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INDIA'S SOFT POWER OUTREACH STRATEGY: CULTIVATING ITS CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA (THE CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN)

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Abstract. This article stresses on India's Soft Power Outreach Strategy (SPOS) as a comprehensive plan that aims to increase its presence in the global arena and reinforce its position as a powerhouse country. SPOS focuses on enhancing the people-to-people connect through the tools like public diplomacy, cultural activities, educational and research collaborations, scholarships, tourism, developmental projects and so on. The article studies implementation of SPOS in Central Asia and attempts to bring about usefulness and effectiveness of soft power diplomacy in the context of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: *soft power, India's soft power outreach strategy, smart power, cultural diplomacy, non-residential Indian influence.*

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ҮНДІСТАННЫҢ «ЖҰМСАҚ КҮШ» СТРАТЕГИЯСЫ: ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯДА ӨЗІНІҢ МӘДЕНИ ҒЫҚПАЛЫН ДАМУ (ҚАЗАҚСТАН МЫСАЛЫНДА)

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Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала Үндістанның «жұмсақ күш» стратегиясына (Soft Power Outreach Strategy – SPOS) әлемдік аренада елдің қатысуын кеңейтуге және оның қуатты әлеуеті бар ел ретіндегі позициясын нығайтуға бағытталған кешенді жоспар ретінде қарастыруға арналған. SPOS қоғамдық дипломатия, мәдени іс-шаралар, білім беру және ғылыми зерттеулер саласындағы ынтымақтастық, шәкіртақылар, туризм, даму жобалары және т.б. сияқты құралдар арқылы адамдар арасындағы байланысты нығайтуға бағытталған. Мақалада SPOS-тың Орталық Азияда іске асырылуы зерттеліп, Қазақстан контекстінде жұмсақ күш дипломатиясының пайдалылығы мен тиімділігін жеткізуге талпыныс жасалынады.

Түйін сөздер: жұмсақ күш, Үндістанның «жұмсақ күш» стратегиясы, ақылды күш, мәдени дипломатия, Үнді диаспорасының әсері.

СТРАТЕГИЯ «МЯГКОЙ СИЛЫ» ИНДИИ: КУЛЬТИВИРОВАНИЕ СВОЕГО КУЛЬТУРНОГО ВЛИЯНИЯ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ КАЗАХСТАНА)

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Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена стратегии «мягкой силы» Индии (Soft Power Outreach Strategy - SPOS) как комплексному плану, направленному на расширение присутствия страны на мировой арене и укрепление ее позиций как страны, обладающей мощным потенциалом. SPOS фокусируется на укреплении связей между людьми с помощью таких инструментов, как публичная дипломатия, культурные мероприятия, сотрудничество в области образования и научных исследований, стипендии, туризм, проекты развития и так далее. В статье исследуется реализация SPOS в Центральной Азии и делается попытка донести полезность и эффективность дипломатии мягкой силы в контексте Казахстана.

Ключевые слова: мягкая сила, стратегия «мягкой силы» Индии, умная сила, культурная дипломатия, влияние Индийской диаспоры.

Introduction

As we know, soft power is the capacity of a state to exert control by political, moral, cultural, or subtle economic means. The ways of making a “positive image impact” created by any regional leader countries or world superpowers

are the obvious subject to make a research and learn the lessons from them.

According to Nye’s idea, soft power is an “ability to affect others to get the outcomes one wants” and command or in contrast, cooperative work or “soft power is the capacity to persuade others

to do what one wants”. According to Nye, intangible soft power resources like culture (where it is attractive to others), values (where it is attractive and not undercut by inconsistent practices), and policies (where it seems legitimate by others) observed by persuasive power based on attraction and emulation.

Examples of wars in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan, where the US understood the limits of Hard Power, should be kept in mind. Examples of worldwide popular American lifestyle, imposed through its assets like “McDonald, MTV, Intel, Microsoft, Hollywood or Starbucks” creates that attractiveness to the world. For smaller states, these traditional tools of hard power are more difficult to attain. The accessibility of soft power resources though depends much less on the size of a state. As the example of Norway, Switzerland, and Korea shows, small states have definitely the ability to build soft power.

