

***THE 72ND FOUNDATION DAY OF INDIAN COUNCIL FOR
CULTURAL RELATIONS***

***AN ARTICLE
ON***

***CULTURAL HORIZON OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY: A CURSORY GLANCE
ON FOUNDATION ICCR***

Written by:

Sayed Qudrat Hashimy

(ICCR Scholar)

***The author has dedicated this Article to ICCR and the Ministry of External
Affairs Government of India, New Delhi***



CULTURAL HORIZON OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY: A CURSORY GLANCE ON FOUNDATION DAY OF ICCR

*Sayed Qudrat Hashimy**

Abstract

The present article discusses the foundation of ICCR and its goals, as well as how Indian foreign policy has been intertwined with cultural diplomacy by ICCR through the years. The contribution of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) to a foreign student's achievement of his or her goals is significant. ICCR is more than just a financial support organization for educational purposes; it is a solid pillar for every foreigner pursuing their aspirations of achievement and illumination. Throughout student stay and education in India, each member of the ICCR family is dedicated to motivating, supporting, soothing, securing, and advising you. India's greatest achievement is that it has remained true to its own land's values and religious teachings throughout the years. The author tries to spotlight the reasons that have led to India's transformation into soft power. Finally, the article discusses the principles of Indian foreign policy that hold Indian engaged with the world tightly.

Keywords: *ICCR, Foundation Day, Indian Foreign Policy, Indian Culture*

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*** ICCR Scholar under SSSAN (Afghan National).**
Email: (sayedqudrathashimy@gmail.com)

ICCR FOUNDATION

While we commemorate the ICCR's founding anniversary, it's also a good time to recall its founder. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a key figure in the Indian independence movement. He was a brilliant scholar and poet as well. During his time as Minister, a variety of initiatives were established to boost primary and secondary education, scientific education, university establishment, and research and higher education opportunities. He founded several institutions, including the Sahitya Akademi,² the Sangeet Natak Akademi,³ the Lalit Kala Akademi,⁴ and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, as well as providing a major impetus for the establishment of higher education institutions, such as the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad received India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, in 1992 for his outstanding contribution to the country.⁵ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a prominent independence fighter and independent India's first Education Minister, established the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on April 9th, 1950.⁶ Its goals are:

- i. to actively participate in the formulation of strategies and training programs ;*
- ii. to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries;*
- iii. to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people; and*
- iv. to develop relationships with nations.*

Every state and culture are woven together by a complicated tapestry of individual values, conventions, and history, thus understanding their culture is to comprehend them. The world's largest beauty stems from its diversity of people, and cultural linkages provide the foundation of people-to-people relationships, establishing an ecosystem of long-term peace and harmony. By hosting countless cultural events across the world and exchanging artists and intellectuals through various scholarships and fellowships, the ICCR has played a significant role in connecting people and spreading Indian culture.

² ...: Welcome to Sahitya Akademi ::..., <https://sahitya-akademi.gov.in/> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

³ Sangeet Natak Akademi - India's national academy of music, dance and drama, <https://sangeetnatak.gov.in/> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

⁴ Lalit Kala Akademi, <https://lalitkala.gov.in/> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

⁵ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Biography Education, Quotes, Life History, <https://www.india-a2z.com/maulana-abul-kalam-azad.html> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

⁶ Press Release : 70th Foundation Day of ICCR, <https://eoi.gov.in/kabul/?10199?005> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

The Council pursues its cultural diplomacy role through a range of initiatives. In addition to organizing cultural festivals in India and overseas, ICCR conducts a wide range of cultural, academic, and intellectual activities in the realm of Indian culture, including Indian dance, music, yoga, languages, cuisines, various festivals, essay writing competitions, ethos, and customs, as well as contemporary concerns, through its Indian Cultural Centres. ICCR has spent decades effectively using its resources to promote an image of India that enhances India's inherent historical attractiveness while also bolstering cultural diplomacy and foreign policy. To foster mutual understanding and maintain peaceful relations the Constitution of India stipulates in Article 51.⁷ The State shall endeavor to —

