

Culture as a Pillar of India's Foreign Policy towards China

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ABSTRACT

Cultural cooperation has the potential to bind people directly at grass-roots levels. And that is mainly because of its primeval nature. Likewise, India has also had a deep-rooted cultural linkage with China since the ancient era. And those cultural linkages have resulted in many diplomatic ties between both countries in the modern era, too. Despite many ruptures in diplomatic ties between India and China, the two countries have always considered maintaining cultural ties intact and following cultural relationships as a significant part of foreign policy. In the contemporary era of diplomatic relations, soft power elements have a vital role in building strong bilateral relationships. Culture is also one of the elements of soft power; hence, culture stands as significant in the India-China bilateral relationship. The paper seeks to explain different facets of the cultural relationship between India and China. In addition, it chronologically explored the different stages of cultural exchange between both countries. Mainly, this paper explains how culture stands as a significant diplomatic tool for India regarding its bilateral relationship with China. Besides, it elucidates how India applied the soft power elements of arts, medicine, yoga, and education in China in order to enhance cultural ties.

Key Words : Culture, India, China, Soft power, diplomacy, foreign policy

I. INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country of age-old civilization. China is a very close neighbour of India. They have established cultural and trade contacts since time immemorial. It can be seen that there are spiritual, cultural, and material linkages among the people across the border. Significantly, in ancient times, there were four routes that helped in the flourishing of both trade and culture. And they include the Maritime Silk Route (Silk Route), the Tibet-Nepal Route, the Silk Route (Central Asian Route), the Assam-Burma Route,

and the Yunnan Route (Southern Silk Route) (Deepak, 2010). These connectivity routes have also paved the way for the exchange of cultural contacts between both countries. Despite many fissures in bilateral relations, cultural cooperation remains a pivotal point in smoothing bilateral ties. This paper is a narration of how culture acts as a pillar in India's foreign policy towards China. Similarly, it explains that different dimensions of cultural cooperation exist in Indo-Sino relations.

The foreign policy of a country aims to establish friendly relations with other countries. Bojang stated in his article 'The Study of Foreign Policy in International Relations', that is why Joseph Frankel says, "Foreign policy consists of decisions and actions that involve to some appreciable extent relations between one state and others" (Bojang, 2018, p. 2). Foreign policy concentrates on attaining national interests through any possible means. Bojang stated in his article 'The Study of Foreign Policy in International Relations, according to Huge Gibson, "foreign policy is a well-rounded, comprehensive plan based on knowledge and experience for conducting the business of government with the rest of the world. It aims to promote and protect the interests of nations. "This calls for a clear understanding of what those interests are and how far we hope to go with the means at our disposal, and anything less than this falls short of being a foreign policy" (Bojang, 2018, p.2).

India's foreign policy has evolved over the years. Chanakya, the royal advisor of Maurya emperor Chandragupta, taught Indians through his Arthashastra the art of diplomacy, statecraft, and foreign policy (Jain, 2014). In the modern era, Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India and architect of India's foreign policy, defined his foreign policy as a peaceful, non-violent one. 'A Foreign Policy for India', an important essay written by Jawaharlal Nehru and published in September 1927, is an important source as far as the foreign policy of India is concerned.

Somarajan mentioned Nehru's view on foreign policy in his book 'Formulation and Practice of India's Foreign Policy: Contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru'. And in that book, it says that foreign policy is essential "to end the isolation in which India has lived for generations and for developing contacts with other parts of the world. Whether we wish or not, India cannot remain, now or hereafter, cut off from the rest of the world"(Somarajan,1993,p.4). In his foreign policy approach, Nehru gave a lot of importance to Asian countries and was likely to extend the hand of friendship to its Asian neighbours. Somarajan stated Nehru's opinion in his book 'Formulation and Practice of India's Foreign Policy: Contribution of Jawaharlal Nehru:"that in developing our foreign policy, we shall naturally cultivate friendly relations with countries of the East, which have so much in common with us. Nepal will be our neighbour and friend, and with China, Japan, Indonesia, Annam, and Central Asia, we shall have the closest contact. So also with Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, and Egypt" (Somarajan, 1993, p. 6).