Indian political figure and well-known speaker on the subject, Dr. Shashi Tharoor mentioned in his lecture at the University of Westminster, *‘Hard Power exercises, Soft Power is evoked’* and *“the current Soft Power resources of US clearly proved inadequate to compensate for the deficiencies of Hard Power approach. Fans of American culture were not prepared to overlook the excesses of Guantanamo”*, which shows the real limits of hard power in the power balance of the modern world.

One should keep in mind that the important aspect of the hard and soft power continuum is time. It appears that generating hard power requires much less time, as its resources are tangible. Vice versa, soft power needs a relatively long period and more effort.

Research Methodology

Technique for analyzing comparative data was used as a research method for this article. In general, scientific processes including assessment, reasoning, synthesis and comparison were used to analyze the data that had been collected.

Indian Soft Power Diplomacy Tools

India has been steadily gaining Soft Power in the international arena and its importance is increasingly being recognized as a key factor in global politics. India's Soft Power has been derived from its rich cultural heritage and its growing presence in the world economy, which have made it an attractive destination for foreign investments and a reliable partner for international trade. India's soft power is also rooted in its strategic partnerships with other countries, which have enabled it to take part in multilateral forums and play an active role in addressing global issues, as it was on UN platforms and G20 presidency initiatives during 2023. Because of these factors, India's Soft Power is proving to be critical to advance its position on the international stage.

Soft Power is increasingly important for India as it looks to become a major global player in the 21st century. Soft Power is an important strategic resource that India must leverage in order to achieve its full potential on the global stage.

India is an incredibly diverse and rich country that has a wealth of cultural assets that can be leveraged as a source of soft power. From its ancient heritage to its vibrant traditional arts and crafts, India's culture is an invaluable resource that can be used to build bridges with other nations and deepen diplomatic ties. Exploring these cultural assets through initiatives like the Cultural Exchange Programme and hosting international

events such as the Indian Culture Festival allows India to display its uniqueness on the global stage, while also creating opportunities for deeper understanding and appreciation of its culture.

India's growing international economic prominence has made it an attractive partner for many countries, and this enhanced visibility has allowed it to extend its cultural influence across a wide range of geographies. From the promotion of traditional Indian values to the sharing of innovative business practices, India's economic engagement with the world is having a profound effect, not only on its own economy but also on its ability to shape global perceptions.

India is a nation that has a long and storied cultural history, providing a unique perspective to the world. India has the potential to leverage its cultural influence on the international stage by showcasing its deep-seated values and beliefs, both in terms of traditional customs and modern trends. India also uses its rich culture to foster collaboration with other cultures, creating an environment of mutual understanding and respect. Indeed, India has many opportunities to utilize its cultural influence in order to strengthen diplomatic ties with other nations while also bolstering its own reputation as an international leader.

Indian Soft Power use in the World

India has a well-structured institutional mechanism to promote various aspects of Indian culture both within India and globally. These government-run institutions are part of the governmental set-up and function under various Ministries of the Central and State Governments. An inherent part of this new manifestation of soft power and cultural diplomacy is played by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), an

extended arm of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India, was established in the year 1950 soon after its independence. ICCR's goals are to actively take part in the creation and implementation of policies and programs pertaining to India's international cultural relations; to promote and strengthen cultural exchanges between India and other nations and people; and to build relationships with countries. Since its inception, the ICCR made significant efforts to consider and deal with the importance of conserving the intricate strands of rich Indian art and cultural heritage, to create an objective cultural mapping from India's huge and widely dispersed cultural landscape, to create a system that will allow the entire country's artistic community to achieve its goals to protect this nation's unique cultural heritage for coming generations to instill a dynamic "Cultural Vibrancy" across the country and highlight India's historical heritage globally.