- (a) Promote international peace and security;*
- (b) Maintain just and honorable relations between nations;*
- (c) Foster respect for international law and*
- (d) Encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.*

Major programs carried out under the auspices of the ICCR with the overarching goal of promoting a better knowledge of Indian culture within the global community may be generally classified as follows:

- I. Sponsoring visits of Indian cultural delegations abroad and holding India Festivals internationally;*
- II. Hosting foreign cultural troupes and international Cultural Festivals in India;*
- III. Art and Craft Exhibitions in India and abroad;*
- IV. Gifting Busts and Statues of India's Iconic Figures Oversea;*
- V. Promotion of Yoga and celebration of International Day of Yoga abroad;*
- VI. Conducting Annual Lecture Series (Deen Dayal Upadhaya Memorial Oration to mark the World Culture Day on May 21) and*
- VII. Promotion of Indian languages, particularly Hindi and Sanskrit, as well as Indian literature, overseas;*

Over time, the ICCR has positioned itself as the most visible face of India's global cultural involvement. One such edge is the Little Guru App, The Little Guru App, an online instructor of the old Indian language Sanskrit. Learning Sanskrit is unquestionably a gateway to

⁷ Constitution of India,
https://www.constitutionofindia.net/constitution_of_india/directive_principles_of_state_policy/articles/Article%2051 (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

understanding Indian culture and traditions.⁸ The app teaches many levels of Sanskrit, ranging from alphabets to speaking, reading, and writing text, allowing users to go from basic to advanced Sanskrit.

Sanskrit, while also an important modern language mentioned in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India,⁹ possesses classical literature that is greater in volume than that of Latin and Greek put together, containing vast treasures of mathematics, philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, storytelling, and more (known as Sanskrit Knowledge Systems¹⁰), written by people of various religions as well as non-religious people, and by people from all walks of life and a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds over thousands of years.¹⁰

Sanskrit exists indefinitely it has no beginning and no end. It will continue forever. It was initially employed in the Vedas and has since become a form of expression in a variety of professions. Valmiki created the Adikavya Ramayana in Sanskrit, with seven sections and 24000 couplets filled with the most powerful imagery, idioms, metaphors, wisdom, and dignity.¹¹ Maharshi Veda Vyas authored the Samhitas, Brahma Sutras, and eighteen Puranas in Sanskrit, including the famous epics Mahabhwatam (known as the encyclopedia of wisdom) and Mahabharata (known as the encyclopedia of knowledge).¹²

Kalidasa is widely regarded as the greatest Sanskrit poet, having written forty-one volumes including Meghaduta, Kumarasambhavam, Raghuvamsham, and the world-famous Abhijnanashakuntalam.¹³ Panini and Patanjali, Kalhana, and Sri Adi Shankaracharya are among the many names on the list. In truth, the contributions to the richness of Sanskrit literature did not originate from just one area or state in India; they came from throughout the country.¹⁴ Other classical languages in India, such as classical Tamil, Telugu, Kannada,

⁸ Little Guru: India launches first of its kind app that teaches Sanskrit, India News News | wionews.com, <https://www.wionews.com/india-news/little-guru-india-launches-first-of-its-kind-app-that-teaches-sanskrit-377089> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

⁹ Sanskrit|Legislative Department | Ministry of Law and Justice | GoI, <https://legislative.gov.in/coi-regional-language/sanskrit> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

¹⁰ VAIBHAV EDKE, NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP 2020) (2022).

¹¹ Many Ramayanas, Publishing.cdlib.org (2022), <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft3j49n8h7&chunk.id=d0e91&toc.id=d0e91&brand=ucpress> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

¹² Maharshi Vyas - A Chiranjeevi, HINDU JANAJAGRUTI SAMITI, <https://www.hindujagruti.org/articles/4.html> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

¹³ About Sanskrit, http://www.sanskrit.nic.in/about_sanskrit.php (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

¹⁴ Cultural Heritage Tourism of India.pdf, <http://anucde.info/Cultural%20Heritage%20Tourism%20of%20India.pdf> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

Malayalam, and Odia, have immensely rich literature. In addition to these classical languages, the works of literature written in Pali, Persian, and Prakrit must be preserved for posterity's enjoyment and education. As India develops, the next generation will wish to engage with and be enriched by the country's vast and exquisite classical literature.

