the effective implementation of theoretical principles, objectives and strategies of foreign policy, but can play a creative role in its formulation, adaptation and development.[33] Since a state has different kinds of national interests, there are different branches of diplomacy for serving national interests. These major branches are political diplomacy, military diplomacy, economic diplomacy and cultural diplomacy.

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[31] Ibid, pp. 4-5.
[32] Norman D Palmer, and Howard C Perkins, *International Relations: The World Community in Transition*, (Delhi: A.I.T.B.S. Publishers,1997), p. 84.
[33] J. Bandyopadhyay, *The Making of India's Foreign Policy*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers Ltd., 1991), p. 22.

## CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND FOREIGN POLICY

Cultural diplomacy is an instrument for attracting the attention of people and decision-makers in other countries in order to strengthen political and economic relations through creating interests in the values and visual arts of a nation-state. The basic concept behind cultural diplomacy is that relations between nation-states are not only determined and continued because of political relations and political commandment but despite these. "The task of cultural diplomacy is to produce understanding that goes beyond stereotyped images, and to mould perceptions in a favourable way. It seeks to present the personality of one's own nation and people, in an appealing manner. It meshes in with the wider goals at building external relationships because cultural affinity services as a useful platform for actions in other areas".[34]

The exchange of cultural artifacts, manifestations of technological advancement and interactions of people across boundaries can shape the new international system and regional sub-systems. Because through these measures peoples of one nation find the opportunity to know the soul of peoples of other nations. This is the real relationship between countries and it is possible only through cultural diplomacy.

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[34] K.S.Rana, *Inside Diplomacy*, (New Delhi: Manas Publication, 2000), p. 144.

Therefore, according to Soedjatmoko and Thompson, "a prime goal of cultural diplomacy is the building of new constituencies of knowledge and sensitivity in other countries for the sake of more stable relationships and affinities between peoples and nations. Only through such ties and understandings can the stability of their relations remain undisturbed by the vagaries of international politics".[35]

## Cultural Diplomacy of Different Countries

In the course of history, kings used marital alliances as part of monarchical foreign policy. In the modern period of history, European countries used cultural relations as an instrument of imperialist expansion. They tried to inculcate European religion, language, educational system, social habits and moral values to the peoples of other countries for expanding their political and economic rule. In the words of J.N. Dixit, "Lord Macaulay's famous minute on Indian educational policy epitomized this philosophy and affirmed the efficacy of being capable of becoming the most abiding instruments for furtherance of political and economic influences".[36]

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[35] Soedjatmoko & K. W. Thompson, "Cultural Diplomacy", in James N Rosenau, K. W. Thompson, and G. Boyd, (ed.), *World Politics: An Introduction*, (New York Free Press, 1976), p. 407.
[36] J.N. Dixit, "Culture as an Instrument of Diplomacy", in Lalit Mansingh, (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Agenda for the 21$^{st}$ Century*, (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1997), p. 420.

France paid attention to the importance of cultural diplomacy at early stage of modern diplomacy through its concept of *mission civilistrice*. France related its cultural diplomacy with French imperialism from the start. The French are accustomed to viewing their culture as a political resource, formally integrating "les relations culturelles" into their Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1920's.[37] Great Britain also tried to reach people in other countries through its institutions of higher education and social and economic research. The British Council enjoying a semi-autonomous status in United Kingdom promotes English language abroad and develops closer cultural relations with other countries.

In the US State Department, the Bureau of Public Affairs and Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs deal with cultural diplomacy. The US Information Agency was created in 1953 and assumed an unassailable lead in cultural diplomacy.[38] In Russia where there is no differentiation from other diplomatic activity, the foreign section and the Department of Agitation and Propaganda deal with cultural diplomacy.

Japan is more conscious than other countries in the field of cultural relations. "One looks in vain for significant literature

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[37] Utpal K Banerjee, "Role of Cultural Diplomacy", in Lalit Mansingh, (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Agenda for the 21st Century*, (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1997), p. 404.
[38] Ibid, p. 404.

elsewhere in the world which has not been translated into Japanese".[39] In India also, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations was established in 1950. Apart from these organizations, all countries pursuing cultural diplomacy have their cultural centres and institutions abroad staffed by career diplomats.

## Means of Cultural Diplomacy

For the operation of cultural diplomacy, the free flow of ideas, interactions between scholars or artists, manifestations of artifacts and, finally presenting the good image of a country through nodal institutions and organisations are generally adopted. For this purpose obviously, it requires many structures and cultural centres, both governmental and non-governmental. In this fast communication age, radio, television, internet, audio and video cassettes, film, CD-Rom and multi-media are used to influence the minds of people in other countries.

The literature and language, music, dance, heritage of visual arts, handicrafts and votive tradition and philosophy are playing the major role in cultural diplomacy. In this regard, cultural festivals abroad have gained great importance. Apart from these, Foreign Ministries make a specific cultural policy to pursue alongwith the

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[39] Soedjatmoko and K. W. Thompson, op.cit., p. 408.

political diplomacy and take the help of other governmental departments in this process. In addition to these, the diaspora of a country in abroad also determines the fate of cultural diplomacy's objectives. Because on any foreign soil, firstly it reflects the values and traditions of its country. This factor applies more in the case of cultural diplomacy of India and China of which large numbers of people are engaged in numerous work in foreign countries. In the post-independence period migration from India consisted mainly of people of technical competence and skilled workers who went voluntarily in search of better economic prospects. The number of people of Indian origin including doctors, engineers, scientists, lawyers, and so on, is over one million in the USA alone, and they command the highest average per capita income of any similar ethnic group in that country. In the case of China, the overseas Chinese population has been increasing at great speed since the late seventies. By 1990 it was estimated that some 30.7 million Chinese were living outside 'Greater China' (comprising mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan).[40] These vast diasporic Chinese and Indians with their good economic and skill performance are certainly creating the awareness about cultural and religious values in adopted countries.

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[40] Vinod C Khanna, "Chinese Diaspora", *China Report,* Vol. 37, No. 4, October-December, 2001, p. 428.

By way of this, the diasporic population is helping in achieving the goals of cultural diplomacy.

**Role of Cultural Diplomacy**

With the adoption and operation of various methods, cultural diplomacy is an important instrument for creating ideological, political and economic influence. This creation of influence serves national interests which are generally political, strategic and economic. In these areas, cultural diplomacy makes the ground for direct operation of foreign policy to influence the countries in each of the areas. Through making cultural relations and understanding, it enhances the possibility of cooperation in all fields. The Chinese experience conveys the potentiality of a planned cultural diplomacy to achieve success in international relations.

Traditional diplomacy has been restricted mainly to official relations and not to the relationship among peoples engaged in various autonomous and private organisations in economic, social and educational field. It is mainly conducted by government officials. So, red-tapism and officialdom inhibit speedy functioning, change-oriented policies and, finally, a broad objective of influencing external entity. On the other hand, cultural diplomacy expands the horizon of support base in foreign countries through its activities in which governmental or autonomous and, sometimes, non-governmental

agencies or peoples are actively participated. It works with its belief in the importance of spread of written words, information across frontiers and, presentation of cultural goods available in peoples' lives. Cultural diplomacy tries to make or retain the continuous cultural relations which purpose is not necessarily to seek one-sided advantage but to achieve understanding and cooperation between national societies for their mutual benefit. The cultural activities speak for the concern of the sending country to maintain relations at more than a formal level, and demonstrate that it understands the language of culture. Cultural relations, sometimes, get success to break down barriers between countries. For instance, in 1971 an American Table-tennis (sport is regarded as under broader definition of cultural relations) team was received warmly by Chinese prime-minister Chou En-lai who made a historic friendship speech on that occasion. This led to Henry Kissinger's exploratory visit to Peking, and subsequently to President Nixon's. A positive change of relations followed. Thus, Ninkovich has rightly maintained, "although cultural relations are a minor form of diplomacy, at the same time the entire foreign policy process is itself subordinate to larger cultural dynamics".[41]

In the context of the above analysis, cultural factor can be regarded as equally important both in domestic and external

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[41] Quoted in J.M. Mitchel, *International Cultural Relations*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 15.

environment. Since cultural factors influence the choice of making policies either for domestic or external context, the sovereign states reflect their cultural or civilizational traditions in international relations. The importance of culture in foreign policy can be seen in the respect nation's own ideology and moral power. At any time, and particularly in the contemporary world, a nation needs for the protection and preservation of its own national, religious and spiritual values. Hence, it becomes the basis of foreign policy. A foreign policy based on certain cultural values alone can respect and support that of other countries. This respect can call forth the confidence, cooperation and support of the overwhelming majority of other nations of the world. This is why, F.S.C. Northrup suggests, "the basis for any foreign policy decision must be an objective understanding of the indigenous culture and philosophy of each and every one of the nations involved in the decision, including one's own, together with a clear knowledge of the relations between these different cultural ideologies".[42]

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[42] F.S.C. Northrup, op.cit., p. 88.

## Chapter 2

# INDIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY WITHIN THE BROADER FRAMEWORK OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Culture holds a most significant place in every walk of life for people in Indian society. From the ancient time of the Vedas, it has been influencing not only the social activities but political and economic also. In the heterogeneous cultural pattern of medieval India, the ruling classes in different regions defined the state, its objectives and the statecraft in the context of their own regional, religious and cultural values. This diversity of culture in the political and social systems has been recognized by the educated peoples and leaders of India during freedom struggle. In this broader context of diversity, the leaders of freedom struggle nurtured the democratic norm in sharing of political power and distribution of economic wealth. In the post-independence period, all policies, aimed at the development, security and territorial integrity, are, by and large, made with a consideration of values and norms of heterogeneous socio-cultural context of India. In this way, culture pervades political system of India.

Political culture, as defined by Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba, is "the system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which define the situation in which political action takes place".[1] In India,

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[1] Lucian W Pye, and Sidney Verba, (ed.), *Political Culture and Political Development*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 513.

there are two levels of cultural orientation in politics. On the one hand, there are individuals or specially elite which cut across all the divisions of region and language, and to that extent there is an all-India frame. On the other, there are also specific local or regional orientations towards authority, symbolism and power which are in some ways much more real. But contemporary Indian political culture can not be put into any single category. Though Indian political system has not proved very effective in orienting the economic and social systems towards the desired goals of democratization, the system is managed through strategies of accommodation, adjustments, concessions and cooperation which make it acceptable to almost all sections of society. Sunil Khilnani supports it as "in the politics, India has managed to achieve relative – it precariously balanced – success. It has allowed most of its citizens to live together with a larger measure of freedom than the citizens of other comparable new nation states".[2]

In the overall context of cultural impact on political system, this chapter analyses the role of culture in India's foreign policy. For analysing this role and, specially, Indian cultural diplomacy within the broader framework of Indian foreign policy, it is, firstly, essential to understand the heterogeneity and homogeneity of Indian culture and its heritage from all possible points of view.

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[2] Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1997), p. 10.