Over the past six decades, artists from every region of India have travelled abroad to showcase their talent. In addition to organizing Indian Cultural Weeks and Festivals, the ICCR has deployed hundreds of cultural troupes across the world. On an average around 100 performing art groups are sponsored by ICCR annually not only for the stand-alone events or performances but also for participation in the international festivals. This approach of the Indian Government to sponsor Indian performances abroad has multiplied presence of Indian culture in the global arena as such performances attracted the private players to host Indian artistes on commercial basis. An eco-system has since been developed for showcasing the Indian performing art forms both at the governmental and

private levels. Involvement of private players in cultural promotion has not only enhanced the global presence of Indian culture but also has made a significant contribution to the Indian economy.

Indian Soft Power use in the World

The impact of media and digital platforms in the global arena has increased significantly in recent years, especially concerning India's reach. With the growth of digital platforms, India has been able to leverage its huge potential to reach a wider audience and gain more influence across the world. This has resulted in an increased awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of Indian culture and traditions all over the globe. The rise of social media networks, online streaming services, news websites, and other online portals have made it easier for Indians to access global trends, engage with global audiences, and get their message out quickly and effectively.

India's "Neighborhood First" foreign policy is an initiative that has been successfully implemented over recent years, with a significant impact on India's soft power outreach. Through this policy, India has sought to strengthen its diplomatic ties with neighboring countries and promote shared economic interests. Such initiative has also helped India in leveraging its cultural influence to further promote its values and build goodwill in the region. This has had a direct impact on enhancing India's soft power capabilities by expanding its reach and increasing the perception of it as a responsible global leader.

Soft Power Diplomacy via Indian Diaspora all over the world

India has used its population to its advantage. While the domestic population is the attraction for big international players to market their

products, the largest Indian Diaspora (ID) living abroad has become a powerful force in terms of soft power diplomacy, playing an important role in promoting India's global presence, cultural values and economic growth. ID have been instrumental in leveraging their networks to foster economic connections between India and other countries, forging strong diplomatic ties and increasing the visibility of Indian culture abroad. The sheer size of the ID has enabled it to create a strong presence across the world, helping to further India's global footprint through positive public relations campaigns, investments and exchanges that promote mutual understanding between India and foreign nations.

Government is increasingly looking towards ways in which they can better tap into the influence and resources of ID to further their soft power diplomacy objectives. ID have significant capital and human resources which can be used to support government initiatives, such as those related to strengthening cultural ties and projecting a positive image of the country abroad. By working with these communities, governments can leverage their existing networks to bring people together and foster greater cooperation between nations. Each Indian festivities like Diwali, Holi and other important days like World Hindi Day, International Women Day, International Day of Yoga facilitates ID and friends of India in Central Asia to widen its local network for diverse business opportunities. Recognizing the role of ID in brand building, Prime Minister Modi has led the networking with ID since he took over as Prime Minister in 2014. Terming every Indian overseas as "Rashtrdoot" (national ambassador) and highlighting the rich cultural diversity of

India, Prime Minister Modi in an address to Indian community in Copenhagen appealed to join the movement “Chalo India” (visit India) motivating non-Indian friends of Indians overseas to visit various parts of India.

The global Indian diaspora is having a significant impact on India's economy and its international reach. Indian cuisine became the most popular food around the world, which shows strong stand on diplomatic and economic arena in the country of presence. Their remittances, investments, and trade flows have contributed to India's growth story, earning the country billions of dollars in foreign exchange every year. The global Indian diaspora has also helped India increase its global visibility and presence in world affairs by creating stronger linkages with their host countries. This has allowed India to gain greater recognition for the contributions it makes to international initiatives, as well as for its unique culture and people.

New Education Policy and projecting India as an ancient civilization and education Hub

Education has always been a significant factor in enhancing India's soft power outreach. It is used to improve the nation's cultural diplomacy, international relations, and economic progress. Education also helps foster greater understanding between countries by improving the knowledge of foreign cultures and languages, thus strengthening India's presence on the global stage. Additionally, education can be leveraged to create better trade ties with foreign countries, which could potentially attract more investments from abroad. Ultimately, education is an invaluable tool that allows India to leverage its unique identity as a powerful nation and grow its influence

around the world.