The Constitutional provisions relating to the Eighth Schedule occur in articles 344(1) and 351 of the Constitution. The official languages of India are listed in the Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. Even though there are hundreds of languages spoken throughout the country, the eighth schedule recognizes just 22 as official languages. While 14 of these languages were initially listed in the constitution, the remaining languages were added through subsequent changes.¹⁵

Today, you can see an Indian relationship in any region of the earth. I ascribe it to the following factors:

1.0 SOFT POWER¹⁶

The term "Soft power" was first coined by Nye in 1990 in his book "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power" and since then its significance of this concept has increased dramatically and many scholars of international politics have been taking a keen interest in it. According to Nye, a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries admire its values, emulate its example, aspire to its level of prosperity and openness, and want to follow it. In this sense, it is imperative to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and only to force them to change by threatening military force or economic sanctions. This soft power - getting others to want the outcomes that you want - co-opts people rather than coercing them. Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preference of others.¹⁷

The evolution of the concept of soft power in international politics has remain implications for developing countries in general and India in particular. It has a direct effect on India's foreign policy choices and alternatives. It means acknowledging that India's claims to a significant leadership role in the world of the twenty-first century relate to aspects and products of Indian Society and Culture that the world finds attractive. These assets may not directly persuade

¹⁵ EighthSchedule_19052017.pdf, https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/EighthSchedule_19052017.pdf (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

¹⁶ Vijay Chauhan, *SOFT POWER: A FOREIGN POLICY CHOICE FOR INDIA*, 9.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 4.

others to support India, but they go a long way towards enhancing India's intangible standing in the world's eye. In terms of soft power, India's position is significantly high in some areas while it has considerable potential in others. India could always count itself among the few nations with strong cards in the arena of soft power", asserting that India's biggest "instrument" of soft power was its diaspora. Indian diaspora is certainly an asset. Beyond its cultural and civilizational riches, its vibrant (if at times chaotic) democracy, its free media, its mostly independent judiciary, its dynamic civil society, and the impressive struggle for human rights since independence all make it attractive to people in much of the world where these characteristics of its national experience are known. In addition, India's largely nonviolent defeat of colonialism served as an important beacon for freedom movements and newly independent countries elsewhere in the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁸

1.1 Strength of Diversity

India, the fabled land of seers, sages, spiritual leaders, and healers has been a beacon of light for the West for centuries. It is known for its tremendous cultural power that has maintained a deep impact on the world for thousands of years. The richness of India's culture is manifest in myriad traditions, languages, faiths, and rituals that lend it both wealth and depth. Today, Indian spirituality is attracting people from all over the world. Every diverse culture in India and other parts of the world flourishes, Hence, ICCR's existence is a matter of pride and joy. ICCR is contributing immensely to strengthening the connection between India and other countries.

1.2 Vibrant Indian Diaspora¹⁹

The thriving Indian Diaspora is actively contributing to the promotion of Indian culture. India now has a diaspora of over 30 million people living in other countries. For instance, Nobel Laureates, Booker Prize winners, Emmy Awardees, eminent physicians, engineers, businessmen, IT specialists, artists, and spiritual leaders are all represented Indian culture. Wherever they go, the diaspora has produced successful businesspeople, well-loved educators, astronauts, celebrities in every field, and civic-minded citizens.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 14.

¹⁹ Indian diaspora largest in the world, 18 million living outside India in 2020, says UN, <https://theprint.in/india/indian-diaspora-largest-in-the-world-18-million-living-outside-india-in-2020-says-un/586624/> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

For Instance, India has 75% of the potential human resources being the nuts & bolts of the largest Research & Development melting pots in the world NASA & Google CEO, India Sathya Nadella, etc.

