

Influence of India's Cultural Diplomacy on The International Order

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Abstract- In the twenty-first century, cultural diplomacy has grown as an indispensable instrument of statecraft in transforming the way nations interact with one another beyond the conventional means of politics, economics, and the military. With increased globalization among nations, states have taken advantage of their cultural possessions-their language, the arts, education, heritage and values-in an endeavor to achieve long-term influence and modify international perceptions. The research analyzes how India's cultural diplomacy has been instrumental in shaping its role and influence in the international order. The study purports that India deploys its civilizational heritage, pluralistic ethos, and soft-power instruments in an effort to establish trust, mutual understanding, and long-term goodwill among nations. This cultural diplomacy, quite apart from traditional power politics, becomes a non-coercive yet powerful tool of projecting India's identity, values, and foreign policy priorities globally. Through cultural agreements, diaspora outreach, educational exchanges, media, art, and institutional efforts of bodies like the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, or ICCR, India nurtures deeper people-to-people contacts, advances cross-cultural understanding, and builds an international environment more amenable to its world-view. The research discusses the historical evolution of these instruments, their operation in the present day, and the impact on India's standing in the global order. The findings suggest that cultural diplomacy has played a meaningful role in shaping perceptions of India internationally, complemented its strategic and economic engagements, and contributed to a form of normative influence that strengthens India's soft-power in an increasingly interconnected world.

I. INTRODUCTION

During the last hundred years international relations have been greatly influenced by military capability, economic strength, and political negotiation. The twenty-first century, however, is witnessing an increasing shift to soft-power strategies, which are based on attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. Cultural diplomacy, the quintessential soft -

power tool, comprises the promotion of cultural values, educational exchange, artistic expression, language programs, sporting events, and shared heritage initiatives.

States have the potential to build trust, promote national identity, and influence international norms through these means. India's rise on the global stage is not solely defined by its economic growth or strategic alliances, but also by its rich civilizational heritage, pluralistic society, and soft-power assets. Cultural diplomacy — the projection of a country's culture, values, traditions, and identity — has emerged as a central pillar of India's foreign-policy toolkit. In a world marked by increasing interdependence and globalization, cultural diplomacy allows India to engage with other countries beyond traditional diplomatic and security paradigms. As articulated by Sahai, India's cultural diplomacy is rooted in the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — "the world is a family" —and underscores an inclusive vision of the global community. Through instruments such as cultural agreements, festivals, educational exchanges, diaspora engagement, and even media and arts, India seeks to project its "idea of India" globally. This research explores how such cultural diplomacy efforts shape India's influence in the international order, helping build trust, enhance mutual understanding, and foster long-term relationships that transcend narrow strategic interests. The study situates itself within broader debates about soft power, public diplomacy, and evolving forms of statecraft in the 21st century.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on India's cultural diplomacy: Celebrating Pluralism in a Globalised World-Paramjit Sahai's (2019) magisterial work-emphasizes its roots

in pluralism and the "idea of India," while distinguishing between the enterprise of cultural diplomacy and mere soft power or public diplomacy. Works such as Indian Foreign Policy and Cultural Values have furthermore explored the ways in which abiding cultural values shape India's foreign-policy decisions, from humanitarian intervention and nuclear policy to relations with Middle Eastern countries.

More recent works emphasize strategic pluralism and hybrid statecraft: that traditional cultural values and modern strategic thinking often blur in promoting foreign policy. Taken together, this body of literature underscores that culture is not peripheral but rather central to making sense of India's emerging role in the international order.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research will follow a qualitative, descriptive-analytical methodology. The data required for the study will draw from secondary sources, mainly academic books, scholarly articles, policy documents. The conceptual and historical foundation shall be found within key texts like Indian Cultural Diplomacy: Celebrating Pluralism in a Globalised World while literature on Indian foreign policy and cultural values shall serve to contextualize and analyze the interplay between culture and diplomacy. This might involve the use of some form of comparative case-study analysis, where, for example, a few countries or regions where Indian cultural diplomacy has been especially active (via diaspora, educational exchanges, cultural centers) are selected, and changes over time in diplomatic engagement, bilateral relations, or soft-power metrics are assessed. Attention would be paid to the role and influence of institutional actors—for instance, ICCR, ministries—and non-state actors such as diaspora and media in determining outcomes.

IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While interest in soft power has grown, there is inadequate scholarly understanding of how India's cultural diplomacy specifically influences the international order. A good deal of existing research conflates cultural diplomacy with public diplomacy,

or focuses only on propaganda and short-term messaging. Furthermore, as global power dynamics shift toward multipolarity, there is a pressing need to understand whether cultural diplomacy fosters cooperation, mitigates conflict, or reinforces geopolitical rivalries.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

India derives its soft power from various sources which include. The heritage of ancient Indian civilizations The system of governance that operates through democratic processes The different cultural traditions that exist within the country The country's religious beliefs and practices The nation's educational facilities The country's scientific discoveries and breakthroughs The nation's entertainment industry

The Indian communities that exist outside their home country India shows multiple religions together with different languages and ethnic groups and culinary traditions and artistic forms and various ways of life which create a socially diverse society that attracts international visitors. India shows itself to the world as a civilization that can bring different cultures together while still preserving its basic unity.