India's cultural approach towards China

India's foreign policy approach towards China began in the 1950s. India opened diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China on April 1st, 1950, making it the first non-socialist bloc nation to do so (Ministry of External Affairs, 2012). India also recommended a permanent seat for China at the United Nations. This had led to many criticisms of Nehru. In 1950, the Chinese leader Mao Zedong sent his army to Tibet, which was a buffer between India and China. This act surprised Nehru. Later, Nehru recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet (Hall, 2019).

Cultural relations and people-to-people contacts played a major role in developing India-China relations. David Scott stated about Nye. Jr.'s views on soft power in his article 'Buddhism in Current China-India Diplomacy' that "soft power is an important tool of public diplomacy because it incorporates soft dimensions into their strategies for wielding power" (Scott, 2016, p. 144). Soft power instills an image of a country in the minds of people in other nations. Culture is one of the aspects of soft power. David Scott came out with Shashi Tharoor's opinion in his article 'Buddhism in Current China-India Diplomacy' that "increasingly countries are judged by the soft power elements they project [...] through the export of cultural products, the cultivation of foreign publics, or even international propaganda" (Scott, 2016, p. 144). Therefore, cultural tools such as the use of Buddhism as a religion, art, tradition, yoga, and the exchange of traditional Indian medicine will have a massive effect on Chinese perceptions

of India. This will lead to warm relations between India and China.

Evolution of India's cultural link ages towards China

Along with India, China is an ancient civilization, and both are close neighbours. Thus, there is a close association between them in both economic and spiritual terms. There is also connectivity between them through both land and sea. However, it is still unclear when the cultural contacts between India and China were initiated. It is widely accepted that cultural contacts started in the 4th century BCE. The ancient epics of Mahabharatha and Ramayana mentioned Cina (i.e., China) many times. Kautilya, who wrote Arthashastra in the 4th century, talks about Chinese silk. It shows the ancient India-China trade in silk. As per the ancient Indian and Chinese astronomical observations, the sky was divided into 28 constellations, which also demonstrates there was an exchange of knowledge in terms of astronomy. During ancient times, i.e., before the Christian era, Chinese rulers sent their envoys to India. Frequent contact helped China gain a better understanding of India. South-western China had road connectivity to India. Only private parties used that road's connectivity for trade purposes, and it was named Dian-Mian Road (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014).

In the 1st to 6th centuries CE, there was a close religious interconnection between India and China. During the 1st and 2nd centuries CE, the king of Kanchi sent people to China to bring rhinoceros to India. Like that, the King of Gandhara sent a white elephant to China, and the Kushan king offered lions to China. The introduction of Buddhism into China became a significant event in India-China cultural contacts. In 68 CE, two Indian monks, Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna, visited China. As a result of their visit, the first Buddhist temple, the White Horse Temple, was established in the Eastern Han capital of Luoyang, China (Scott, 2016). During 220–580 CE, there was a greater improvement in the widespread movement of people between two countries. This led to increasing cultural exchanges. From India, Buddhism moved to the east; thus, there was a movement of Indian monks to China to preach the religion. The monks involved in translating Buddhist teachings and sutras brought into China techniques and knowledge of Indian architecture, calendar, medicine, astronomy, painting, and culture (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014). Faxian, a Chinese traveller, also visited India to study Buddhism (Waugh, 1999).

There were also political contacts between India and China during the 3rd to 6th centuries. The king of Kapilavastu, Candrapriya, sent a letter of credence to the emperor Wen of Song in 428 CE. The Chinese also documented an official letter to the Gupta King, which was sent to Emperor Wu of Liang in 502 CE. The Buddhist temples of China have combined the architectural characteristics of both China and India. They mixed both traditional Chinese style and ancient Indian style. In regards to literature, a famous Chinese writer, Lu Xun, called the ghost stories (ZhiGuai) supplemental textbooks for Buddhism. These stories were introduced after Buddhism flourished in China. This shows the literary talents, artistic creativity, and rich imagination of Indian people. Buddhism also introduced new themes and styles to Chinese paintings. Zhang Sengyao, a painter, is a good Buddhist figure. His painting of a temple door shows smoothness, even in a near view, and shows relief from a distance. This skill was introduced in China by Indians (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014).