## Indian Culture and its Heritage

There seems to be a consensus among sociologists, anthropologists and historians on the difficulty of defining culture. Because there is no single characteristic which can be regarded as the essence or differential of culture. It is always a combination of many strands of varying importance and vitality. Definitions of culture have been given in a variety of ways by sociologists and anthropologists. In its most general and pervasive sense, "the concept of culture is a consideration of all that which is symbolic: the learned, ideational aspects of human society. The symbolic representation that constitute human knowing are in their various groupings classifications and manifestations, the cultural".[3]

Constructivism views culture as an evolving system of shared meanings that governs perceptions, communications, and action.[4] In the collective sense, culture invokes a state of intellectual and moral development in society. This is a position linking culture with the idea of civilization that is informed by the evolutionary theories. Civilization is the organization of life which allows civil society to grow. Such civil society is a necessary condition for corporate life in which alone individuals can pursue fruitful and creative activity. Culture is the

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[3] Chris Jenks, *Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 8.
[4] Sanjoy Banerjee, "The Cultural Logic of National Identity Formation: Contending Discourses in Late Colonial India", in Valerie M Hudson, (ed.), *Culture and Foreign Policy*, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p. 29.

outcome of such organisation and expresses itself through language and art, philosophy and religion, social habits and customs, and political institutions and organisations. None of them is separately culture, but collectively they constitute an expression of life which is described as culture. Here culture has been taken in pluralistic sense under social category. In this sense, culture is regarded as the whole way of life of a people.

## Indian Culture in Historical Framework

India's is the most ancient civilization like Chinese. It has kept its cultural heritage intact. Though, in India the process of civilisation have not been so higher developed as in Europe or America, the stage of civilisation evolved has expressed itself in the pervasive character of culture which envelops the vast majority of its people. India provides the best area of cultural study within the framework of its history.

Throughout the long period of its history, there were clashes between the native and the foreign forces which were finally absorbed but not without leaving their impact on the indigenous people and their way of life and conduct. The Aryans, Achaemenians, Persians, Greeks, Parthians, Sakas, Kushenas, Hunas in the ancient period, the Arabs, Afghans, Turks, Mongols and Mughals in the medieval period and the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English in the modern period have all added to the mainstream of Indian culture. The present culture may,

thus, be considered to be a composite one symbolizing unity in diversity in regional, religious, linguistic and anthropological spheres. Though the cultural movements in north of the country did cast their shadow on the southern part and vice versa, it is essential to take notice of local variations as well.

**Indian culture in geographical framework**

The configuration of India presents three great regions characterized by sharply contrasting features. The Himalayan region, the Indo-Gangetic plain and the table land in the south. India contains winding chains of hills and the highest mountain ranges, lofty plateaus and vast plains, deep rivers and fertile river valleys, dense forests and sandy deserts. There is also every variety of climate. All these factors tended to separate India into different local zones, each with a regional spirit of its own.

In many ways this geography of India has affected the course of its history and culture. For instance, the spirit of tolerance has been nurtured and fostered by India's geography. The vastness of the land and its climate have influenced the Indian mind. The great variety in landscape, climate and conditions of life prepared in the mind a readiness to accept difference. Nature has generously placed within the boundaries of India almost all the resources that man needs for a civilized and creative life. A famous historian, A.L. Basham, says,

"India was blessed by a bounteous nature, who demanded little of man in return for sustenance, but in her terrible anger could not be appesed by any human effort. Hence, it has been suggested, the Indian character has tended to fatalism and quetism, accepting fortune and misfortune alike without complaint".[5]

## Multi-racial and casteist feature

Indian history explains why the mosaic of its culture is so rich and multicoloured. Races after races have poured into India, lent their original contribution to its culture, and have been assimilated in the Indian milieu. As a result of common life in India these races have been modified in their characteristics and evolution of a common Indian type and culture has been the result. Besides the different races coming from outside, Indian society has developed an unique caste-structure internally.

In the course of time, this structure became most exploitative instrument in the hands of upper class of society for maintenance of its social, political and economic hegemony over the middle and the lower classes. Due to the rigid caste structure with absence of social mobility, Indian society has remained divided while its ramifications have not completely obstructed the process of cultural unity.

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[5] A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That was India*, (London, Sidgwich and Jackson, 1954), p. 3.

## Religious base of Indian culture

In fact, all social and cultural systems of India have taken their validity from the religious philosophies and ideas. Hence the inner-structure of Indian culture primarily lies in the religious principles of India has been symbolized by a cultural continuity, embodied into a unified principle of consciousness.[6] This consciousness is much more influenced by religion which is a "specific attitude of the self, itself and no other though it is mixed up generally with intellectual views, aesthetic forms, and moral valuation".[7]

In the realm of duty, relation, behaviour and, finally in shaping the ideology, religion has bearing on mental framework of Indian society. In the words of Aurobindo, "it provided an organisation of the individual and collective life, a framework of personal and social discipline and conduct, of mental and moral and vital development by which they could move each in his own limits and according to his own nature in such a way as to become ready for the greater existence".[8]

## Critical views on Indian culture

The inseparability of spiritual other-worldly thinking from the Indian mind and interpretations of religion by few sections of society in

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[6] W. N. Brown, "The Content of Cultural Continuity in India", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XX, No. 4, August 1961, p. 434.

[7] S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1927), p. 13.

[8] Sri Aurobindo, *The Foundation of Indian Culture*, (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust, 1953), p. 124.

favour of some at the cost of other from time to time validated the status quo of even exploitative structure of the society. As a result of this, instead of having richest heritage of civilization and culture, India could not catch the pace of world-wide development as interpreted by some western scholars like Max Weber. In words of Nehru, "we have great religions and they have had an enormous effect on humanity. Yet, if I may say so with all respect and without meaning any ill to any person, those very religious, in the measure that they made the mind of man static, dogmatic and bigoted, have had, to my mind, an evil effect. The things they said may be good but when it is claimed that the last word has been said society becomes static".[9]

The religious and ethnic groups in India define the heritage of nation in their own different terms which sometimes dispute the common national identity. The definition of the nation's heritage entails the projection of contemporary socio-political hierarchies and boundaries into the past. The heritage identifies the nation as the heir of critical strengths and foundations for exclusive unity, but also the heir of distinctive weaknesses and vulnerabilities.[10] The secularist identity of India fixes the nation's heritage as a mixture of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikh and others. The ideal evolved in Hinduism has reconciled the numerous forms of worship within it. It is adapted to the situation by casting Islam as another system of religious symbols that

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[9] *Jawarhal Nehru's speeches*, August 1949 - February 1953 (New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India, 1954), p. 358.
[10] Sanjoy Banerjee, op.cit., p. 33.

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refers ultimately, to an integral divinity that transcends any symbols. This ideal of transcendence was at the core of Gandhi's rhetoric and provided the foundations of a unified Indian heritage construction. It was an answer to the problem of diversity that presented itself on a vast scale to the independence movement.[11]

In contrast, the Hindu nationalist identity constructs the Indian heritage as exclusively Hindu. This construction is represented by the Rashtriya Swayamsevek Sangh or Sangh Parivar. Such type of construction may bring the nation's heritage under logic of hegemony which discriminates among all religious and ethnic groups. But at the same time, this construction takes all communities under one exclusive framework that rejects the existence of various religious faiths and cultural values. In contemporary India, as Sunil Khilnani maintained, "Hindu nationalists struggled to capture the state and to purge the nationalist imagination, leaving it homogenous, exclusive and Hindu; others fought to escape the Indian state altogether and to create their own smaller, homogenous and equally exclusive communities".[12]

Though the religious differences among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Christians and others can not be denied in the practical sense, the conflicts are not surely derived only from the real or basic texts of these religions but these are generally associated with vested interests which can be seen in the interpretations of history.

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[11] Ibid, p. 37.
[12] Sunil Khilnani, op.cit., p. 152.

Abid Hussain has rightly maintained that the heart of India which supplies life-blood to Muslims as well as Hindus has been so nurtured on the breadth of mind and vision of mystical traditions, that religious antagonism leading to war, which was a common phenomenon in Europe in the middle ages, was rare in Indian history.[13]

## Indian cultural continuity

The Indian culture which has developed during the course of many centuries has survived longer than the cultural traditions of Egypt, Babylon, Rome, Greece and others. India and China, in fact, are the oldest continuous cultural traditions in the world as supported by Basham.[14] The main reason of Indian cultural continuance is the acceptance of the best from all other contemporary streams. As Swami Vivekananda clearly explained to the delegates of the parliament of religion at Chicago in 1893, India stands for "assimilation and not dissension".[15]

India,inspite of its many shortcomings, has always shown the basic characteristics of process of integration and differentiation go on side by side. Thus, the liberal and receptive character of Indian culture saved it from any cultural clashes and rendered it ever-lasting Indian

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[13] Abid S Hussain, *The National Culture of India*, (New Delhi: National Book Trust of India, 1956), p. 8.

[14] A. L. Basham, op.cit., p. 4.

[15] Vivek Ranjan Bhattacharya, *Wisdom of Cultural Heritage of India*, (New Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co. Pvt. Ltd., 1989), p. 2.3

culture is free from ideological conflicts and complexities of religion, which has helped it grow as an eternal culture.

## Indian Arts

An important segment of Indian culture is art, which can be traced back to the protohistoric period and Indus valley civilization. The most striking feature of Indian art is that it is somewhat influenced by spiritual colour. For instance, one of the famous dances Bharat Natyam, with its origin in an unbounded faith in God, has the purpose of conveying to the human mind the virtues of purity coupled with an admiration for aesthetic values. Aurobindo suggests that Indian art is intuitive and spiritual eye.[16] Another important feature of Indian art is "It is that in India the three arts of painting, sculpture and architecture were never separated as they were in post-renaissance Europe".[17]

Indian art also gives the diversified richness to the culture because of having many forms or schools of painting, dance, music, architecture, sculpture and literature. Overall impression is early made in this context that the heritage of Indian art is so vast one that on this basis India can be called richest in this field in comparison to other cultures of the world.

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[16] Sri Aurobindo, op.cit., p. 209.
[17] *Towards Understanding India*, (New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1965), p. 77.

## Main features of Indian culture

Finally, Indian culture is distinguished by its possession of a number of important characteristics or qualities. Firstly, it is characterised by tolerance because of assimilation factor with all sorts of races and creeds. Secondly, it has greater emphasis on harmony or cosmic order, what the Vedas called 'Rta'. Thirdly, with its continuity and change accordance with time, the most attractive thing has been its catholicity. Fourthly, it has a long tradition of democratic norms which origin can be traced back to the system of Sabha, Samiti and Vidhata of the vedic age, and to the republican system of Lichhavi state. In the social system also, there has been a tradition of making the decisions of public interest through samitis or councils represented by elders in the villages. Lastly, it can not be denied that besides the continuous wars between rulers for power, cruelty, oppression and exploitation under varna system, in comparison to many other cultures, Indian culture is best characterized by its humanity. "In no other part of the world were the relations of man and man, and of the man and the state, so fair and humane".[18]

This culture has a fundamental unity. Inspite of different languages, customs, political disunity and geographical impediments, a uniform cultural stamp is printed upon the literature and thoughts of all different units of India. There has been a close socio-cultural

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[18] A. L. Basham, op.cit., p. 8.

cooperation among the peoples of different creeds and communities. Indian art, literature and music have also greatly helped in strengthening this cultural unity. The composite culture of India is a living example of its fundamental cultural unity.