The democratic nature of the Indian political system also contributes to India's soft power. India represents the world largest democracy which shows its commitment to constitutionalism and electoral participation and freedom of expression and rule of law principles. These values strengthen India's credibility in global governance discussions.

India derives another important source of soft power through its spiritual traditions. The worldwide popularity of Yoga and meditation and Ayurveda and Indian philosophical traditions has reached extraordinary levels. The traditions show their connection to mental well-being and holistic health and inner peace and sustainable living practices. The growing worldwide acceptance of their culture brings increased cultural power to India.

The Indian film industry together with the Indian entertainment sector establishes a framework through

which people understand Indian culture. Bollywood movies together with Bollywood music and dance and digital media content reach viewers throughout Asia and Africa and the Middle East and Europe and the Americas. Foreign audiences develop a sense of familiarity with India through Indian cultural products which establish an emotional bond between them and the country.

Cultural diplomacy functions as an active process because its various pathways enable the transmission of cultural values, which create important global relationships. India establishes its unique cultural diplomacy method by combining ancient Indian traditions with present-day international ambitions.

The country's extensive past history, which includes its intellectual heritage and spiritual beliefs and artistic traditions and various social groups, serves as a valuable source of cultural assets.

The diplomatic value of these resources emerges only when people use specific methods to present their existence.

The chapter demonstrates its purpose through an examination of India's primary cultural diplomacy instruments. The instruments include yoga and Ayurveda and traditional knowledge systems and educational systems and cinema and media and diaspora networks and institutional mechanisms. The elements of this system work together to create India's international presence and diplomatic power. The elements form a complete system of cultural interaction because they work together to create positive connections between each other.

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The future of India's cultural diplomacy shows important possibilities because international relations undergo their current transformational process. The world will experience increasing cultural impacts which will shape international diplomatic ties and international public perceptions.

India gains major cultural strengths through its diverse population and historical heritage and democratic governance and its worldwide Indian diaspora. The resources of India can enhance its international power base when used through proper management.

Cultural outreach now receives new possibilities through technological advancements and digital communication systems. The combination of online education and digital media and virtual cultural events and social networking platforms allows India to expand its international presence.

India's rising economic and strategic importance creates advantageous opportunities for cultural diplomatic relations. The worldwide increase of interest in India results in enhanced recognition and significance of Indian cultural heritage.

India can enhance its global diplomatic presence through the combination of cultural diplomacy with sustainable development and climate action and wellness initiatives and educational programs and humanitarian collaboration. The traditional Indian

philosophies which promote environmental harmony and collective welfare and peaceful coexistence, maintain their relevance in addressing present-day worldwide issues.

India needs to keep funding educational exchange programs and cultural institutions and media outreach efforts and people-to-people diplomatic activities to increase its worldwide cultural impact. The country needs to maintain its soft power base through its pluralistic and inclusive values which serve as its fundamental principles.

Cultural diplomacy has become a fundamental tool which India uses to interact with modern international diplomatic relationships. The cultural assets of India provide the nation with strategic benefits because the world currently relies on attraction and legitimacy and public perception to determine power.

Through its cultural diplomacy India gains a better position in international governance because it helps create international goodwill and multilateral partnerships and develops shared human values and collective advancement. The program creates trust relationships between people from different regions while building international connections.

The challenges which India faces in maintaining its cultural diplomacy, face problems which stem from three different areas. The Indian government needs to resolve these issues because they threaten its ability to maintain its soft power reach.

Indian cultural diplomacy shows that culture functions as a crucial element which influences international relations together with world political dynamics and international partnerships and the development of global power structures. India will continue to use cultural diplomacy as a main part of its global activities and its international identity because the world moves toward a multipolar system with increased international connections.

The international system has experienced fundamental changes because of the ongoing power transition between countries. The international community still values military strength and

economic power, but these two elements no longer enable states to maintain their worldwide political dominance. The world has developed new methods of interaction through which people connect because of international trade and interdependent relationships and borderless networks. States use cultural diplomacy as their main diplomatic tool to show their national identity and core values and their global perspective.

India uses its ancient civilization, diverse cultural heritage, and multiple social traditions to develop cultural diplomacy into a weapon of power. The current international system has developed into a multipolar structure which creates changing alliances and brings about difficult worldwide problems. India's cultural diplomacy establishes a path for international relations because it helps countries develop better cooperation and trust and understanding of each other.

VI. CONCLUSION

The research on India's cultural diplomatic practices which developed through its preceding chapters shows how nonviolent diplomatic methods now play a crucial role in establishing international relations.

Cultural diplomacy builds its approach through attraction and persuasion and shared values whereas traditional methods work through military power and economic strength and strategic partnerships. Global relations have evolved because power now influences international relations through both political supremacy and recognition of national identity and international authentication.

The research presents its key findings about India through which it evaluates Indian cultural diplomacy operations in today's international relations system. From its civilizational heritage and diverse cultural expressions India has established itself as an important player globally. The study investigates cultural diplomacy's current limitations and potential evolution in the development of multiple global power centers.

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