During the 6th and 10th centuries, cultural, political, and commercial relations increased. The era saw a characteristic increase in both political and Buddhist contacts. The Tang Empire of China sent envoys to India. Xuanzang translated *Abhidharmakosa Sastra*, a book on astronomy. He also translated 73 sutras and put forward 'five no' principles in translation. The Chola Empire sent envoys to China. King Rajaraja's letter also mentioned China, in particular the relations through the seas. The Ming Dynasty had connections with Indian places such as Kollam, Cochin, Calicut, Andaman, and the Nicobar Islands. During the 18th and 19th centuries, colonialism and territorial expansion took place. Maritime trade between them increased. The Indian diaspora, mostly traders from India, went to Xinjiang. Kashmiris went to China and settled there (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014).

In 1893, Swami Vivekananda, a well-known philosopher, visited China. He praised and wrote about China and its affairs. His works implicitly refer to friendship and sympathy towards China (Page, 2013). The British army used Indian soldiers to suppress the Taiping Rebellion in China (Gregory, 1959). This shows that during colonial rule, India also had close connections with China. During British colonial rule, there emerged a great poet named Rabindranath Tagore. He has received the Nobel Prize for his work, 'Gitanjali'. Tagore visited China in 1924, and he also decided to set up an institute for Chinese studies at Vishwabharati University in Shantiniketan, Bengal (Reddy, 2016).

It was the first centre for Chinese studies in India, inaugurated in April 1937. The people in China recognised his poetry well (Reddy, 2016). Jawaharlal Nehru visited China during the war in 1939. The Indian Medical Mission also visited China. Among them, doctor D. S. Kotnis stayed and died there. He is one of the most revered Indian physicians in China. During the Sino-Japanese War in 1938, he performed a gallant operation for 72 hours of sleepless service while he treated more than 800 wounded soldiers on the battlefield (Desai, 2013). The Chinese are still remembering his selfless job in the medical service. During World War II, Indian envoys such as K.P.S. Menon, K.M. Panikkar, and Zafarullah Khan also visited China. Later, the envoys' status was raised to that of ambassadors. There started the official diplomatic relations of modern India with China (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014).

Post-Independence Cultural Ties

In 1952, an India-China Friendship Association was formed by Tripurari Chakravarthi, Professor of Chinese History at Calcutta University. In October 1955, an Indian Film Festival was held in almost all parts of China, and more than five million people attended it (Passin, 1961). Indian film delegation Prithviraj Kapoor also visited China in 1955 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014). Thus, there also started linkages in areas such as education and film fields.

Nehru and Zhou Enlai signed Panchsheel (Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) on April 29, 1954. It was part of an agreement on trade and intercourse between the Tibetan Region of China and India (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014). Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited China on December 21, 1988. An agreement was signed between Rajiv Gandhi and Deng Xiao Peng on science and technology cooperation, civil air transport, and cultural exchange and cooperation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China). The Indian diplomats thought that the dispute between the two countries was due to the 'irritants left by imperialism' and hoped that this agreement would bring 'a peaceful method of solving irritants directly between the great neighbours' (Arpi, 2015). Diplomatic relations between India and China reached their 55th anniversary in 2005. Thus, the two nations decided to celebrate the event with cultural activities. Both nations decided to conduct a 'Cultural Festival of India' in China and a 'Cultural Festival of China in India'. Both countries want to strengthen their friendship ties by spreading awareness in their own nations. The two