**Role of cultural factors in India's foreign policy**

Since a national culture reflects the values, traditions, habits and accumulated mores, it has great bearing on all domestic and external policies. These factors deeply influence the human mind and behaviour and in result, the conduct of the states. Therefore, for the complete understanding of India's foreign policy it becomes necessary to observe the cultural influences on it.

These influences are the domestic factors which can broadly be divided into the non-human environment and the social organisation. Under social organisation, culture, social structure and behaviour are basic determinants. Apart from culture, tradition and history, democracy, economic factors, pluralist nature of society and personality of leadership are the factors which influence India's foreign policy. In India, among all these factors, cultural factor is most important because it influences all the domestic factors including the policy choice for economic development and foreign relations. Therefore, indirectly through influencing the domestic factors and directly through influencing the human behaviour in decision-making

process, cultural factor has much more worthy importance in India's foreign policy to analyze.

## Idealism and Realism in India's foreign policy

At the very outset, the role of cultural factors in India's foreign policy can be analyzed only in the realm of idealism and realism. These two dimensions have been taken as a dichotomy in western foreign policies where the rational choice is only for realism while India has tried to strike a balance between the two in its foreign policy. The most important factor of this balance is non-alignment which does not mean indifference and inactivity.

In fact, this non-alignment policy has been completely influenced by the greater tradition of the middle path of Indian culture. Michael Brecher states, "the central message of India's philosophical tradition dating from the Buddha has revolved round the rejection of absolutes, and extreme positions. On the contrary, it has stressed philosophical relativity, intellectual catholicism and co-existence of good and evil, in short the golden middle path of compromises and tolerance of opposites".[19]

In view of this middle path or the golden mean which reflection can be observed in the personality of Jawaharlal Nehru, the chief architect of independent India's foreign policy, India preferred this path

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[19] Michael Brecher, "Neutralism: An Analysis", *International Journal* (Toronto, ont.), Vol. 17, 1961-62, pp. 224-36.

as middle way between Western liberal democracy and Soviet egalitarianism. It, therefore, refused to align itself with any particular bloc and resolved to cooperate with both the blocs in furtherance of its own ideals.[20]

In the Constituent Assembly on 22 January 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru states, "India, in so far as it has a foreign policy has declared that it wants to remain independent and free of all these blocs and that it wants to cooperate on equal terms with all countries".[21]

This aforesaid policy is known as the policy of non-alignment which clearly reveals India's cultural-philosophic foundation. This policy of non-alignment has not surely been isolationism and indifference to world affairs but it was the active involvement in India's own way and own choice. The policy of non-alignment was adopted not only on basis of idealist approach but also in line with realist approach to the national interest.

Heimsath and Mansingh emphatically state that non-alignment provided India with the influence, even power to pursue its major national objectives in the international arena.[22] In addition to this, culturally influenced doctrine of Panchaseela including the policy of

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[20] K. Shridharani, "The Philosophic Bases of India's Foreign Policy", *India Quarterly* (New Delhi), Vol. 14, No. 2, April-June, 1958, p. 198.
[21] Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Select Speeches,* September 1946 - April 1961 (New Delhi: Publication Division, 1961), p. 11.
[22] Charles H Heimsath, and Surjit Mansingh, *A Diplomatic History of Modern India,* (Calcutta: Allied Publishers, 1971), p. 55.

non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries has been also in tune with India's national interest. The prime minister of a modern national state Nehru could not afford to be a pure idealist and often referred to the real factors in India's national interest as important determinants of his foreign policy.[23]

Though realistic factor in India's foreign policy can be observed in the action of 1961 in Goa, it was strengthened after the Chinese aggression of 1962. As Nehru himself admitted, "in the past our preoccupation with the human problems of poverty and illiteracy was such that we were content to assign a relatively low priority to defence requirements in the conventional sense".[24] But it does not mean that there was absence of realistic factor in Indian culture of foreign policy or since 1962 India's foreign policy has been less doctrinaire and more realistic. In contrast there has been good blend between the both.

Realistic approach or practical approach in the conduct of state did have existence in the Indian culture or in particularly Hindu culture. This realism can be traced back to Kautilyan period and even in the high period of idealistic doctrine of Ashoka. After independence in India's foreign policy the realistic approach with retaining the idealistic tradition has been proved by Indira Gandhi "as a person with a job to

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[23] J. Bandyopadhyay, *The Making of India's Foreign Policy*, (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1991), p. 71.
[24] Jawaharlal Nehru, "Changing India", *Foreign Affairs*, (New York), Vol. 5, No. 3, April 1963, p. 459.

do in contrast to her sensitive and idealistic father".[25] She was pragmatic not an idealist. She did not project preconceived theories on the phenomenal world. In this respect she felt that she reflected her country's cultural ethos.[26]

In fact, either the balance or the ambiguity between idealism and realism which have been the basic conceptual framework to understand India's foreign policy, are only the result of Indian cultural traditions in some way or the other. The distinctive combination of idealism with national interest reflects itself in foreign policy's main objectives which are "the pursuit of peace not through alignment with any major power or group but through an independent approach to each controversial or disputed issue; the liberation of subject people; the elimination of racial discrimination; and the elimination of want, disease and illiteracy which still afflict the greater part of the world's population".[27]

**Means and ends of India's foreign policy**

The equal importance of means with an end is other most distinctive feature of India's cultural traditions in foreign policy. Though the emphasis on good means for achieving an end is echoed by Mahatma Gandhi in modern India, its root can be traced to ethical and moral principles for statecraft in the ancient texts of India. For

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[25]Surjit Mansingh, *India's Search for Power*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984), p. 20.
[26] Ibid, p. 27.
[27] K. P. Misra, (ed.), *Studies in Indian Foreign Policy*, (Delhi: Vikas Publication, 1969), p. 26.

instance, in Dharmsastras, there are some famous preaching like "one should not do a good thing by following a bad path" and, "to seek to further the welfare of the state by enriching it through fraud and falsehood is like storing water in an unburnt mud pot and hoping to preserve it".[28]

Nehru was also aware of the basic Indian tradition and the Gandhian position that the means to be employed to achieve an end are as important as the end itself and that both should be according to moral law. In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on 20 December, 1956, he stated, "means are as important as ends. If the means are not right, the end is also likely to be not right, however much we may want it to be right".[29]

In keeping this view India adopted three major means for achieving its foreign policy objectives: non-alignment, the temper of peace, and friendship with all countries. However, in the latter period of Nehru's Prime-Ministership and the whole periods of Indira Gandhi in power, India took more concern towards the ends in comparison to the means. This importance of ends came on the surface due to the changing circumstances and, as a result it culminated into the killer

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[28] Quoted in A. Appadorai, *The Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 32-33.

[29] Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Select Speeches*, September, 1946 - April 1961, (New Delhi: Publication Division, 1961), p. 179.

instinct sometimes, towards the national interest as witnessed in Indo-Pakistan war in 1971.

This pragmatic shift in the reverse circumstances is also a product of Indian cultural tradition as reflected in the famous ancient book Arthsastra written by Kautilya. He recommended the adoption of methods of statecraft according to the circumstances and expressed the view that what produces unfavourable results is bad policy; a policy is to be judged by the results it produces. For him diplomacy was an art, not concerned with ideals but with achieving practical results for the state.[30]

## Cultural and religious thoughts in India's foreign policy

Some conceptual features which guide the direction and goals of India's foreign policy and relations are the temper of peace, tolerance, the concept of co-existence, the right of self-determination and anti-imperialism. These features are also the India's cultural pattern established by religious thoughts and philosophy. Since religious thoughts emphasized the beginningless and endless God or simply truth based on the perfection consisting in realizing the spirit which can be denied by violence, the non-violence became a strong means to realize the goal of perfection. From time immemorial a school of philosophy has been existed in India, which maintains that penance,

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[30] A. Appadorai, *Contemporary India: Essays in Domestic and Foreign Policy*, (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1988), p. 32.

self-abnegation, and non-injury are the means to get rid of sin and secure salvation. The Upanishads give the basis of the theory of non-violence. Historically, the peaceful approach found celebrated trends in the Emperor Ashoka's rule, Buddhism and particularly in Jainism.

In modern India, Mahatma Gandhi related the concept of non-violence with freedom, equality, democracy and international relations. Though Hindu religion preached non-violence as a way of life in the society, it never recommended the denial of war in the conducts of state as it can be found in Mahabharata. Gandhi also realized this when he says, "Hinduism has certainly not condemned war as I do. What, however, I have done is to put a new but natural and logical interpretation upon the whole teaching of the Gita and the spirit of Hinduism".[31]

In fact Gandhi applied his idea of non-violence to international relations as the only way to ensure security in the atomic age. However, the traditions of non-violence to India's foreign policy was deliberately accepted as a method of approach to foreign policy problems which emphasized reconciliation and the temper of peace. It does not mean the adoption of method of non-violence to foreign policy even in the wake of attack. Since Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi were aware of the difficulty in equating public with private morality,

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[31] M. K. Gandhi, *Hindu Dharma*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1950), p. 156.

they have taken the Gandhian concept of non-violence as relevant to safecraft only up to a point. Nevertheless, the principles and objectives of India's foreign policy reflect the influence of cultural pattern of ancient India or of the modified version evolved during the freedom struggle.

Thus, Indian cultural traditions which inculcate some ideals, values, peaceful attitudes and practices, certainly influenced India's foreign policy. In Nehru's view, two aspects of India's foreign policy, viz. the 'positive aspect of peace' and the desire to promote 'a larger degree of cooperation among nations' were directly traceable to the impact of India's past thinking on the formulation of foreign policy.[32] Nehru said in the Lok Sabha on 9 December 1958: " . . . It is a policy inherent in the circumstances in India, inherent in the past thinking of India, inherent in the whole mental outlook of India . . . "[33]

## Cultural Diplomacy in India's Foreign Policy

Cultural relations do not depend only on the actions of governments and their agencies. It is primarily a relation between people across the political and military boundary. In some form or other cultural relations survive even in the operation of cultural relations are conducted by public as well as private institutions. However, cultural diplomacy depends on the will and the initiatives of governments.

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[32] Nehru's reply to the debate on foreign affairs in the Lok Sabha, 9 December, 1958, *India Lok Sabha Debates*, Vol. 23, Series 2, Cols. 3959-61, New Delhi.
[33] Ibid, Cols. 3959-61.