The Indian music and dance in Bollywood are not only practiced by Indians only now, it has traveled abroad. The countries like Turkey, Russia, and Gulf nations, have separate channels to telecast the Indian movies and Dramas, though in the dubbed format. Bollywood, the soft power of India has't only helped the Indian Diaspora stay connected to its culture, but the people of the host country have also developed their interest in the Indian culture. Some countries even celebrate the festivals of India like Diwali and Holi.

1.3 Yoga

Yoga is a way to learn and understand spiritual India. Also, yoga is associated with the culture and heritage of India. In Sanskrit, yoga means to unite' and describes a way to live a healthy life. Many people from India and foreigners are resorting to yoga and meditation to de-stress and rejuvenate their minds. Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover a sense of oneness with yourself, the world, and nature. Yoga and Ayurveda have become the symbols of India outside India. India is a nation of unity in diversity.

1.4 The doctrine of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has become a catch-all notion for India's diplomatic orthodoxy to be deployed in numerous scenarios.²⁰ Although it might be open to myriad interpretations, it has been used to broadly convey India's ideal and liberal concept of global norms, themes of globalization, or global commons. In doing so, it suggests that this is an ideal world worth achieving and it can be created through negotiations alone. India is taking effective steps to spread this concept of Unity through Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Narendra Modi, Indian leaders have often evoked the phrase Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family), taken from the Maha Upanishad, to elucidate the country's global outlook. While the term has become a mantra of India's diplomatic lexicon.

²⁰ NARENDRA MODI, *We believe in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. Entire World is our family!*, (2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIKikrSkVMQ> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

1.5 Non-violence

One of the most famous leaders of a non-violent movement was Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948), who opposed British imperial rule in India during the 20th century.²¹ Gandhi took the religious principle of ahimsa (not harm) common to Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism and turned it into a non-violent tool for mass action. He used it to fight not an only colonial rule but social evils such as racial discrimination and untouchability as well. Gandhi called it "satyagraha" which means 'truth force.' In this doctrine non-violent conflict aimed was to convert the opponent; win over his mind and his heart and persuade him to your point of view. Gandhi was firm that satyagraha was not a weapon of the weak - "Satyagraha is a weapon of the strong; it admits of no violence under any circumstance whatever, and it always insists upon truth." Among the techniques of non-violent protest are Peaceful demonstrations, sit-ins, picketing, holding vigils, fasting and hunger strikes, strike blockades, and civil disobedience. According to M.K Gandhi nonviolence is a power that can be wielded equally by all - children, young men, and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts. Non-violence is an active force of the highest order. It is soul force or the power of Godhead within us. In 3000 years of Indian history, people from all different parts of the world have come and invaded India, Yet India has not done this to any other nation. Why? Because Indians respect others' freedom.

2.0 FOREIGN POLICY

No doubt, India's foreign policy is at crossroads. National interest has been the governing principle of India's foreign policy even at the time, of Nehru who was inspired by the idea of world peace, toleration, and mutual respect among nations. From non-alignment to multi-alignment, India's primary quest has been the practice of strategic autonomy to protect and promote its national interests amid the world's stormy geopolitics. The foreign policy practice of India also reveals its two other objectives; Elimination of colonialism and racial discrimination and the Protection of the interests of people of Indian origin abroad. Today's India is materially more endowed and overtly more aspirational in the search for its rightful

²¹ International Day of Non-Violence | United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-violence-day> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

place in the international system.²² According to Appadurai and M. S. Rajan²³, there are three fundamental objectives of India's Foreign policy:

2.1 Territorial integrity and independence of foreign policy:

The territorial integrity and protection of national boundaries from foreign aggression is the core interest of a nation. India had gained hard-earned independence from foreign rule after a long time. Thus, it was natural for her to give due emphasis to the independence of foreign policy. India's effort to strengthen Afro-Asian solidarity endorsement of principles of non-interference, in the internal affairs of other nations, and finally the adoption of the policy of nonalignment should be seen in this light.

2.2 Promoting international peace and security:

India as a 'newly independent and developing country rightly realized that international peace and development are correlated. Her emphasis on disarmament and the policy of keeping away from military alliances is intended to promote global peace.