countries decided to celebrate the year 2006 as the 'year of India-China friendship' (Ministry of External Affairs, 2005). To enhance the friendship, the leaders of the two countries started visiting each other's nations. The Indian secretary of sports and culture went to China based on an invitation from China's Ministry of Culture. It led to the signing of the first cultural exchange and cooperation agreement in 1988 (Ministry of External Affairs, 2014). Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed a memorandum in 2005. Based on the agreement, India agreed to provide five crore rupees for the construction of a temple, a Buddha idol, and other materials to China. India also agreed to provide the Indian architects with the Chinese temple architecture design and expert supervision. The political leaders expected that, when the temple is constructed, it will become a powerful symbol of India-China cultural ties in terms of religion, which is Buddhism (Ministry of External Affairs, 2005). The year 2013 saw positive results in cultural and people-to-people exchanges. There was an exchange of 100 youths between India and China. Both nations signed sister city agreements between Chengdu and Bangalore, Kunming and Calcutta, and Beijing and Delhi. The Indian External Affairs Ministry and the Chinese State Council Information Office started the first China-India Media Forum in New Delhi (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China). The exchange of youth shows that cultural relations are reaching new heights between the two countries. Youth are the future leaders who turn the wheel of power. Therefore, this is a great advancement in terms of cultural relations between India and China. The sister-state relations also enhance the close connection between the two. Xuanzang, a Chinese traveller, visited India in 629 C.E. To commemorate his visit, a memorial for Xuanzang was established in Nalanda. Now, the government has decided to bring Xuanzang's relic from Patna to Nalanda (Sopam, 2017).

One of India's most important soft power instruments is its cultural and civilizational ties. India's real motto lies in the Sanskrit term 'Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam'. It is the basic concept that helps in the linking of the cultures, civilizations, and religions of other nations.

The following is the recent cooperation between both nations in the field of the arts.

Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015, Bollywood dance performances were conducted in Shanghai as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the ICCR and the Centre for China Shanghai International Arts Festival (CSIAF). • Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre organises Indian classical dance classes in various parts of China.
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Cultural diplomacy is an important aspect of India's foreign policy. India's art, culture, and spiritualism have attracted people across the continents, including our closest neighbour, China. Cultural connectivity always helps in preventing war and establishing peace. And that understanding led to the formation of the Indian-India Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) in 1950. Its main aim is to strengthen, revive, and deepen India's cultural links with the rest of the world. It helps in the reorientation of the foreign policy of India, especially towards China. Soft power, along with cultural diplomacy, results in regional integration (particularly in South Asia) and international cooperation. Cultural diplomacy enables a nation to connect with other nations. It also helps in building bilateral relations and healing the ruptures created by politics and history. Cultural diplomacy works well with our frontier countries. Soft power and its dissemination resulted in the rise of a public diplomacy division called the External Publicity Division. Foreign policy officials give low status to cultural diplomacy compared to traditional diplomacy based on hard power, especially military power. Nevertheless, nowadays, Narendra Modi's government has given it a higher status and linked it with the foreign policy objectives of India towards China (Mukherjee, 2019).

The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) is the institution that helps foster India's relations with other countries. It helps in formulating and implementing policies and programmes related to India's cultural relations. Mainly India's relations with China are fostered by the ICCR. It helps in strengthening mutual understanding and fostering cultural relations with China. The major cultural tools that India uses to enhance cultural relations with China include the arts, medicine, yoga, and education.

Arts

Arts are anything that gives a sense of happiness. It includes music, dance, and films. It affects the aesthetic sense of people. That results in cultural understanding between people of two nations. India adopts the arts to cooperate with ordinary Chinese to create an image of India and its culture among the Chinese people. That helps foster cultural diplomacy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, Ms. Leela Samson performed a classical dance (titled 'Charishnu') in Nanjing Province. It was part of the 'Colours of India' musical programme conducted by the ICCR.
Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015, the Shanghai Women's Federation (SWF) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) organised a week-long India-China Women Artists' Residency Programme in Shanghai. In 2016, an exhibition of Gupta art was conducted in Shenzhen, China, as part of the 2nd International Conference of Indologists. In 2016, a photo exhibition was conducted as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the China Federation for Literary and Art. In 2017, ICCR conducted an exhibition on Buddhism in Zhenjiang Province, China. In 2017, a photo exhibition of Gandhi was conducted during the Yiwu fair.
Cinema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2016, both nations entered into an agreement on the co-production of movies. In 2016, a Bollywood film festival was conducted as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the China Federation for Literary and Art. In 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the ICCR and CSIAF to reproduce the Indian movie 'Awaara'. Every month, Swami Vivekananda Culture Centre organises Indian movie screenings.
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2017, ICCR conducted a poetry recitation on the occasion of the 'Hindi Diwas' celebration in Shanghai. In 2018, the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Beijing organised a music performance by Pt. RajanSajanMisrawas.