It has two levels of meaning.[34] Firstly, it applies to the agreements, whether bilateral or multilateral, which are made between governments to permit, facilitate or prescribe cultural exchanges. The inter-governmental negotiation of cultural treaties, conventions, agreements and exchange programmes are cultural diplomacy. Secondly, it is less determinate. Essentially, the execution of these agreements and the conduct of cultural relations flowing from them may be seen ether as the extended responsibility of governments or as something delegated by governments to agencies and cultural institutions. As an aspect of diplomacy, it is normally carried out abroad by diplomatic staff. It is closely aligned to official policy and national interest. It's ulterior purpose is political or economic.[35]

Culture is utilized as an instrument of diplomacy with the motivation to crate a climate of understanding to influence the decision-making sections, academics and intellectuals of other societies in one's favour, to faster an objective and realistic perception of values and influences; to sustain an interest in and to preserve and create, academic, artistic and literary activities which would contribute to friendship and goodwill between countries; the overall objective

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[34] J.M. Mitchell, *International Cultural Relations*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 3.
[35] Ibid, pp. 2-4.

being to crate a favourable political climate which would contribute to the fulfillment of mutual interests, friendship and influence.[36]

## Methods and objectives of cultural diplomacy

The methods of carrying out cultural diplomacy are: cultural exchange programmes including artistic, academic, scientific and technological activities: formal educational, cultural, scientific and technological agreements; the establishment of bilateral friendship societies or associations for people-to-people contact and non-governmental interaction between societies and the establishment of international organisations and allied agencies in field of educational, scientific and cultural cooperation like United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural organisation are important. The institutional or operational arrangements also include the establishment of governmental organisations or agencies of an autonomous nature dealing exclusively with foreign cultural relations, the creation of specialized cultural and scientific wings or sections in the foreign offices and diplomatic missions by each country.

Behind all these arrangements, the main "conviction and expectations is that successful cultural and intellectual contacts are established, they would lead to linkages and cooperation in more tangible fields of economic, technological and at the highest level,

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[36] Niranjan M Khilani, *Realities of Indian Foreign Policy*, (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1984), p. 89.

political affairs".[37] Therefore, the main thrust of cultural diplomacy is to impress and to present a favourable image so that diplomatic operations as a whole are facilitated. In the contexts of the objectives and expectations of cultural diplomacy, it is pertinent to observe the success or failure of Indian cultural diplomacy.

## Indian Cultural Diplomacy: A General Outline

Cultural diplomacy as a method in the conducts of state for making the relations with foreign countries is not new in the Indian sub-continent. Though the purpose and the concept of cultural diplomacy was not very clear in the ancient India period, it had the existence certainly in one way or the other. Indian history has evidence of many efforts carried out by Indian rulers for cultural relations at least on the basis of religion. Emperor Ashok sent Prince Mahendra and Princess Sanghamitra to Sri Lanka with Theravadi messages of Buddha, leading to the Buddhist temple at Anuradhapur. The Kushana era was marked by the spread of Indian culture to its neighbours and the active intercourse lasted from the first century AD for about 1000 years. While India enriched central Asian art and culture, central Asia on its part played a unique role in disseminating Buddhism to China, Korea and Japan.[38] Many scholars like Fa-Hsien and Hsuan-tsang came India and through these visits the knowledge about Indian culture went outside in

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[37] Ibid, p. 89.
[38] Lalit Mansingh, (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Agenda for the 21st Century*, (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1997), p. 399.

the world. India also had cultural relations with Cambodia and Indonesia. The terraced architectural form of artistic culmination at Borobudur in Indonesia, apart from Angkorwat in Cambodia, gives the impression of this cultural relations.

In medieval India, translation of some Sanskrit texts and other branches of learning into Persian language gave the impetus to cultural relations. In this period, the relationship between India and central Asia in art and architecture was flourished greatly. By these cultural relations, monumental architecture was created in a massive fashion, both visual arts and performing arts flourished and languages were enriched. The main impact of these cultural relations in particularly ancient period was that "political diplomacy played little or no role, playing only second fiddle to cultural diplomacy".[39]

When India got independence through long and persistent struggle, it faced partition of the country on the religious grounds. This particular event laid compulsions before then leaders to think over the effort to make aware the world and its neighbours about India's secular multi-religious and multi-lingual identity as a nation. Therefore, India does not come under the group of newly-emergent countries which tried to overcome their respective crises of identities by utilizing their

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[39] Ibid, p. 402.

cultures. In contrast, India started its cultural diplomacy to overcome and resolve the situations which arose in the political relations.

The crisis of identity, unlike other newly independent countries, has not been a problem before India but to build a good image which become necessity due to some religious and cultural clashes and narrow interpretations of India's culture by some western scholars in the interest of colonialism. India had to build and revive its own cultural image on the international arena in the midst of cultural imperialism of Europe led by the United Kingdom in the sub-continent. Independent India with the leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad started to pay attention to the importance of fostering cultural relations under the conscious framework. The Department of Cultural Affairs was formed in the Ministry of Education, and an autonomous organization, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) under the Presidentship of Abul Kalam Azad was established to give special attention to the fostering of cultural and academic exchanges between India and other countries.

In the earlier years, cultural activities were limited to exchange programmes envisaged on an ad hoc, year-to-year basis with West Asian and Southeast Asian countries. The External Publicity Division with its Information Service centres abroad was also carrying out the task of cultural diplomacy. The main objectives of external publicity were the projection of India's policy of non-alignment and peaceful co-

existence and the propagation of India's point of view on several important matters. The task of external publicity was also to present through the media of the press, the radio, television and films, India as a multi-religious, secular democracy where all religious faiths were practiced and tolerated.[40] Apart from this, the Department of Culture within Ministry of Education was responsible for all cultural activities, both inside and outside the country. The cultural attaches in Indian Missions abroad were mainly engaged in the work of cultural diplomacy but, they were dependent on the Ministry of Education for the supply of inputs. Therefore, in the tasks of cultural diplomacy Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Ministry of Education and the ICCR all were engaged.

**Institutional Infrastructure**

For making the fundamental institutional arrangements for the conduct of India's external cultural relations, the Government of India appointed a committee in 1964 under the chairmanship of Dr. Homi Bhabha. This committee recommended that "the Ministry of External Affairs should have a cultural cell or a cultural division to oversee the conduct of India's external cultural relations".[41] The Pillai Committee also in its report to the MEA observed in 1966 that arrangements should exist for better planning and coordination by the MEA of cultural

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[40] Annual Report, Ministry of External Affairs, 1965-66, Government of India, New Delhi, 1966, p. 83.
[41] N. M.Khilani, *Relations of Indian Foreign Policy*, (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1984), p. 97.

activities abroad. The Pillai Committee saw grounds of confusion as it commented: "the government should review the relative position of the MEA and the Ministry of Education with regard to the handling of the subject".[42] Thereafter, MEA initiated discussions with the Ministry of Education for the transfer of the administrative control of the ICCR from the latter to the former, and agreement to this effect was finally reached between the two Ministries in April 1970.[43]

In 1977 Janata Government appointed a committee on India's external cultural relations under Ashoka Mehta. This committee acknowledged culture as an essential and important part of India's diplomatic effort. It recommended that one Ministry should have overall responsibility for all aspects of our cultural relations with other countries, and preparation and implementation of programmes under that policy should be entrusted to an executive agency. In view of the committee, the MEA would be the most appropriate Ministry in which the overall responsibility for conducting international cultural relations should be vested and ICCR should be nodal agency for implementing all programmes.[44]

Thus, while the Pillai Committee of 1966 paved the way for linking ICCR with MEA, the Asoka Mehta Committee of 1977 strengthened MEA and ICCR position in the tasks of cultural

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[42] J. Bandyopadhyay, op.cit., p. 229.
[43] Ibid, p. 229.
[44] N.M.Khilani, op.cit., p. 97.

diplomacy. In this way, from 1950's to 1970's, Indian cultural diplomacy and its infrastructure gradually took the shape of structured direction for its better operation. In 1970's MEA and ICCR became fully responsible for cultural diplomacy but certainly with the help of other Ministries and governmental autonomous agencies engaged in the works relating to culture.

The ICCR was established in 1950 as an autonomous body with clearly stated objectives in its own. The objectives of the Council are: "(a) to establish, revive and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; (b) to promote cultural exchange with other countries; (c) to establish relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture; and (d) to adopt all other measures as may be required to further its objectives".[45] Usually the External Affairs Minister is its chairman and the Chief Executive officer is a senior IFS officer deputed by MEA.

The activities of ICCR have gradually expanded. The festivals of India and the return festivals of other countries are primarily organized or coordinated by it. It sends distinguished individuals, cultural troops, exhibitions abroad, maintains chairs for Indian studies there, invites similar individuals, troops, exhibitions at house, organizes film festivals outside, publishes books, souvenirs, supervises foreign cultural centres like British Council etc. It also administers important awards

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[45] J. Bandyopadhyay, op.cit., p. 229.

like Jawaharlal Nehru award for International Understanding and Indo-Soviet Friendship Awards. It also maintains close liaison with the cultural wings of foreign missions in India.[46] With headquarters in New Delhi, the council has a network of six cultural centres abroad and seven regional offices in India.[47]

The cultural centres are located at Port Louis (Mauritius), Georgetwon (Guyana), Suva (Fiji), Jakarta (Indonesia), Paramaribo (Suriname) and Moscow (USSR). In these countries, the cultural centres have their significance due to population of Indian overseas is large in number. The Regional offices in India are at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Bangalore and Trivandrum. By the end of 1990's, the number of its cultural centres abroad reached fourteen including in London and Berlin. The council undertakes extensive preparation for the festivals of India abroad and return festivals in India. The first festival of India was held in UK in April 1982, and thereafter many festivals of India were organized by the Council in USA in 1986, USSR in 1988, Germany in 1992 and others. In addition to this under the guidelines issued by the central cultural committee of the Government of India in 1971, "the foreign cultural centres and libraries in India will be managed and supervised by the ICCR".[48] In pursuance of this the management of British libraries and the House of

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[46] Ranbir Samadhan, "Culture as a Critical Factor in Indian Foreign Policy", *Asian Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 3, 1992, pp. 48-49.
[47] Annual Report, MEA, 1989-90, p. 89.
[48] Annual Report, MEA, 1986-87, p. 88.