The Indian Government recently introduced a trans-formative New Education Policy that seeks to revolutionize the nation's education system, making India a global education hub. This policy looks to strengthen the quality of education and make it more accessible, equitable, and inclusive; while also integrating the latest technological advancements into academics. It aims to promote better learning outcomes and provide a comprehensive framework for holistic development. The policy encourages multidisciplinary studies, improved infrastructure and research facilities, and increased access to quality higher education courses, increased industry-academia partnership opportunities and a greater focus on vocational training. Additionally, it looks at developing an efficient regulatory for thousands of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) around India.

India has been the academic destination since ancient times. India has always shared the benefit of its academic excellence with the world by opening its doors for the students and scholars from the world over as India believes in the principle of “*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*”, which means “*The World is One Family*”.

In furtherance to its objective of sharing the benefit of India's educational achievements, the Government of India has opened its horizon for research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and global institutions. Credits acquired in foreign universities will be permitted where appropriate as per the requirements of each HEI, to be counted for the award of a degree.

Major salient features of the academic collaboration that offers Twin

Degree, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes to foreign institutions are aimed to pave the way for meaningful academic collaboration between well-performing Indian Universities and top-ranked foreign higher educational institutions. Top-ranked universities and institutions in the Central Asia can take advantage from more than 1000 high-ranked Indian HEIs, which have been selected by the Indian Government based on their academic excellence and achievements for collaboration with foreign institutions.

In the context of Kazakhstan, signing of Memorandum of Understanding in November 2022 between South Kazakhstan Medical Academy, Shymkent, Kazakhstan and JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Mysore to promote pharma education and research is a good example of soft power diplomacy for mutual benefit.

The recent implementation of NEP 2020 has truly made India a global education hub and has opened up the doors for a new era of collaborative quality education. This policy is aimed at making India an education superpower by improving the quality of education and developing holistic and multidisciplinary educational frameworks. It will not only bolster India's reputation as a global hub for educational excellence but will also encourage foreign students to come and study in India, thus providing an impetus to the country's economy.

Worldwide propagation of Buddhism as a product of Indian civilization

India has carved out a distinct position for itself in the global society, where adherents of all the main world religions — Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Jainism, Islam, Judaism, and

Zoroastrianism — co-exist peacefully. Buddhism has had a significant influence on many aspects of Indian society. In the sixth century BC, it was gift of India to the world. Buddhism is one of the most followed religions of the world. India has been a country which has allowed various religions to have space in its society. Similarly, over a period of time, Buddhism has not only found its place in Indian religious system but also has become one of the main religions practiced in India and other countries.

Buddhism used to be the predominant religion in East, South, and Central Asia due to their dedication, willingness to make sacrifices, and effort. Buddha delivered his own sermons in local languages such as Magadhi, a language used by ordinary people, which was a huge comfort for those who couldn't understand Sanskrit. Another aspect of Buddhism's ascent was governmental support.

Buddhism's resurgence in the decades following World War II had a strongly internationalist outlook on the religion's potential application in foreign policy and placed a strong emphasis on bridging existing sectarian and geographic barriers. The Indian government's efforts to appropriately incorporate Buddhist legacy into its foreign policy are intended to provide the groundwork for future diplomatic, cultural, economic, and strategic alliances. The potential for Indian foreign policy is revealed by the well-established global network for Buddhism and the role of faith in millions of people's lives worldwide.

The Dalai Lama was the focal point of India and China's conflict in Buddhist diplomacy. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in-exile are present in Dharamshala, North India, and greatly

enhances India's reputation among world's Buddhist population.