Buddhist Connectivity

Religion is another cultural connectivity tool. Religious connectivity is another tool of India-China cultural relations. Both countries decided to have many exhibitions on Buddhist

images and heritage sites in China. India is also a partner in the construction of many Buddhist temples in China.

The following are the recent initiatives of India in the promotion of Buddhism in China.

India's promotion of Buddhism in China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2007, the Xuanzang Memorial was established in Nalanda, India. In 2008, stamps released by both the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya depicted on one stamp and the White Horse temple at Luoyang depicted on another stamp. In 2010, India constructed a Buddhist temple inside the White Horse Temple complex in Luoyang, China. In 2017, the Consulate General of India in Shanghai organised a photo exhibition named 'Buddhist Heritage of India'.
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Source:(Embassy of India, Beijing, China).

Education

Education is another field where India-China cultural cooperation is possible. India decided to have chairs in Chinese universities and

offered scholarships to Chinese students in India. Indian schools and universities teach Mandarin Chinese. Chinese universities teach Hindi and Sanskrit. All these enhance cultural cooperation.

The following are the recent initiatives of India in the promotion of education in China.

<p>India and China signed Education Exchange Programme (EEP) in 2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is an umbrella agreement in the field of education. • Both nations agreed to award the scholarship to 25 students from both • The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) offered 25 scholarships to students from the Indian side.
<p>In 2015, both nations signed a new Education Exchange Programme (EEP).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperation had been set up at the institutional level in the field of vocational education and higher learning. • 25 Chinese students selected the EEP scholarship awarded by ICCR to join the Hindi language course. • Scholarships are annually awarded to Chinese students to study Hindi at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra. • As a result of EEP, the number of Indian students increased in China, for example. <p>Number of Indian students enrolled in various Chinese universities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014-2015 academic year: 12,998 Indian students • 2015-2016 academic year: 13,000 Indian students • 2016-2017 academic year: 18,171 Indian students • 2018-2019 academic year: 23,000 Indian students <p>Number of Chinese students enrolled in various Indian universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014-15 academic year: 291 • 2015-16 academic year: 191 • 2016-17 academic year: 177 • 2017-2018 academic year: 172 • 2018-2019 academic year: 106
<p>Operational Chairs of ICCR in China</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai • Shenzhen University • Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangdong
<p>Chairs of Indian Studies/Hindi in various Chinese Universities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shenzhen University • Jinan University • Fudan University • Guangdong University • Shanghai International Studies University
<p>Centre for Indian studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peking University
<p>Centre for Gandhian and Indian Studies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fudan University
<p>Memorandum of Understanding on Project Cooperation signed in 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between Jiangsu University and Kalinga Institute of Information Technology (KIIT) University

Sources: (Embassy of India, Beijing, China) and (AISHE)

Medicine

Medicine can act as another cultural tool in India-China cultural relations. Medicine is a part

of science that helps in identifying, treating, and preventing disease. That means when exchanges of information on medicine, various medical

practices, and solutions for diseases take place between countries, this will result in people-to-people understanding. When Indian traditional medicine and its knowledge exchange take place that fosters greater understanding between India

and China. Not only traditional medicine but also new medicines are being exchanged between both nations. Such agreements are signed between two countries.

The following are there cent cooperation between both nations in the field of Medicine

Memorandum of Understanding between both nations on Medical Science and Technology	India and China signed various Memoranda of Understanding in the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exchange of scientists • exchange of scientific and technical information and documentation • organisation of bilateral scientific and technical seminars and conferences • joint identification of scientific and technical problems • formulation and implementation of joint research programmes • establishment of the India-China Joint Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation
Agreements on Cooperation in the Field of Health and Medicine	Both nations agreed in the following fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional medicine, including yoga and acupuncture. • tropical medicine • occupational health • maternal and child health care and family planning • infectious diseases and parasitology • Pharmacology and pharmaceuticals, including methods of quality control and good manufacturing practices.
Cooperation of the field of Traditional Medicine	In 2019, Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Ayush of the Republic of India and National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine of the People’s Republic of China

Source: (Embassy of India, Beijing, China).