Soviet Culture at Trivandrum and the supervision of the Max Muller Bhawans and the Alliances Francaise in India have been undertaken by the council. The Council's quarterly journal are *Indian Horizons*, *cultural news from India*, *Papeles de la India*, *Recontre Avec l'Inde*, *Gagnanchal* and *Africa Quarterly*. The Council also organizes seminar with other countries on India's foreign policy and international relations like Indo-Australian seminar on non-alignment and neutrality at its headquarters in Delhi on 26-27 November, 1981.[49]

## Target countries

At the very beginning Indian cultural diplomacy was mainly directed towards West Asia and Southeast Asia, but in 1970's its activities were started in many other Asian and African countries. After the merger of the Indian Council for Africa in the ICCR in 1974, the latter took over the management of the Indian Centre for Africa and has since then been paying special attention to developing cultural contacts with African countries. In 1955 India had only one cultural agreement with Indonesia and in 1956 India signed a cultural agreement with Japan. But in 1980's India had formal cultural agreement with 63 countries.[50] Apart from the Third World countries, India started its cultural diplomacy in developed countries. These engagements are more visible in the latter part of 1980's and in 1990's. The specific motivations of India's external cultural policy could be

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[49] Cultural News from India, *ICCR*, Vol. XXII, No. 1, New Delhi, 1981, p. 86.
[50] N.M. Khilnani, op.cit., p. 93.

described as follows: to make Indian cultural, intellectual and scientific developments known abroad in the hope that it would add to bilateral cooperation; to respond to academic, cultural and artistic curiosity about India in foreign countries, to be responsive to Indian overseas who need India's support to sustain their cultural or ethnic identity in countries like Mauritius, Fiji, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname; to create an atmosphere of understanding and goodwill about India through cultural and academic exchange programmes.[51]

Thus cultural diplomacy has its significant role in India's foreign policy for making the conducive environment for political and economic diplomacy. It has a major task of making and building of India's image which is most important thing for a country in international relations.

Indian cultural diplomacy took more time to be structured and fashioned in a modern way. Still it does not have good infrastructure, trained manpower and shortage of funding due to the lack of adequate awareness of its importance among leaders and policy makers. In the way of making it effective, there is a need of adequate diplomatic instruments and staff which are not available to India. The limited economic trade and generally temporal dimension of political and military relationships with other countries are hampering the good possibility for Indian cultural diplomacy. The internal communal situations and some regional disputes based on religion , ethnicity and language give challenges to the overall effort of projecting good

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[51] Lalit Mansing, (ed.), op.cit., p. 424.

cultural image of India abroad. But after the 1970's the activities of Indian cultural diplomacy have, by and large, created significant friendship and influences in all countries with which it has relations. The widespread activities undertaken by the ICCR have presented the rich cultural heritage of India in foreign countries. These projections and presentations have helped India to overcome the arised confusions on some issues in other countries about Indian social fabric.

Though 1970's witnessed the active role of Indian cultural diplomacy, the decade of 1980 has actually been the period of its all round functions. Because only in this period, more and more cultural agreements, not for ad hoc activities but for formal and regular activities, were signed and a number of exhibitions, cultural programmes and activities were undertaken. In this period, the festivals of India were started and cultural activities were linked with political relations with foreign countries in practical sense. In fact, Indian cultural diplomacy got adequate and desirable place in India's foreign policy first time in 1980's with greater achievements than ever. Therefore Indian cultural diplomacy in this period deserves a case-study which will give better understanding of its potentialities.

## Chapter 3

# THE IMPERATIVES, WORKING AND THE RESULTS OF INDIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 1980'S

In the decade of 1980, leaders like Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi were keenly interested to make Indian cultural diplomacy the most effective instrument of India's foreign policy. The external situations in general and internal situations in particular became imperatives for Indian cultural diplomacy to be effective for making India's image better in the abroad. The demands were felt in the field of economic and technological development to make stronger relationships with other countries at all levels through image building course and mutual understandings.

The importance of cultural diplomacy and its possible results were realized deeply in the 1980's. Though some initiatives had been taken in the 1970's, all aspects of Indian cultural diplomacy got their operative directions first of all in 1980's. This chapter tries to explore the situations of the 1980's when Indian cultural diplomacy was given more thrust for achieving the objectives of foreign policy. Besides, the main purposes of this chapter are to be examine the effectiveness of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's and the positive results of its workings to push forward the India's foreign policy for better political and economic relations.

## IMPERATIVES FOR INDIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 1980'S

Primarily, various kinds of paradoxes inherent in the domestic conditions of India gave imperatives for Indian cultural diplomacy. These paradoxes especially in the 1980's can be analysed with the account of successes and failures in social, political and economic fields. There has been an inconsistency to the some extent between India's domestic conditions and its claim of success in resolving internal problems. The difference between actual external situations and Indian visualization of these situations also sometimes results in challenges to India's foreign policy. The political diplomacy is mainly responsible to face these challenges. But success requires a well structured cultural diplomacy for better understanding about India's views.

The ideas of foreign countries about India were fluctuating due to many expected or unexpected events occurring within India's political and social system. Cultural diplomacy took its course as corrective measures for India's image in foreign countries. Because, the country was facing situations which were not consistent with its projected romantic image. At the same time, Indian cultural diplomacy adopted the normal but not less important task of cultivating awareness about India's conditions and concerns for giving the

momentum to slow-moving or inert wheels of political, economic and technological relations.

## Personality factor in the 1980's

India under a tough political leader, Indira Gandhi, witnessed such type of phenomena which were sufficient to give new image to it abroad. On the personality level, Pupul Jayakar being her close friend and closely associated with cultural diplomacy in 1980's wrote, "Like a tigress guarding her cubs, her antennae would awake at the slightest threat. Her courage was epic. She dared, refused to be intimidated whatever the odds".[1] As a prime minister she protected the national interests but as a strategist she many times made contradictive moves and counter-moves. These attributes are supposed to be compounded, by charisma and over weaning power drive, hidden behind the mask of humility. Her political maneuvering resembled the trotting of a fox in a rhythmical style of "slow, slow; quick, quick - two slow steps followed by two quick steps".[2]

It is sure that being a pragmatic leader she always stressed on security and territorial integrity as the prime concerns of her foreign policy. But in addition to these, she was equally concerned with the India's prestige and image which she visualized as the basic

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[1] Pupul Jayakar, *Indira Gandhi: A Biography*, (New Delhi: Viking, 1992), p. 475.
[2] Niranjan M Khilnani, *Iron Lady of Indian Politics*, (New Delhi: H.K. Publishers, 1989), p. 31.

groundwork for successful foreign policy. She interpreted the values that constitute the bases of Indian foreign policy in a normative way, one of the bases of her foreign policy was Indian culture and civilization.

The sense of fearlessness, firmness and equality, simplicity of life, concept of socialism, secularism, democracy and peace had influenced her life and action. Though Mrs. Gandhi considered herself to be a fully integrated person and appeared less wrought by inner conflicts than many others, some inevitable ambivalence in her attitudes had political consequences. In correlating inner alternations of Indira Gandhi and outer alternations of India as a state, three themes stand out - cultural identity, object of ambition and power.[3]

On the personal level apart from the object of ambition, and power, Indira Gandhi had special interest and belief in India's diversified culture. her love for the peasant, the artisan, the weaver, her contact with the creative and sensitive elements in the country gave her strength.[4]

After Indira Gandhi's brutally assassination on 31 October, 1984, her son, Rajiv Gandhi, became the prime minister who had inherited the modest trait of Nehru and realistic approach of his

[3] Surjit Mansingh, *India's Search for Power*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1984), p. 21.
[4] Pupul Jayakar, op.cit., p. 475.

mother. Rajiv had plenty of charisma. Yet, in power he was accused of being arrogant, impervious, short-tempered with officials and politicians alike - traits which suggested insecurity.[5] On the cultural level, his leadership can be remembered to give modern image to India that is adaptative and more receptive.

### Domestic factors of the 1970's and the 1980's

At the level of linkage between domestic factors and foreign policy, India's most complex and persistent problems have involved the country's international relations, either explicitly or implicitly. Rosenau rightly says, "Domestic factors may be of considerable significance, even if they are not primary sources of foreign policy and on some issues they may be well dominant".[6]

In this context, in India, one of the most perplexing problems for the national leadership is the translations of national policies into contexts that relate to the parochial interests of the state and local leaders. The government and party officials have to justify the policies to a very alert and sensitive electorate. In abnormal conditions when in any international crisis India's security or regional interests are involved, foreign policy assumes greater importance in domestic

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[5] Nicholas Nugent, *Rajiv Gandhi: Son of a Dynasty*, (London: BBC Books, 1990), p. 212.
[6] James N Rosenau, (ed)., *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy*, (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 3.

politics. On the other hand, any internal crisis influences the direction of foreign policy because "internal crisis is a situation which gives rise to some 'load', 'strain' or pressure which threatens or actually disturbs the system - equilibrium".[7]

It is pertinent here, to take a brief account of the 1970's domestic conditions which had bearing on India's foreign policy and cultural diplomacy of the 1980's to a large extent. On December 16, 1971 India got a major success in the form of emancipation of Bangladesh as an independent country. though India tried to resolve the differences with Pakistan peacefully in the starting point of crisis and, after the victory in the form of Shimla agreement in June, 1972, the other countries especially Western countries and China observed this total event with suspicion. Because the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation was signed on August 9, 1971 followed by the start of India's decisive stand.

On the other hand, within the country all sections of people gave overwhelming support to the government of Mrs. Gandhi. Even the opposition leaders talked of "one nation, one forum, one leader".[8] But this validity to the leadership actions gave extreme setback to the

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[7] Nalini Kant Jha, *Internal Crisis and Mrs. Gandhi's Foreign Policy*, (Patna: Janaki Prakashan, 1985), p. 3.

[8] G.P. Ojha, *Mrs. Gandhi's Foreign Policy Choice*, (Meerut Cantt.: Mrinal Books, 1982), p. 43.

democratic norm of India when a state of emergency throughout the country was declared on 25 June 1975.

Thee is no justification for the dreaded Emergency rule and many of the abominable things practiced in its name by officialdom. Though the emergency was imposed in circumstances of extreme political upheaval and retard economic conditions[9], it was certainly against the peaceful and matured cultural ethos of India as nurtured during the freedom struggle. This crisis of democracy got wider reactions in the country and in abroad. A keen U.S. scholar of the Indian scene N.D. Palmer wrote: "The crisis was in many ways the country's most serious for never before had there been the questioning of the political system itself".[10]

The Americans and the Britishers were the forerunners among the foreign critics of the Emergency. In addition to these events which certainly produced the imperatives to the leadership for damage control measures, the Janata government which assumed office in March 1977 did not achieve so much success that it could establish the traditional vibrant image of India due to the short term and the continuing political instability. Janata government pledged itself to a

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[9] Growth rate of per capita income was recorded as 2.8% in 1974 and 1.3% in 1975 as against the 1971's electoral promise of 'Garibi Hatao'.
[10] Norman D Palmer, "The Crisis of Democracy in India", Orbis, Vol. XIX, No. 2, Summer 1975, p. 390.

foreign policy based on national consensus within the parameters of genuine non-alignment. The foreign policy did not get rid of the controversy of measure of continuity and deviations. The Indian External Affairs Minister's visit to the People's Republic of China in February 1979 was appreciated, while in the overall context the response of neighbours to India's policy of beneficial bilateralism and good-neighbourliness was not so much encouraging.

The projection of long traditional culture of India with unity in diversity abroad become an inevitable task for the Government of India in the 1980's . The Emergency rule for two years and political instability in the 1970's had already raised many questions about India's capability to resolve its internal problems with consensus. In the whole decade of the 1980's, internal crises had taken a new face as threat to country's unity and integrity on the level of society, culture and religion.