To confront the problems of the new millennium, Buddhism could still be used as an ancient geo-political tool in India, declared by Ambassador P. Stobdan, who served as the Director of the Indian Cultural Center in Almaty from 1999 to 2002 while on assignment in Kazakhstan. His time in Kazakhstan saw considerable efforts to preserve India's Buddhist legacy. Despite the fact that Buddhist diplomacy is widely acknowledged to be important, serious efforts are yet to be translated into full-fledged power.

The Indian Government needs to do more efforts encouraging people to visit Buddhist temples and shrines while traveling for business. India today enjoys access to a variety of resources, including holy places, goodwill from other countries, and the right intentions. While protecting the Tibetan Buddhist legacy, Government must actively work towards strengthening relationships with other Buddhist schools of thought. Effective revival of the Nalanda University project and support of Buddhist studies in the universities across the nation are required to ensure that a wide spectrum of thinking that goes beyond Tibetan Buddhism is brought.

To increase India's recognition as a center of the religion abroad, Buddhist tourism must be promoted in a manner akin to the "Incredible India" campaign. Tourism sites must be managed well in addition to being advertised. Inspiration for this can be drawn from the Kumbh Mela's successful management, which was the subject of a Harvard Business Review case study in 2013 as a result of its well-organized planning.

The current administration has shown sufficient intention to strengthen India's

standing in the Buddhist world, but now it must successfully carry out its plan. This would significantly impede China's progress, improve its ties with Asian nations, and assist it in advancing its goals of regional and global dominance.

India and Kazakhstan: historical past as the road map for future

Ethnic-cultural and trade contacts between India and Kazakhstan go back to many centuries. Aryan tribes from steppes of Eurasia began their migration to the plains of the Indian subcontinent. Later, during the 2nd century BCE, the members of the Saka tribes traveled to India and established mighty empires in the North-West of the country.

Mass migration of Indo-Aryan tribes from Eurasia to India in second century B.C. added a historical similarity between the two countries. It is known that Central Asian tribes were called Kushan nomads in Indian history. They created a huge empire which stretched from the Indian North-West through Afghanistan to Central Asia where Buddhism spread later. This can be confirmed by the presence of Buddha's image on rocks near Almaty at a place called «Tamgaly». These Buddhist sites need to be studied as a topic of future archaeological research.

Kazakhstan was the home for the Sakas (or the Scythians), who, around 1000 BCE, moved southwards and established their rule in parts of northern India. The first Saka king in South Asia was Maues, who, around the end of 1st century BCE, conquered Taxila from the Indo-Greek King Apollodotus II, and later embraced Buddhism. Thence Buddhism travelled northwards into the Central Asia, and up to China through the Great Steppe of Kazakhstan.

In the Middle Age, the Great Silk and Spice Routes united India and Kazakhstan

There was a constant exchange of goods, ideas and thoughts between the two countries. Another historical similarity in the cultural development of India and Kazakhstan started with the spread of Islam. It happened primarily through spread of Sufism in India, some of whose rituals are similar to the old religious beliefs of our people, based on the concept of unity of man and nature. Till now people in Northern India have the surname Yasawi, founder of the Sufism school in Turkestan Khoja Ahmed Yasawi. Here, the journey of Mulla Zaman from Turkestan city to India in 1500 AD for spreading Sufism may be mentioned (his grave is in the Kutub Minar complex in Delhi).

Later, the cultural relations between our countries carried on during the times of Qutubuddin Aibak, Ghiyas-uddin Balban, Amir Taimur, Babur and Muhammed Haider Dughlat. This is proven by the composition of the armies of these generals where many of the present day Kazakh tribes were represented under the common label of Turks. According to the investigation carried out by Professor M. Abuseitova of the Institute of Oriental Studies, our peoples also had trading relations, during 16-18 centuries. Kazakh horses were valued greatly in India and during this period Kazakh tribes supplied more than 40 000 horses to India.

