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An analytic interpretation on the importance of India's soft power in international cultural diplomacy over the centuries

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Abstract

India's Soft Power which is part of Smart Diplomacy or cultural diplomacy in India. India's soft power diplomacy can be traced back to the time when Swami Vivekananda visited Chicago Parliament of Religion and spoke about Hinduism and India, which attracted many Indians and Foreigners who visited India and learnt about the Indian culture and the Sanskrit, his book on Raja Yoga influenced Western countries to practice Yoga who came to India and visited ashrams, India's main soft powers include spiritualism, yoga, Ayurveda, the world is shifting towards organic method of treatment which has its trace in India. There is culture exchange of arts, music, dance. Indian Diaspora and Young youth are the weapons for the spread of Indian culture across the globe, People are interested in Indian culture and epics of Ramayana and Mahabharat and studying on Kautliya. India literature and craft have received international recognition, countries abroad have included Sanskrit as part of their educational curriculum. India has also emerged has an export of herbs medicine to many foreign countries like Middle East, Europe, Africa etc. and this soft power of India will help in creating a massive influence across the world but before that Indian should have ample knowledge about their own history and culture and languages.

Keywords: Soft power; Smart diplomacy; India; Cultural; Yoga; Ayurveda; Sanskrit

1. Introduction

The term soft power was introduced by Joseph Nye in 1990 which means magnetism towards a country's culture, political ideas and foreign stratagem. Soft power requires no military power, no political pressure and no hard diplomacy. Soft diplomacy can be also referred to as Smart Diplomacy. Soft power comes from three components which are culture : places which are attractive to others, Political values: when it lives up them at home and abroad and the most important foreign policy when they are seen as permitted and having upright. Soft power is less expensive compared to hard power. It has become a weapon for public diplomacy, It is the key pillar of foreign policy in this age of globalisation, mass communication, global trade and tourism, which includes sharing of cultural values among countries like intellectual, artistic, it also helps countries to expand its association and interest with other countries.

Cultural diplomacy aims at educating the people on other country's values and heritage and can help to correct negative ideas in foreign media, academic and Political presentation. For centuries India's soft power has been recognized across the global where people learn about the Indian culture, arts and heritage of one of the oldest Civilization. India is using Yoga, Buddhism and its rich culture to increase its soft power .A Public diplomacy Division was created in 2006 within the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations was expanded worldwide (ICCR), the Ministry of Tourism's Incredible India campaign has been enlarged. Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas for Indian Diaspora has played a

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significant role in promoting India's Soft powers followed by which we have Bollywood films and shows abroad, Made in India Campaign with Prime Minister Modi intensive Foreign visits and NRIs as Cultural Ambassadors, if we talk about India's soft powers with its neighbourhood then its infrastructure project, Indian soap opera and bollywood, Student exchange programs, cricket diplomacy for Afghanistan, with Pakistan it is Cricket Matches, Wagah Border ceremony, Medical Tourism, Bollywood, daily buses for trade, With Bangladesh it is hydroelectric projects, student exchange, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicle Agreement, With China it is bollywood, student exchange, Coordinating on global forum platforms on Climate and trade issues, with Nepal it is open border, employment opportunities, Framing constitution. India is rising its soft power, with music festival, Indo-ASEAN craft programme, in the field of literature and visible arts we are being recognised at the globe level, the graph is increasing day by day. Yoga has been adopted in many countries abroad and Sanskrit as part of educational studies. Soft power is also a way to get in touch with Indian Diaspora, India image has improved and has increased over the years from historical culture, literature etc.

1.1. Research Methodology

For the purpose of this exploration, I have used an amalgamation of two of the archetypical social sciences research tools application – as they are authentic and brilliant method to assemble statistics from multiple appellants in a methodical and convenient way. Questions were asked to the common youth, students of International relations, public policy, survey, interviews – consisting of several interrogations which were dispersed among representatives of each contender group.

Objective of the Research Paper

The main areas of exploration in this paper incorporate

- Understanding India's soft power.
- Influence of India's soft power in the world.
- How India is emerging as a global hub for soft power.
- What is the future of India's Soft Power.

