

## Cultural Diplomacy and Soft Power as Tools of Indian Foreign Policy

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Culture has always acquired a unique and key position in the promotion of the national interests of a country. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is being rejuvenated into a more effective tool in foreign policy. Cultural diplomacy is considered as a long-term investment since it fosters mutual understanding and creates a positive image of a country. Soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion. A country's soft power rests on its resources of culture, political values, and foreign policies. Since Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, there has been an increased use of soft power in Indian foreign policy. India has extensively utilized its cultural heritage to project India as a secular and multicultural nation. India's historical monuments such as the Taj Mahal, Ajanta Caves and holy places, classical dance, and music, the Ayurvedic system, languages and traditions have attracted people and organizations from all parts of the world. Indian embassies organize various events such as International Yoga Day celebrations and the Holi festival to bring Indian culture closer to a large audience in different countries. One of the major recognitions of India's soft power was the UN's approval of 21 June as International Yoga Day. In recent times, Indian cinema including Bollywood, Kollywood and Tollywood has played a major role in the diffusion of Indian culture and languages worldwide. The popularity of ancient Indian schools of Yoga and Indian cuisine throughout the globe depicts how India has used soft power as an important instrument in its foreign policy. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), which was established in 1950, contributes to enhancing India's cultural diplomacy. This research focuses on how a country rich in diversity like India can use cultural diplomacy and soft power more effectively to achieve foreign policy goals. This research will predominantly utilise the qualitative methodology and data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources.

**Keywords:** *cultural diplomacy, soft power, foreign policy, culture, India*