2.3 Economic development of India

Today, India has the fourth-largest army, the second-largest producer of rice and tea, and the largest producer of mica, jute, pulses, and milk. It is the fastest-growing economy in the world. It is estimated that by 2030, India will become the third-largest economy, with projected GDP of \$30 Trillion.

India boasts of having close to one lakh fifty-five thousand six hundred post offices across the country and this is by far the largest postal network in the world. Not to mention that India is the 19th largest exporter and the 10th largest importer in the world. The highlight in the recent past, India's first successful Mars Orbiter Mission - Mangalyaan, completed a 400-million km long journey to Mars, thereby becoming the first Asian country and fourth in the world to undertake a mission to the red planet.

3.0 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY

While keeping in view the fundamental objectives of India's foreign policy India have adopted and pursued certain principles to realize these objectives. Some of these principles are given

²² Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, <https://www.mea.gov.in/> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

²³ INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AND RELATIONS by Appadorai, A. & M.S. Rajan: Very Good Hardcover (1988) | Reiner Books, <https://www.abebooks.com/INDIAS-FOREIGN-POLICY-RELATIONS-Appadorai-M.S/875977957/bd> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

in Article 51 under the Directive Principles of Policy in the Constitution of India.²⁴ These principles are the promotion of international peace and security; friendly relations with other countries; respect for international law and international organizations like the UN; and finally the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The principles of India's foreign policy and its objectives are closely interlinked with each other. These principles have stood the test of time and are ingrained in international law and India's foreign policy practice. Some of these principles are discussed below.

3.1 Panchsheel²⁵

Indian Policymakers understood the linkage between peace and development and the survival of mankind. Given the destruction caused by two world wars, they realized that for the progress of a nation a durable world peace was needed. Without global peace, social and economic development is likely to be pushed to the background.

Thus, the founder of India's foreign policy, Nehru gave utmost importance to world peace in his policy planning. For him, India desired peaceful and friendly relations with all countries, particularly the big powers and the neighboring nations. While signing a peace agreement with China; he advocated adherence to five guiding principles known as Panchsheel. Panchsheel was signed on 28 April 1954 and since then it has become a guiding principle of India's bilateral relations with countries also. Panchsheel includes the following five principles of foreign policy:

- i. Mutual respect's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- ii. Non-aggression against each other.
- iii. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- iv. Equality and mutual benefit.
- v. Peaceful co-existence.

These principles of Panchsheel were later incorporated in the Bandung Declaration, signed in the Afro-Asian Conference held in 1955 in Indonesia. They are the core principles of Non-alignment and still guide the conduct of India's foreign policy.

²⁴ Indian constitution is the longest written constitution in the world which originally had 395 articles, divided into 22 parts and 8 schedules. At present, it contains 448 articles, with 12 schedules. The Constituent Assembly gathered for over 2 years, 11 months and 18 days before the final version of the Constitution was formed. And yes, it was all hand-written and it was on the 26th of January that marked the celebration of Independence in its true sense and the Constitution came into legal circulation at 10:18 AM on the 26th of January, 1950.

²⁵ Revitalising Panchsheel, <https://www.mea.gov.in/articles-in-indian-media.htm?dtl/15408/Revitalising+Panchsheel> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

3.2 Policy of Non-Alignment²⁶

Non-alignment is the most important feature of India's foreign policy. Its core element is to maintain independence in foreign affairs by not joining any military alliance formed by the USA and the Soviet Union, which emerged as an important aspect of cold war politics after the Second World War. Non-alignment should not be confused with neutrality or non-involvement in international affairs or isolationism.

It was a positive and dynamic concept. It postulates taking an independent stand on international issues according to the merits of each case but at the same time not committing to coming under the influence of any military bloc. Thus, keeping away from the military alliances and superpower blocs was a necessary condition for the independence of foreign policy. India's policy of nonalignment got many supporters in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America as it provided the opportunity for protecting their foreign policy independence amidst the cold war pressures and tensions.

India played a leader in popularizing and consolidating the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). India, under the leadership of Nehru, convened the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in 1947 to forge the idea of Asian solidarity.