2. Literature Review

India is home to diverse culture, heritage and languages, we have more than 19500 mother languages and every state has its own language, culture, rituals and practices which make them unique from the rest of the world. It is the birth place of few religions like Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism. The country is famous for its historical locations. India was once called the golden bird, a land of knowledge, gold, spices, navigators, merchants. India was the first country in the world to have university education offering more than 700 subjects and people across the world use to come and study in India it was an education hub. India's main soft powers include spirituality, Yoga, Ayurveda, its pluralism society, non-violence and Bollywood and Music. India's vast landscape its cultural and spiritualism have reached all corners of the world, the epic Ramayana and Mahabharata is being compared with Illiad and Odyssey, Kautliya aggressive foreign policy, then Kalidasa the great Sanskrit playwright with Shakespeare. The Language Sanskrit has played significant role in promoting its soft power across the globe. Indian Scholars have accumulated 160,000 texts. The ancient and traditional image of the Hindu religion shows how much India has been pluralistic. The Vedas and Hindu culture has received significantly importance in the world. Swami Vivekananda, is regarded as a soft power icon of India would went to Chicago Parliament of Religion and spread about Hinduism, he inspired thousands of Indians and foreigners who followed him. In Belurmath, which is in West Bengal, people from foreign come and study in that University, Swami Vivekananda to learn about spiritualism and Hinduism, Spiritualism and Yoga has been reaching out to maximum people. In fact, every year the World celebrates International Yoga day. India's spiritualism is entering Europe and North America at a rapid pace. Russia and India are having cultural exchange programmes where today in most of the universities in Russia, Sanskrit language is being taught. India is a country that has offered religion refugees to Parsis, Muslims, Christians and Jews, Buddhism which has spread from India to Japan has also increased its cultural ties with the country since centuries, followed by China who also follows Buddhism. The International Yoga day shows us how popular Yoga has become worldwide. India's Information Technology sector has also emerged as a source of soft powers. India's ayurvedic medicine, India's business of toys are emerging as important soft powers. India's Literature and artistic has escalate across the globe with especially recognition to the poems of Rabindranath Tagore, people are reading about Swami Vivekananda. India and China has signed collaboration on 12 cultural exchange programmes. Indian soft power is making India emerge as a global power in many sectors and has influenced the world with its culture and Hinduism philosophy.



Figure 1 A gist of India' cultural and its integrity

3. Findings

The Unique craft of the country is unparalleled, they vary from puppetry to fine arts, artefacts made from wood, stones. Indian Jewellery is a unique craftsmanship which is made using stones, pearls, symbols and science all coming together. Jewellery, designs and textile has been reaching to majority of the people in the country and each state has its own craft beauty. Even the tribal handicraft of India is peerless. For instance Madhya Pradesh is famous for Silk, Phulkari embroidery work in Punjab, jute bags with extra-ordinary designs on it, the textile industry in India is one of the oldest and has gained momentum with its unique craft which not only contributes to fashion but also gives special identification to the state. Ajarakh is also very famous especially in Gujarat its basically printing fabric. India's Ayurvedic market has reached out to many foreign countries like Middle East and Africa, Europe, North America and Asia Pacific, Ayurveda medicine over the past 3000 years are providing solutions for healthcare through the cooperation between the body, spirit and mind. The herbal medicines are being exported from India to majority of the countries. The Ayurvedic market has amplified over the years with the promotion of organic treatments, there is a growing demand for Ayurvedic medicine, more than 2000 natural herbs has been recognised for curing different diseases some of the herbs in India are used in tea and in the food preparation. In Africa and Middle East where natural herbs are flourishing which has reduced the dependence on synthetic drugs. India's Indic technology, Yoga, Ayurveda and vedic Physics has spread across the globe.

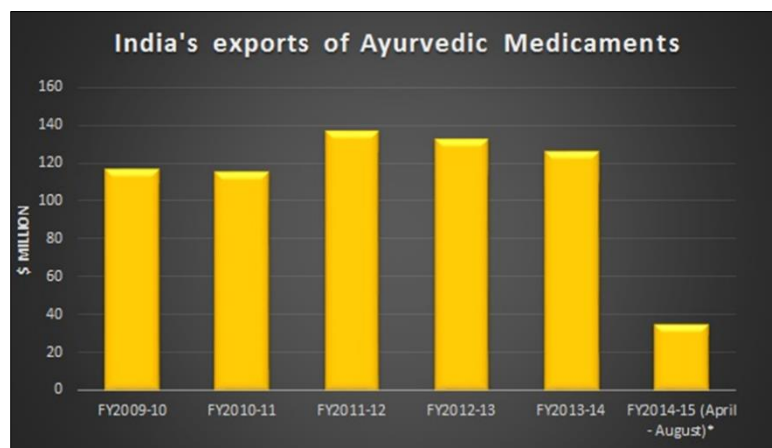


Figure 2 The demand of Ayurvedic medicine

Coming to Yoga which has emerged as a soft power of India. Yoga was early practiced only by religious ascetics which is found in texts which are 2500 years old. Over the years Yoga has undergone tremendous importance and a shift in the last 100 years as part of globalization, the European Gymnastics industry has now mixed with Indian yoga posture also. Yoga practice started in the late 20th century. Swami Vivekananda was the person who brought Yoga to the West Countries, he was a monk and spoke about India and Hinduism in Chicago Parliament of religion, his book Raja Yoga created an impact on the Western culture about Yoga, Yoga is also a way of moving towards Spiritualism, and it was also practiced by Indian Wrestlers. Today more than 170 countries in the world practice Yoga. Yoga tourism has grown over the years, where people across the world come to India Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, in the town of Rishikesh.