Politically, stability came with the Congress party victory in general election and Mrs. Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister on 14 January, 1980. But the problems in Assam, Kashmir and especially in Punjab made this whole decade as crisis-ridden. The influx of Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam precipitated a crisis there where the Government of India was alleged to be politically motivated to resolve the problem. The action of erecting barbed wire fencing on

Indo-Bangladesh border to check infiltration of the refugees caused a sharp bitterness in the Indo-Bangladesh relations.[11]

The Naga and Mizo rebels in North-east, the centre-state tension caused by overthrowal of Farooque Abdulla's government in Jammu and Kashmir and N.T. Rama Rao's government in Andhra Pradesh, and separatist sentiment voiced in Tamil Nadu under the pretext of central government's alleged inaction in saving the Tamils in Sri Lanka had all raised a question mark over India's federal democratic politics based on socio-cultural diversity and ideological plurality. But more damage to the cultural image of India came from the situation prevalent in Punjab throughout the decade of 1980. Mrs. Indira Gandhi took this problem with her personality characteristic "to tackle a problem at the practical level and to meet exigencies of a situation as they presented themselves".[12] When by April 1984 Sikh extremists fortified some Sikh temples and especially Golden Temple, the central government acted decisively and, after two days of intense military activity the Indian army took control of the Golden Temple on 7 June, 1984. The assault on the Golden Temple was widely regarded as a deliberate attempt to humiliate the Sikhs.[13]

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[11] Nalini Kant Jha, op.cit., p. 140.
[12] Uma Vasudev, *Indira Gandhi: Revolution in Restraint*, (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1974), p. 282.
[13] Rajiv A Kapur, "Khalistan: India's Punjab Problem", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 10, October, 1987, p. 1217.

On 31 October, 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards. This was followed by the outbreak of anti-Sikh riots in several parts of country. Thus, in the whole context, the legitimacy of Indian political system was questioned by not any one particular community but by fairly a large number of common people of different countries. Therefore, in this situation, it became imperative for projecting the brighter side of Indian culture with the pretext of claiming these problems as temporary and very local in the vast country.

### External factors of the 1980's

At the level of external factors, the erosion of détente, revival of the Cold war atmosphere and intensification of great power rivalry influenced the international relations. In many respects, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was the catalyst to the demise of détente. The United States' countermoves included enunciation of the Carter Doctrine, declaring US willingness to use military force to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf, an effort to organise a worldwide boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, and suspension of US grain exports to the Soviet Union and other trade restrictions. Not surprisingly, hostility again dominated superpower relations.[14]

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[14]Charles W Kegley, and Eugene R Wittkopt, *World Politics*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 101.

India's commitment to non-alignment had been given a new currency when American renewal of emphasis on alliance was accompanied by search for new allies and friends. Non-alignment, in theory, is supposed to prove advantageous in two ways. It should secure against the danger of getting involved in superpower politics. And it should give third-world countries plenty of scope for manoeuvere, so they could attract maximum economic benefits from both the eastern and western blocs.[15] But at the very practical level, sometimes this policy proved difficult to follow by non-aligned countries. After the Indo-Soviet Treaty in 1971, India's credentials for being an exponent of non-alignment was questioned in the West and even in some third-world countries.

When in the 1980's, the cold war got a new momentum, it became essential for India to prove its commitment to the non-alignment movement. For economic and technological help also, India could no longer be dependent upon one block. Against the backdrop of these situations, India hosted the seventh Non-Aligned Summit in March 1983.

Non-alignment policy is the part of India's broader culture, so by the extensive course of cultural diplomacy it was easy for India to

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[15] Deepak Tripathi, "India's Foreign Policy: The Rajiv Factor", World Today, Vol. 44, No. 7, July 1988, p. 112.

prove its ideological attachment with non-alignment policy. India gave much more emphasis on cultural diplomacy to make the better political and economic relationships with the West in the first half of the 1980's. The lacunae in India's economic and technological development could best be filled from the West.[16]

In the 1980's though India got rid of food shortage, its goal of self-reliance in economic and technological development was facing difficulties due to the balance of payment crisis. In this context, India started to give importance to private sector, infrastructure development and export growth. Therefore, it was essential to develop a better economic relationship with the West for acquiring technological goods and capitals, and with third-world countries for the growth of export.

Cultural diplomacy in the 1980's helped to make political and economic relationships with both the eastern and western block through the presentation of India's cultural heritage and values abroad. In this process, it mitigated the bad effects of internal crises on India's relationships with other countries. Since India's internal crises were mostly of sectarian, linguistic, religious and communal nature, only through cultural diplomacy could the effects of these crises be reduced. When both the western and eastern blocs were

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[16] Surjit Mansingh, op.cit., p. 71.

claiming their superiority on the cultural levels also, and Chinese and Japanese diplomacy were getting the fruits of successful projection of their countries images in the world, Indian cultural diplomacy tried effectively to assert India's broad cultural image in abroad to prove commitment to the basis principles of foreign policy. Thus, it is, here, pertinent to review the workings of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's.

## WORKINGS OF INDIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 1980'S

The culture of a nation is closely related to the scientific, technological and creative capacity of its peoples and even politics. As being the representative of all values and capacities, the vigour and vibrance of the culture of a nation manifest in external or outward economic and political activities. In this sense economic and political activities are also largely shaped by the culture of a nation. But more explicitly, when in external affairs a nation faces some challenges which source of origin may be either the domestic conditions or external situations, the presentation of country's views at non-governmental level and exhibitions of art, history and economic development help in overcoming the challenges. In the positive sense, if a country needs to establish and strengthen the political and economic relationships with other countries, all sorts of cultural activities at governmental or non-governmental levels make

conducive environment for this by the enhancement of mutual understanding level. From both points of view, it is important to analyse Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's as during this period it became a significant tool of India's foreign policy.

## Institutional settings in the 1980's

Indian cultural diplomacy with the establishment of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) in 1950 reached at its zenith in the 1980's while it flourished structurally in the 1970's with gradual development during the 1950's and the 1960's. The working of Indian cultural diplomacy can be analysed mainly through the activities performed by the ICCR along with the other organisations and within the broader policy framework of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The ICCR, with its cultural centres in Suva (Fiji), Georgetown (Guyana), Jakarta (Indonesia), Port Louis (Mauritius), Moscow (USSR) and Paramaribo (Suriname) and Regional offices within India at Bombay, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Calcutta, Lucknow, Madras and Trivandrum, has good coordination with other organisations or institutions like various universities of India and abroad, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, National Centre for Performing Arts, National School of Drama and Natya Shodh Sansthan, Lalit Kala Academy and All India Radio and Television centres in matters of archives. The institutions or organisations which cooperate with the

ICCR include Saraswati Mahal, Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Asiatic Society, National and State Museums, National and State art galleries, etc.

The cultural centres abroad maintain libraries and reading rooms, organise lectures, symposia, exhibitions, essay competitions, performances of dance and music, staging of plays, screening of films and publication of news bulletins. The centres are expected to develop and maintain contacts with a wide cross section of local citizens including students teachers, scholars and cultural personalities.[17]

**Personalities of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's**

As far as the personalities associated with the cultural diplomacy are concerned in the 1980's the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, her close friend, Pupul Jayakar who was the Advisor to Prime Minister on cultural heritage and vice-president of the ICCR for a long period and later on Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, were the key policy-makers of cultural diplomacy. The heads of the foreign missions and cultural centres in abroad had the main responsibilities to implement the policies of cultural diplomacy. Personalities like Pandit Ravi Shankar, Dr. L.N. Subramaniam, Shrimati Kumudini lakhia, Zubin

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[17] Annual Report, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, 1989-90, p. 95.

Mehta, Sonal Mansingh, M.F. Hussain, Kanaka Srinivasan, Shobha Naidu, Mani Krishnaswamy and others were associated with Indian cultural activities in the presentation of Indian music, painting, dance and theatre.

As part of the cultural projection effort abroad, the ICCR sent visitors to various countries in the 1980's under cultural exchange programmes for participation in international conferences and for creative interaction by Indian dancers, artistes, critics eminent writers and academicians. Under this programme, the ICCR sent more than 300 Indian visitors from 1981 to 1989. The performing delegations for the presentation of Indian music, dance, painting, etc. more sent by the ICCR. These performing delegations were almost 400 in the 1980's.[18] sometimes, these delegations included magic troupe like in 1985 one magic troupe was sent to USSR under P.C. Sarkar.[19] In the same year Shri Shiv Shankar then Minister of Commerce headed a VIP delegation to visit China.[20]

For promoting studies in Indology, Indian language and allied subjects in foreign universities, the council deputes visiting professors in abroad. The number of such visiting professors reached 16 in 1989 in universities of China, Indonesia, Thailand, Republic of Korea, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname.

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[18] See Annual Report, MEA, from 1981-82 to 1989-90.
[19] Annual Report, MEA, Government of India, 1985-86, p. 69.
[20] Ibid, p. 69.

## Tools of Indian cultural diplomacy in the 1980's

In the electronic age, the packaging and exporting the content of cultural diplomacy are vitally important. In this age, the electronic cultural materials and electronic media are supplementing the existing oral and written media. These electronic materials are:

- "Audio cassette (to include all the sound material of music, chanting, speech, etc.);

- video cassette (to include sound, animation, moving images of performance, ceremony, fairs, festivals etc.);

- film (to include cinematic material);

- CD-ROM (to include text, data, audio, video animation, etc. in digitised form, eminently easy to transport and retrieve);

- Multi-media (to include computer-controlled interactive manipulation and navigation of text, data, audio, video, animation, etc. as a superb tool for education, entertainment, information and knowledge)"[21]

The "Audio-visual Reference Section" in the ICCR was established in 1987.[22] One of the major activities of this section is the video documentary films and special recording of eminent performing

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[21] Lalit Mansingh, (ed.), *Indian Foreign Policy: Agenda for the 21st Century*, (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1997), p. 413.

[22] Annual Report, Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), 1987-88, New Delhi, p. 7.

artistes.[23] These films and recorded performances were meant for foreign audiences. In 1989, a special effort was made to improve the Audio-visual section. In the period under review there is no evidence of using good scientific networking system with internet which offers exciting possibilities to cross all barriers of nation or region for the use of cultural scholars, experts, students and career diplomats.

## Presentation and Exhibitions

As part of cultural diplomacy, the presentation and exhibitions of art objects were used effectively in the 1980's. Under the presentation programme, books, art objects, arte-facts, musical instruments, handicrafts and audio-cassettes were sent to Indian Missions abroad for presentation to universities, institutions and cultural organisations of various countries. The art objects included Indian masks, puppets, dolls and charkha. Indian exhibitions of cultural or art objects were also performed during the period in many countries. These exhibitions included arts and crafts; contemporary art, textiles, masks, musical instruments, cartoons, Madhubani paintings, etc. In 1985, for instance, the following important exhibitions were mounted or sponsored in part by the ICCR:[24]

Exhibition of Graphic Art

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[23] Annual Report, ICCR, 1988-89, New Delhi, p. 44.
[24] Annual Report, MEA, Government of India, 1985-86, p. 69.