Tourism

Tourism is an essential tool to promote the culture of one country in another. The foundation of culture rests on the pillar of tourism. Tourism promotes people-to-people exchanges and

cherishes an understanding of a nation’s culture and tradition in the minds of tourists. Promoting tourism results in a greater exchange of traditions between India and China.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of tourism	In 2015, the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of India and the National Tourism Administration of the People’s Republic of China signed an agreement on tourism cooperation. The following are the objectives of the MoU: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation between hotels and tour operators • cooperation in capacity-building in the tourism sector • cooperation in investment in the tourism and hospitality sectors • cooperation in the exchange of visits by tour operators • cooperation between the media and opinion-makers
Observing 'Visiting Years'	➤ designated 2015 as 'Visit of India Year' ➤ designated 2016 as 'Visit of China Year'
E-visas to Chinese travellers	Since 2015, India has been offering e-visas to Chinese travellers.

Source:(Embassy of India, Beijing, China).

Yoga

Yoga is a cultural tool that connects India and China. China celebrated International Yoga Day with much pomp. China establishes yoga

colleges there. Indian yoga teachers also take classes in China. That results in major cultural exchange between India and China.

The following are the recent cooperation between both nations in the field of yoga:

China's participation in promoting yoga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China was also a co-sponsor of the UN resolution on the International Day of Yoga on June 21. • In 2015, a Yoga-Taichi performance was conducted in the Temple of Heaven in Dongcheng, China. • In 2015, an agreement was signed on establishing a yoga college in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China. • In 2017, an event on Yoga at the Great Wall was conducted at the Juyongguan section of the Great Wall. • Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre of the Embassy of India regularly conducts yoga classes in China. • In 2018, a yoga event was held at Longfu Buddhist Temple in Hebei, and special yoga workshops were held at the Embassy of India in Beijing. • In 2017, International Yoga Day was celebrated across 10 Eastern Chinese cities under the theme of 'Ten cities, ten days, bringing together 15000 yoga lovers closer to India and promoting a healthy and harmonious lifestyle'. • In 2017, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Indian Yoga Institute, KYM (Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram), and Huzhou Taihu Tourism Resort for the promotion of yoga.
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Source:(Embassy of India, Beijing, China).

India-China relationships in the above-mentioned areas have paved the way for building and strengthening strong diplomatic ties. Both countries always show their interest in making cultural cooperation in bilateral meetings. Moreover, India and China still explore further areas of cooperation in order to expand their cultural relations. India has set up many institutional arrangements in China, especially with the initiatives of various cultural promotion agencies. And such agencies are playing a significant role in promoting India's culture in China.

II. CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded that culture stands as one of the strong pillars of India's foreign policy towards China. As a soft power mechanism, culture plays a vital role in strengthening India's bilateral relationship with China. Our soft power is our strength and foundation for the building called foreign policy. Cultural contacts between India and China did not start very recently. It had a long history. Since culture and tradition are physiological tools to approach a nation, all the elected Indian governments used culture as a strategy to tie diplomatic relations with China. It is explicit that the problems residing between India

and China cannot be solved so easily, and those are lasting for decades due to the geopolitical environments of the two countries. However, many diplomatic initiatives are being undertaken in order to smooth bilateral relations and stabilise a peaceful atmosphere across the border. By making direct connections among citizens, both countries can avoid a greater number of skirmishes between the two countries. Cultural cooperation is the finest and most sophisticated soft power element that can peacefully enhance diplomatic relations. And culture can also be applied as a mechanism to build confidence between both countries in their bilateral relations. India uses culture on many occasions as a diplomatic strategy in order to smooth and stabilise bilateral cooperation with China. Moreover, India has already taken enough initiatives, and many initiatives are ongoing to enhance cultural cooperation with China. Hence, it can be said that culture stands as an important pillar of India's foreign policy towards China.

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