At the time of the Mughal empire, the famous Thinker from Kazakh Tribe “Dulat” Mohammed Haider Dughlat, who was a medieval historian and a general of the Mughal forces, had been appointed by Humayun as Mughal viceroy in Kashmir and ruled there between 1540- 1551. His contribution to the development and blossoming of the region was huge. While in India, he wrote his famous poem «Jahan Nama» and the book «Tarikh-e-Rashidi»,

which describes the history of the Kazakh and Kashmiri people in the Middle Ages. Considering the friendly relations between Kazakhstan and India, a copy of this book was handed over by the Aligarh Muslim University to the Kazakh cultural heritage collection in August 2001.

More recently, during the last century, new elements being added to our bilateral relationship through the popularity of Indian films, culture, yoga, dance and music in Kazakhstan. India and Kazakhstan have thus felt a natural affinity and bond with each other for the past several millennia. Bollywood films and TV serials, generally dubbed into Russian language, became extremely popular ever since the Raj Kapoor era, in 1950s.

At present, India and Kazakhstan enjoy close cultural relations that manifest in popularity of yoga, Indian films, dance and music in Kazakhstan and India considers Kazakhstan as “extended neighbourhood”. Indian Cultural Centres in Astana, Dushanbe and Tashkent are engaged in enhancing people-to-people relations through various cultural and academic activities, including conducting of Hindi, yoga, dance and music classes; celebration of Indian festivals, exchange of academic and cultural delegations and so on. India has recently signed Cultural Exchange Programmes with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

India provides scholarships in various disciplines under the ICCR Scholarship programmes for students from Central Asian countries. Separate scholarship slots have been allocated for each Central Asian country under various scholarship schemes administered by ICCR. The annual programme is open for the nationals of Central Asian countries to pursue not only academic but also courses in the creative fields like Indian dance

and music as also for Yoga and traditional medical system.

The Indian Cultural Centre in Astana is running under the aegis of the Embassy of India in Kazakhstan. It runs programs to acquaint the Kazakhs with the Indian culture and customs. Indian Cultural Centre in Astana is engaged in various cultural activities, including conducting of Hindi, Yoga, dance and music classes; celebration of Indian festivals; organizing of cultural performances; screening of Indian films and documentaries; organizing performances by visiting Indian cultural troupes in Kazakhstan and Kazakh cultural troupes in India; facilitation of ICCR scholarships and fellowships; and organizing visits under Academic Visitors Programme. India trains specialists and scholars from Kazakhstan in various fields under the Government of India's ITEC program and ICCR's Scholarship programmes.

Kazakhs have the opportunity to learn Hindi, history and literature as well as to practice Indian dances and yoga. Such Indian classics as the «Mahabharata», «Bhagvad-Gita» and «Rigveda» have been translated into the Kazakh language and “Shabd Manjusha” (i.e. ‘Book of Words’) by Abay Kunanbaiuly into Hindi language with the support of the Indian Cultural Centre.

ICCR's main responsibility is to advance cultural understanding on a global scale. To achieve this goal, the ICCR presents top-notch performing artists and ensembles in many nations so that the public at large can witness and appreciate the variety and vitality of India's performing art genres such as classical, folk, theater, modern dance, and music, among others. These delegations are sponsored both within and outside of India's Cultural Exchange Programme

with all Central Asian countries.

Efforts have been made to establish active bilateral collaboration, especially in exchange of students and towards creating direct contacts between universities of the two countries. Around 5000 students are undergoing education in medical universities in almost every major city of Kazakhstan - Aktobe, Almaty, Astana, Karaganda, Petropavl, Shymkent, Semey etc.

With the help of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scores of Kazakh experts and students are getting education and are doing courses in leading Indian higher education institutions. Since 1992, more than 1200 specialists have undergone training under ITEC programme and more than 200 students have studied in India under ICCR programme. Currently 35 ITEC slots and 15 ICCR scholarships are offered to Kazakhstan annually.

The cultural and people-to-people contacts between Kazakhstan and India started in ancient times, continued through the ages and now they are the cornerstone of cooperation between the two countries.

It is notable that the development of western classical music itself in India took place with the participation of musicians from Kazakhstan. Kazakh violin virtuoso Marat Bisengaliev, who is currently music director of the Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI) at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) Khushroo Suntook and professional musicians from Kazakhstan form the core of the orchestra. SOI, the only western classical symphony orchestra of India, has performed all over the country and abroad with the participation of Kazakh professionals.