Exhibition of contemporary Indian paintings, handicrafts and ceramics

Exhibition of contemporary Indian art (cholamandal) Madras.

Exhibition of Indian pottery.

Exhibition of handicrafts and graphics.

Exhibition of water colours and pastels

Exhibition of graphics (to coincide with the performance of Gulbenkien orchestra).

Sometimes, the Indian exhibitions programmes were performed in the international festivals like under the outgoing exhibition programme, the council participated in the First International Council Biennale held in Algeria in July-August 1987 and the first Art Biennale of Pakistan in January-February, 1988. [25] The ICCR also organized exhibitions at home and received exhibitions from abroad. In 1987 the Sections of Contemporary Arts and Traditional Arts and Crafts were established in the ICCR.[26]

**Festivals of India**

In the period of 1980's, India started the festivals of India as a part of cultural diplomacy to attract the attention of peoples of foreign countries and for making the cultural relations. The Prime Minister office and the MEA were directly involved in the tasks of these

[25] Annual Report, ICCR, 1987-88, p. 21.
[26] Ibid, p. 7.

festivals. But the responsibility of preparation was given to the ICCR. The first festival of India was held in the UK, launched in April 1982 by Indira Gandhi and Margaret Thatcher. The festival in UK was the brainchild of Pupul Jayakar. It set the pattern and took place on massive scale because she was able to leverage advantage from her close relationship with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.[27] This festival translated into a series of exhibitions of ancient and contemporary artifacts for one year duration.

In 1985 the festivals of India were started in the USA and France. In close association with the Asian Art Museum, the Festival of India got a great success in San Franscisco, USA. Pt. Ravi Shankar from India was sponsored to perform at the inaugural concert of the festival.[28] In response to the festival of India in France held in 1985-86, the festival of France in India was inaugurated in February 1989.[29]

During 1987-88 the ICCR was entrusted by the Government of India with the performing arts programmes of three major festivals in USSR, Sweden and Mauritius in addition to a major cultural manifestation in Switzerland. The festival of India in USSR was inaugurated on 3rd July, 1987, by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi,

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[27] K.S. Rana, *Inside Diplomacy*, (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2000), p. 161.
[28] Annual Report, MEA, Government of India, 1985-86, p. 70.
[29] Annual Report, ICCR, 1988-89, p. 8.

and the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Mikkail Gorbachev. Some 200 performing artistes toured and performed in 110 cities of the USSR.[30] The Soviet festival in India was also held in the same period, and ended on 19 November, 1988 in New Delhi. In the same year, the Festival of India was inaugurated in Tokyo (Japan) where on April 15, 1988 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi pronounced in his opening remarks, "development is not a matter merely of higher production, but the refinement and harmonization of the human spirit. That is why we attach the highest importance to the conservation of our cultural and spiritual traditions".[31] The main purpose of these festivals was to bring people close together, and to spread understanding.

## Target countries in the 1980's

During the period under review, the 'target countries' for Indian cultural diplomacy were both the developing and developed countries. Apart from the Indian participation in international festivals like in International Ocean Festival, Mauritius in 1987, India on the one hand, presented its cultural heritage through the many exhibitions and the start of festivals in developed countries, and on the other, it continued to send the cultural troupes to developing countries.

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[30] Annual Report, ICCR, 1987-88, p. 15.
[31] Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Statements on Foreign Policy, April-June 1998, External Publicity Division, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, p. 2.

Earlier India made first conscious framework of cultural relations with west Asia and southeast Asia. In scientific cultural and technological terms, west Asian countries have had a post-colonial orientation towards Europe and North America, but in ethnic, philosophical, religious and artistic terms a revival has taken place in developing relations with India. As far as southeast Asia and East Asia are concerned, the influence generated by three major religious and cultural movements from India, namely, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, is apparent in the region. The first two originated in India and historically India was an interim take-off point for Islam to southeast Asia.[32]

In the course of time, India, in addition to being responsive to West Asia and Southeast Asia, tried successfully to foster cultural relations with North America, East and West Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia. In the 1980's, India continued to focus on cultural relations with countries like Fiji, Mauritius, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Suriname where large migrant population of Indian origin deeply interested in retaining their cultural and ethnic linkages with India. In 1987, the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre designed by Satish Gujral was set up at Port Louis in Mauritius.[33] India also tried to

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[32] Niranjan M Khilnani, *Realities of Indian Foreign Policy*, (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1984), pp. 99-100.
[33] Annual Report, ICCR, 1987-88, p. 7.

strengthen the cultural relationships with neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka to overcome the periodical controversies. The ICCR's special section on Africa, the Indian Centre for Africa and various Indo-African Friendship Societies and Associations were actively engaged in developing the cultural relationships with African countries.

In the earlier period of the 1980's, Indian cultural diplomacy was concentrated towards the cultural relationships with developed countries like USA, USSR, UK, France, Germany and Switzerland. But after 1986-87, it moved more towards developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In 1988-89, like the centre for Africa two other centres viz., the centre for Latin America and the centre for South and South-East Asia have also started functioning under the aegies of the council. More intensive cultural exchange have taken place with these regions during the year than in any period in the past.[34] In the same period, the ICCR sent cultural troupes to participate in several well-known international festivals in developing countries, such as the Limmassol Festival in Cyprus, the Cervantino Festival in Mexico, the Spring Arts Festival in Pyongyong (North Korea) and the International Babylon Festival in Iraq.[35]

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[34] Annual Report, MEA, Government of India, 1988-89, p. 82.
[35] Annual Report, ICCR, 1988-89, p. 8.

According to the ICCR's annual report of 1987-88, the shift of the council's focus from the advanced western countries to the developing countries is reflected in the following statement:[36]

|  | 1985-86 | 1986-87 | 1987-88 | 1988-89 (projected) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Outgoing | Visitors |  |
| To the USA, East and West Europe | 91 | 60 | 10 | 48 |
| To the Asia, Africa & Latin America | 23 | 19 | 23 | 43 |
| **Outgoing cultural troupes** |  |  |  |  |
| To the USA, East & West Europe | 44 | 19 | 18 | 34 |
| To the Asia, Africa & Latin America | 19 | 18 | 55 | 31 |

It can be further substantiated by the facts that of the 62 incoming visitors received by the ICCR made the distinguished visitors' programme, close to 65% were from Asia, Africa and Latin America in 1989. Similarly, of the 83 performing delegations sent abroad in 1989, about 20% were sent to neighbouring countries and almost 25% to countries of west Asia and Africa. Overall about 60% of the council's outgoing performing delegations visited developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.[37] Thus, during the period under study on the one hand, India retained its cultural relations with

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[36] Annual Report, ICCR, 1987-88, p. 7.
[37] Annual Report, ICCR, 1989-90, p.7.

those countries which were historically or culturally related for the long time. On the other hand, Indian cultural diplomacy expanded its horizon in those countries with which India needed to strengthen the political and economic relationships in the wider framework.

## RESULTS OF THE INDIAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE 1980'S

The working of Indian cultural diplomacy resulted into the better political and economic ties with foreign countries. Sometimes, through cultural activities India expressed its sympathies to the developing countries for liberty, freedom and equality. For instance, the ICCR in collaboration with Latin American Missions in India organised an exhibition on "Latin American Liberators" in Delhi from 11 to 16 December, 1981.[38] Similarly, India played an important role in raising the voice for ending apartheid and racial discrimination in South Africa not only on the political level but also on the cultural level.

The long cultural relations with African countries and the continuous of Indian cultural diplomatic activities in the 1980s helped in the economic benefit in favour of India. Africa became the good market for supplying railway equipment, machinery for power generating equipment and machine tools. A large number of people from India in Africa also contributed in the process of India's political, economic and cultural relations with this region. In the mid-half of the

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[38] "Cultural News from India", Vol. XXII, No. 1, *ICCR*, New Delhi, 1981, p. 86.

1980's, India has 44 joint ventures in Africa of which the largest number of 22 are in Nigeria, 12 in Kenya, 4 in Mauritius and one each in Botswana, Liberia, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.[39]

In the case of Latin American countries, India, chairing the non-aligned movement, had a special interest in the success of the democratic experiments, in this region and especially in Argentina. All cultural engagement alongwith the political diplomacy resulted in India's good economic relationships with Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela. The President Giani Zail Singh's official visit to Latin American countries in 1984 increased the bilateral cooperation with the countries of this region.

The effective operation of cultural diplomacy changed the views of European countries to the some extent when because of problems in Punjab, Kashmir, north-east and of some communal tensions like Bivandi riot in Maharashtra in 1984, they viewed India as loose federal entity. The Indian cultural activities in Europe, like in 1982 festival of India in the UK, participation in the Vienna Dance festival, Commonwealth Arts Festival at Brisbane and the Edinburgh Festival in the UK, in 1983 an exhibition of Commonwealth Arts on the occasion of the Commonwealth heads of Government Meeting at New Delhi, in 1984 participation in the Festival of Himalayan Cultures in 22

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[39] P.G.Salvi, *India in World Affairs,* (Delhi: B.R. Publishing, 1985), p. 82.

cities of Europe, in 1985-86 the Festival of India in France, in 1986-87 the Festival of India in Sweden and Switzerland and others made favourable environment for India's foreign policy in Europe. These all resulted in the better political understanding and relationship between India and European community (EC). This understanding also provided an impetus to Indo-EC trade. The India Trade Centre of Brussels came into existence in 1979 with the partial assistance of European Economic Community (EEC) funds to promote trade in mainly four sectors viz. electronics, engineering goods, leather, jute and coir. A few agreement with EEC which replaced the old one signed in 1973, came into effect on January 1, 1982 for a period of five years. During the 1980's the political, economic and cultural links with countries of Europe and especially with the United Kingdom were strengthened.

Similarly, in the case of relationship with the USA, India was engaged in identifying the new area of mutual interest to both the countries in the realms of art, commerce, industry, agriculture and science and technology. The Indo-US Commission on Education and Culture including Joint Media sub-committee and the joint Museum Sub-committee worked effectively to make cultural relations strong between India and the US. The Festival of India held in the US in 1985-86 provided an opportunity for a larger number of Americans to get a glimpse of not only of India's culture and traditions, but also of

India's recent achievements in science and technology. Certainly, "the Festival of India in 1985-86 spurred an upturn in the curve of interest in things Indian in the US".[40]

The process of making more stronger relationship with the US that had begun with Indira Gandhi's second term in office was further expanded after Rajiv Gandhi and President Reagan signed an agreement on cooperation in high technology on 5 November, 1987. In 1987, India signed 212 joint venture agreements with American firms, this was the highest that year. The government of India approved new US equity investment of $22.7 million. It should be noted here that a large percentage of these agreements were only agreements for technical collaboration and did not involve any investment.[41] For a number of years in the eighties, the United States remained India's largest partner. From 1983 to 1989, India had a favourable balance of trade.[42]

All these economic relationships show the political desires on the part of leadership of both countries instead of having many irritants like the issue of Afghanistan, arms sale to Pakistan and Super 301 Provision. Right after the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's visit to the US in 1982, the leaders of both countries wished to reach

[40] Nathan Glazer, "Four Decades of Indian-American Cultural Exchange" in A. P. Rana, (ed.), Four Decades of Indo-US Relations, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), p. 103.
[41] A.P.Rana, (ed.), Four Decades of Indo-U.S Relations, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications, 1994), p. 269.
[42] Ibid, p. 271.

at the stage where the largest democracies of the world were prepared to focus not just on the problems of the day but on the identified cultural bounds and on the long term requirements of a productive relationship.