Another Asian Relations Conference was convened by India in 1949 on the question of the independence of Indonesia as India stood firm -against the colonial rule in other countries. A larger Conference, known as the Bandung Conference of 29 countries of Asia and Africa was convened in Bandung (Indonesia) in 1955 to forge the Afro-Asian unit. The conference laid down ten fundamental principles of international relations, which included five principles of Panchsheel. The leaders pledged to work together for colonial liberation, peace, and cultural, economic, and political cooperation among developing countries.

3.3 The policy of Resisting Colonialism, Imperialism, Racism

India has been the victim of colonialism and racism and was as such opposed to these evils in any form. India considers colonialism and imperialism as a threat to international peace and security India was the first to bring the issue of Apartheid to the UN in 1946. India raised her voice for the independence of Indonesia and organized Asian Relations Conference for this purpose. Due to India's consistent efforts through NAM and other international forums, 14 African countries were liberated from the yoke of colonialism in 1964. India made sincere

²⁶ History and Evolution of Non-Aligned Movement, <https://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?20349/History+and+Evolution+of+NonAligned+Movement> (last visited Apr 9, 2022).

efforts to end the scourge of apartheid in South Africa. At India's initiative, NAM set up the Africa Fund (Action for Resisting Imperialism, Colonialism, and Apartheid) in 1986 to help the frontline states, which were victims of aggression of South Africa for supporting the cause of the fight against Apartheid. India made a generous contribution to this fund. The end of racialism in South Africa in 1990 was a great success for Indian policy.

3.4 Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes

One of the core elements of India's foreign policy is its unflinching faith in the political solution and peaceful settlement of international disputes. This principle has been included in the Constitution of India, under the Directive Principles of State Policy as well as in the Charter of the UN. India has played a leading role in the resolution of the Korean conflict and supported negotiated settlement of the Palestine issue, the Kashmir problem, border problems with neighboring countries, and other such disputes and problems. At present, India is in favor of the resolution of peaceful settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue, the problem of a democratic upsurge in the Middle East, and so on. India is always against foreign military intervention in resolving international problems. This principle continues to be the cornerstone of India's policy.

3.5 Support for UN, International Law, and Equal World Order

India has a deep respect for international law and/or the principles of sovereign equality of nations and non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations as espoused by the UN. India has supported the cause of disarmament pursued by the UN. In 1988, India proposed a very ambitious program of nuclear disarmament before the UN.

Though this proposal was not accepted by the other members of the UN, India stands committed to the cause of universal disarmament even today. India has played a key role in preserving world peace by helping in the decolonization process, and through active participation in UN peacekeeping activities. To make the composition of the Security Council more realistic and democratic, India has proposed and supported the reform of the Security Council and other UN agencies. India is one of the claimants to permanent membership of the Security Council.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In nutshell, ICCR intends to boost cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties between India and other nations by enhancing India's soft power worldwide via strengthening cultural

linkages and fostering mutual understanding. It serves as a link between Indian culture and the rest of the globe. It has taken several steps to promote India's rich civilizational traditions and cultural diversity in other countries. ICCR's cultural, academic, and intellectual exchanges and promotion of India's culture internationally encompass a wide range of outreach activities, including Indian art, history, oral traditions, dance, music, yoga, languages, food, festivals, and contemporary issues, through its 39 cultural centers abroad and 19 Regional Offices within India. India opted away from the power block politics, which was the defining feature of cold war international politics. India has promoted a soft power approach through a series of new initiatives framed around concepts of 'non-reciprocity', 'connectivity', and 'asymmetrical responsibilities', which indicate a willingness to use economic attractiveness to persuade its neighbors rather than coercive military capacities. Since 1980 it has resulted in a greater political investment in different regional institutions such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, the South Asian Economic Union, and BIMSTEC which were created to enhance cultural and commercial ties. Thus, India seeks a peaceful periphery and works for good neighborly relations in her extended neighborhood. India's foreign policy also recognizes that issues such as climate change, energy, and food security are crucial for India's transformation. Since these issues are global, they require global solutions.

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