The Orchestra participates actively in the development of a future generation of Indian musicians that can play western classical music. For this purpose a school has been created for gifted Indian children who wish to be trained in western classical music. Graduates from the school are already giving concerts and attracting thunderous applause from discerning Mumbai residents.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Kazakhstan-India IT centre at the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University on 7 July 2015 during his visit to Kazakhstan. Earlier in 2011, during the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the Eurasian National University, supercomputer PARAM was installed as a gift from the Indian people to Kazakhstan.

As a mark of respect to the internationally renowned leading Indian political and social icon Mahatma Gandhi, his statues were installed at prominent locations in Almaty and Astana. In January 2009, one of the central streets of Delhi was named in the honour of the great Kazakh poet Abai and his bust inaugurated in the heart of Delhi. In October, 2009, a memorial to the Indian poet, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was installed in the Ethnic Park «Zhastar» in Ust-Kamenogorsk city of Kazakhstan.

Bilateral cultural relations are playing an important role in the development of friendship and partnership between the peoples of Central Asia and India. Cultural ties in the background of historical linkages and the warm feelings that the two peoples share for each other create a huge potential for greater collaboration. There is a huge potential for better prospects in future for the cultural relations between Central Asia and India.

Soft Power in the New dimensions

of Culture, Education and Traditional Medicine (Ayurveda, Yoga)

India has experience in cultural diplomacy. India's modern nationalism was significantly shaped by its self-discovery of its rich cultural legacy and its global influence. Its rich cultural heritage drew artists, poets, and thinkers from all over the world.

Swami Vivekananda's trips to the West that began in 1893, sparked a significant resurgence of Indian cultural influences all over the world, with globalization of Yoga-based teachings and practices serving as its chief engine.

Throughout the 20th century, the global Yoga movement grew dramatically. In the West, there was a significant resurgence of interest in yoga and meditation in the 1960s, and there has been a continuous increase ever since. Many Indian gurus have travelled the world to teach yoga and meditation.

Today, there are more than 100 million yoga practitioners worldwide. In addition to asanas, pranayama, mantra, and meditation are frequently practiced. The Yoga Sutras and Bhagavad Gita are two classic works that are commonly studied in yoga training programs.

The current Indian administration has been bold to recognize and openly share India's soft power. India's cultural contributions to the globe have been emphasized by the administration, which also aims to improve diplomatic ties. The new yoga effort, launched by Narendra Modi with declaration of 21 June as the International Yoga Day by the UN, is a welcome change from India's previous cultural approach in globalizing the Yoga and ancient Indian cultural heritage. It heralds the beginning of a new era, one in which India celebrates its millennium civilization and works to spread it.

Current government is integrating yoga instruction into the classrooms, expanding the practice beyond physical activity to include meditation and yoga philosophy. A revival of yogic India from its classical era of global prominence, Modi's new India. International Yoga Day's impressive global celebration is in fact evidence of India's tremendous soft power.

Conclusion

India can leverage its rich Soft Power resources to strengthen its image and influence in Central Asia. The benefits of this strategy are numerous - it promotes better understanding and tolerance of different cultures, increases economic investments from other nations into India as well as creates more opportunities for exchanges in terms of business and academics. These resources include its diverse culture, vibrant film industry, awe-inspiring heritage sites, powerful diaspora networks, world-renowned cuisine, and a deep knowledge of traditional medicine – all of which can be used to effectively market India's soft power profile in the region. Additionally, by partnering with well-established organizations such as the CICA and UNESCO to promote science and technology education initiatives in Central Asian countries, India can expand its reach and enhance India's standing even further.