The Indian leadership in 1980's succeeded to get benefit from the long cultural relations with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the Peoples Republic of China and the countries of South-East Asia. in relation to the USSR, apart from the some ideological similarity and security concern, India have had strong cultural relation with the country. It can be seen even in the popularity of Hindi films of Raj Kapoor and Amitabh Bachchan in the USSR. This strong cultural understanding resulted in the famous Indo-Soviet Treat of 1971 and the Delhi Declaration signed by Rajiv Gandhi and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986.

With the effort of Indira Gandhi in the early 1980's India's trade with the USSR stood up rapidly. The volume of mutual trade stood in 1953, when the first trade agreement was signed, at Rs. 1.7 crore. In 1983, it has reached the figure of Rs. 3260 crore. This is an unprecedented growth rate never reached by world trade in general, nor by India's overall trade, in particular.[43] The Festival of Indian in USSR and Soviet Festival in India were held in 1987-88. By these festivals the two countries came more closely to understand each

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[43] P.G. Salvi, op.cit., p. 150.

other. In 1988, on the closing economy of Soviet Festival in India, President Gorbachev signed an agreement for avoidance of double taxation on income, joint exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes and the economic and technological cooperation in the power sector.

So far as the Indian cultural diplomacy in China is concerned, India, in the 1980's, did not have cultural exchange in a conscious framework like with other powerful countries. There were reciprocal but low key festivals between Indian and China in the 1980's. The historical cultural relations were added by the continued Indian cultural troupes visits to China in 1980's. These cultural relations at the governmental or non-government levels retained the mutual understanding between the both countries. It reflected in the path-breaking visit of Rajiv Gandhi to China in 1988. During the visit, the Indian concept of mutual interests and understanding were broadly acceptable to the Chinese. The two sides agreed to set up a joint border commission and a second joint committee was appointed to promote trade, cultural, technological cooperation.[44]

In relation to South East Asian countries, Indian cultural diplomacy was active in the 1980's under the framework of formal cultural agreements with many countries of this region. The Indian cultural diplomacy remained inspired by the conviction of possible

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[44] Verinder Grover, (ed..), *International Relations and Foreign Policy of India (Vol-1)*, (New Delhi: Deep & Deep Publications, 1992), p. 539.

economic benefits from the closer ties with the Association of South East Asian nations (ASEAN). In addition to this, Indian cultural diplomacy by the way of multifarious cultural activities contributed to make the political relationship with the neighbouring countries peaceful in the 1980's to the some extent.

Thus, during the period under study, Indian cultural diplomacy achieved new heights in its contribution to the political and economic relations. Its effective operation made the awareness in many countries about India's culture, tradition and development. It corrected the wrong opinion, and made the right opinion in countries where India had major political and economic interests. The workings of Indian cultural diplomacy brought about the good communication between the peoples of India and other countries that led to the coming closer of civilizations with the purpose of making peace and mutual development. The importance of the workings of Indian cultural diplomacy can be summed up with the statement of President of India Shri R. Venkatraman on the closing ceremony of Festival of India in USSR in 1988: "Meet together, talk together; May your minds be your action and achievement; common be your thoughts and intentions; common be the wishes of your hearts, so there may be thorough communion among you. . . The waters of the two great rivers symbolize the self renewing energy of our two civilizations".[45]

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[45] Annual Report, ICCR, 1987-88, p. 15.

# Chapter 4

# CONCLUSION

The aim of any foreign policy and diplomatic activities is to influence attitudes, beliefs and actions of external entities. For achieving of this aim, a foreign policy uses culture as an instrument beyond political level. Because, political relations do not touch a large number of people in the targeted countries, cultural diplomacy plays a significant role in achieving the goals of foreign policy through establishing cultural links. In this context, the role of culture in making and strengthening the foreign relations has been proved in this study.

Besides, it has been analysed broadly that culture influences the organisational and leadership behaviour in the process of formulating and implementing the foreign policy. All organisations and policy-makers, engaged in foreign policy, are the parts of larger domestic context. In this context, policies can be seen as products of socio-cultural conditions of the nation-state. At the operational level of foreign policy also, the cultural influences on the political system of external entity are considered deeply. By this way, cultural influences on the whole course of foreign policy have been established as facts.

In Indian context, the objectives and principles of foreign policy have been proved to be influenced by the cultural values of India. Through

idealism and realism debate, it has been observed that there is a balance between the both and cultural influences over them. Besides, the analysis of ends and means also indicates the preference of cultural values in India's foreign policy choice. Therefore, India is a classic country to examine the cultural influences on foreign policy.

Culture as an instrument of foreign policy performs through cultural diplomacy. The cultural diplomacy works with the task of creating curiosity and awareness of its own country in the outside world. In this task, higher education, the arts and sciences, and the broadcasting media all have a key part to play. Through many cultural activities and exchanges, the cultural diplomacy makes strong and durable foreign relations. It helps to foreign policy in achieving the multilateral cooperation. Because, the conducive environment, made by the cultural diplomacy in the targeted country, gives better opportunity for making the relations at all levels. It becomes easy for a country to make better political and economic relations on the ground made by cultural diplomacy. In this way, certainly, "cultural diplomacy enhances political and economic cooperation".

In the broader context of enhancing political and economic cooperation by cultural diplomacy the case-study of Indian cultural diplomacy indicates the profound understanding of its importance by Indian leadership in the 1980's. There is no doubt that in the 1980's Indian

cultural diplomacy was operated at a massive scale in comparison to the past. This greater emphasis was a result of Indian leadership thinking to overcome the difficulties at external level. These difficulties came in the wake of many internal complexities and recurrent crises of this period. Therefore, Indian cultural diplomacy was largely used as corrective measures in the 1980's.

In this period, many cultural activities were taken under Indian cultural diplomacy. Certainly, the cultural exchanges, presentation and manifestations were increased in number. More particularly, the festivals of India, started in this decade, made Indian cultural diplomacy more effective. Many academicians and cultural personalities were engaged. All activities helped effectively in building or rebuilding the better cultural image of India. Since cultural image is a fragile, intangible, easily distorted or shattered, and hard to rebuild, the Indian cultural diplomacy adopted all available means or tools to overcome the confusion of outside world about India's image in the 1980's. All measures were adopted to make strong foreign relations through the building of cultural image. Therefore, it can be maintained, "systematic measures were adopted by India to use culture as an effective instrument in the 1980's". The measures resulted in the better understanding of Indian views and concerns in the targeted countries. It truly enhanced the possibilities of stronger political and economic ties.

However, in India, it seems that people and policy-makers are not so aware about its importance. Indian cultural diplomacy has not been given the prime importance alongwith political and economic diplomacy. The Government of India never declared a structured long-term cultural policy for India's image making and foreign relations. In the 1980s, in regard of target countries for cultural diplomacy, India opted for the countries only with an aim of short-term gains. Indian cultural diplomacy was operated more in the developed countries when India needed their validity over internal situations and economic benefit from them. When this goal was fulfilled even partially, it turned towards developing countries. In fact, India does not have cohesive and continuous policy with a long-term perspective.

At the institutional level, there are many cultural organisations in India but only Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is engaged effectively. When some major cultural activities are held by India at international level, more and more cultural organisations are invited to participate. But on a regular basis there is less coordination and participation of these organisations. Though ICCR as an autonomous agency attached to Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), there is no separate administrative division for cultural diplomacy to achieve the coordinated effort. In the 1980's, especially during the Festivals of India in abroad, the lack of infrastructure was more visible. By and large, its reason lies in ill-organisation of bodies for cultural activities. The

implementation and sometimes, planning of all cultural activities in the 1980's were dependent upon few non-administrative and non-diplomatic persons, like Pupul Jayakar, who had close personal relations with political heads at the top level. In fact, activities under Indian cultural diplomacy were not institutionalized administratively but largely personalised politically. Moreover, India could not use electronic tools and modern means of communication effectively due to the lack of institutionalisation of whole cultural diplomatic process. Nevertheless, Indian cultural diplomacy achieved remarkable success if it is viewed under India's internal vast chasm between ideological moorings and recurrent complexities and external weak image. Overall, it can be concluded that there is a need to have the long-term policy for making Indian cultural diplomacy better and for taking the gains by integrating it effectively with the broader goals of India's foreign policy.

On the basis of identifying shortcomings in Indian cultural diplomacy some practical suggestions can be given. These are as follows:

1.  It is essential for successful Indian cultural diplomacy to integrate cultural activities into the broader goals of foreign policy.

2.  For this integrated task, a division in the MEA is desirable to make sure of coordinated work.

3.  The ICCR must be maintained as an autonomous institution in the real sense. Indian cultural diplomacy can become more effective if

the ICCR becomes an apex agency for many diverse cultural activities.

4.  There should be an administrative mechanism for all other cultural organisations to cooperate with the ICCR for cultural performance in abroad. The ICCR can be conferred special authority only for this purpose.

5.  The cultural centres abroad should be made more operative, and their activities need to be integrated more with Indian missions. In those countries where India's political and economic interests have become vital, cultural centres should be established.

6.  The Indian performing arts and good artistic Indian films should be encouraged equally in developing and developed countries to attract the attention of peoples beyond Indian Diaspora.

7.  Intellectual exchanges are useful for creating awareness about a country in the outside world. For this task, there should be a continuous policy, not merely based on the case by case project scheme, to allow some autonomous technical institutes and universities have their separate agreements with other countries' institutions in research work. The quantum of autonomy should be in a form of giving freedom to India's research institutions in choosing foreign institutions by their own for such type of

agreements. In the whole process, political consideration and interference must be discouraged.

8. In broadcasting and electronic media, India should upgrade its communication satellite to cover larger parts of the world. The Internet, TV, CD-ROM and Multi-Media should be used efficiently to disseminate information about India's culture, scientific achievements, economic policies and political concerns by the ICCR and MEA with a specific goal of image building.

9. International tourism in India should be more developed not only as a separate economic activity but also as a part of cultural image building process.

10. In the last, there is a need of appointing a committee consisted of academicians, cultural personalities and senior Indian Foreign Service cadres to examine the workings of Indian cultural diplomacy. Such a committee should recommend a broad long-term policy and a more coordinated or specific administrative arrangements for effective cultural diplomacy.

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