Figure 3 India’s soft power and it’s reach across the globe

Indian food, dance, music, culture are part of its soft power. India culture has a lot of influence in Japan, Korea, Thailand, China, Nepal, Bhutan and many Central Asia regions with Russian Federation is also increasing its cultural ties with India through student exchange program, Food festival, Music festival, arts and Bollywood and Music.

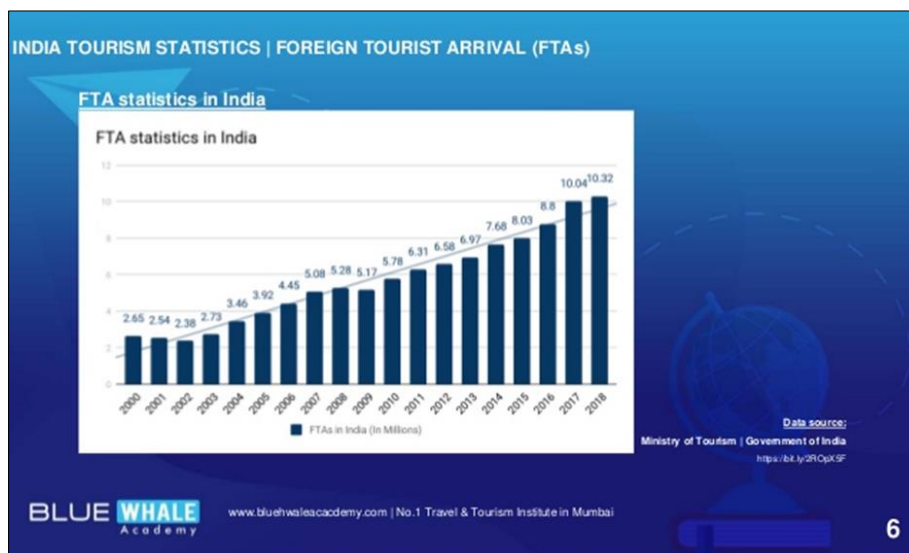


Figure 4 FTA Statistics in India

In the South Asia region, India attempts to use its soft power to revive its historical connection, Indo-ASEAN successful artist camp in Udaipur as well as the music festival in Delhi was a success in bringing young youths of different countries together. Young generation across South East Asia are connected through education, music, dance and arts, even Yoga and Buddhism is gaining ample importance in the region. India’s culture, yoga, restore of Nalanda University, Buddhism and Indian cultural centres is more prevalent in the Bali, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand and Joint restoration of

moments in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. India temples have been found across the world. Scientist are studying on India architecture, the beautiful temples in South India, and what the drawings indicate, the logic and concept in Science Maths, physics what they are bringing today, Ancient India knew about that long time back and has its inscriptions on the walls of temple. We also see Indian Vedic astrology which is gaining ample importance in the world. These are India's soft power which has increased India's influence across the world.

4. Way Forward

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi policy to use soft powers in his foreign diplomacy. In order to amplify its soft power, India should first develop the Tourism sector and provide maximum benefits to the people who come from foreign to explore the Indian culture, We should ourselves first help to promote our own culture and respect it, as most of our young generation are more influenced by the western culture and have less knowledge of their own History and culture as still to some extent we are living under the British Colonialism and the outdated education system which India has, which doesn't speak about our culture and our history and India is dominated by English language, where the world is interested in learning Sanskrit. We need to open up colleges which talk about our culture and languages for students who want to intensify their knowledge on Hinduism. We need to organize more educational exchange programme and promote Indian culture, arts, music and dance. India is home to many classical dance, each state has its own dance form, which is soothing and makes the mind fresh.

5. Conclusion

India is a country with unique characteristics, culture, momentums, languages. Every state in India has its own culture and language and creativity. India is home to incredible Jewellery, crafts, textile. India's Hinduism has its own glory across the world. Today, many countries are adopting Indian culture and the use of language Sanskrit. Today 90 % of the world practice Yoga which has its origin in India. we also have an International Yoga Day celebrated across the world. Spiritualism, pluralist idea of a society are spreading across the world with cultural and student exchange programme being conducted, It is the young and the Indian Diaspora that are playing a crucial role in spreading the significant of Indian culture and its diversity. With India successful conducting Music and artist festival with ASEAN countries, the impact of Indian soft powers have amplified but India still needs to work a lot in this sector to create its influence in the world.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors hold no conflict of Interest.

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Author's Short Biography



Dr Sumanta Bhattacharya is a Research Scholar at MAKAUT and a Public-Defence-Foreign Policy Analyst. He has 180 research papers, 27 Patents and 27 Book chapters, holds the record for maximum number of degree courses, have won International and national awards for his excellences in Education and Policy Making