Through Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, India is currently making strides to propagate this idea of unity. Indian leaders have always referred to Maha Upanishad's Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) to explain their nation's outlook on the globe. While the phrase has established itself as a diplomatic mantra in India.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam has evolved into a generalized idea that may be used to describe India's diplomatic orthodoxy in a variety of situations. It has been used to generally represent India's ideal and liberal view of global rules, themes of globalization, or global commons, despite the fact that it may be susceptible to a variety of interpretations. In doing so, it implies that this is a goal worth pursuing and that it can be accomplished through simple discussion.

The "convergence" of soft power and so-called smart power, which will be the primary tactic to develop a digital economy, should be the one major aim of Kazakh diplomacy. Due to this advantage, the government is able to expand foreign direct investment (FDI) in government-private and production-oriented industries including agriculture and construction.

Public diplomacy is crucial to people-to-people relations because, at the most fundamental level, encounters between residents of other nations lead to outreach that, occasionally, isn't even possible through official state and diplomatic channels. Rural tourism is a prime example of this due to the favorable perception that it may create due to the several levels of communication and pleasant interactions between those who share their culture and values within the structure. For this reason, the Kazakhstan may adopt the concept of "Non-Resident Indians" (NRIs) or Indian Diaspora used in Indian diplomacy. As a result, Kazakh people who travel and work abroad will fortify their moral and cultural ties to their motherland, which will provide Kazakhstan with the most necessary boost for its positive influence and image around the world.

Multifaceted foreign policy based

on the UN Charter and a humanitarian outlook on the world during this diplomatic mayhem should be maintained. With the primary goal of demonstrating to the entire world how similar Kazakh culture is, how tolerant it is, and how the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan is an example of national unity, it must be completely understood and digitalized. E-books, the digital translation of old classic novels by Kazakh authors, conferences, and the development of a cutting-edge Meta Verse approach to many cultural issues are all examples of this. Only peaceful methods can bring Kazakhstan wealth in the new era.

In the past few years, there have been notable changes in the global realm. States must use a variety of strategies to increase their influence and advance their foreign policy agendas due to the interaction of numerous entities in a globally competitive environment. The importance of Soft Power in describing and comprehending these changes has grown. Not only the "soft power" program be implemented properly to meet contemporary needs, but it also must be done in a way that recognizes our own interests and effectively fortify us against outside cultural advance. Therefore, taking into account all of the previously mentioned arguments, major projects must be undertaken at the state level.

As a road map for soft power outreach by Central Asian countries to the world, the following points will be highly appropriate and suggested to be absorbed by the Governments and their authorities on a regular basis:

- Develop an institutional mechanism (as in the case of Ministry of Culture of the Government of India and ICCR) by

creating new institutions or restructuring the existing institutions to be headed by political leadership to promote various elements of cultural heritage and contemporary achievements within the country/region and in other countries of the world as inherent part of the foreign policy.

- Region-centric approach for projecting the central idea of cultural, social and educational prosperity to the outside world-renowned

- Soft power elements should be included in the agenda for any central Asian forums

- Promotion of Kazakh language and facilitation of its formal transformation into Latin script for the benefit of global learners of this language;

- Reviving cultural heritage by adopting a policy of promoting it from the school level;

- Joint efforts to increase the number of IT projects and professionals in Central Asia;

- Translation of the best Central Asian literature works into English language, like Sahitya Academy from India translating the modern literature best works in the Russian language to approach CIS countries;

- Soft Power tools like 'Kazakh Invest' and 'Kazakh Tourism' should be part of the routine functioning of Kazakh Missions Abroad;

- Central Asian countries must introduce the concept of "Overseas Central Asian Natives" (OCAN) on the lines of "Non-Residential Indians" used in Indian Diplomacy;

- National and Cultural branding tools, like the 'Incredible India' Public policy program, should be created and promoted via social media and mass media tools.

While many major powers have and

will continue to use hard power in the near future, soft power may continue to be one of the main strategies used by certain smaller nations to advance their interests to other states and make their arguments on a global stage. In

this process, it became important to thoroughly examine all state-owned resources in order to cultivate them as instruments for soft power diplomacy in the development of global and bilateral interactions and talks.

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