

A Week Long Course Work on  
**Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Promotion and  
Public Liaison Techniques**

11-16th July, 2022; RTC, ICCR, Kolkata



**A REPORT**



**A Week-Long Course Work**  
**on**  
**Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Promotion**  
**and Public Liaison Techniques**

**11-16 July, 2022**  
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**A Report**

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**PROGRAMME ITINERARY (11-16TH JULY, 2022)**

**DAY -1 : 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

**Inaugural Session**

- Session 1 : Indian Culture: An Overview
- Session 2 : An Enquiry to the Tools of Indian Soft Diplomacy
- Session 3 : Special Session – Significance of Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav: India & Abroad (Special emphasis on India's tradition of Democracy)
- Session 4 : Documentary Film Show

**DAY -2 : 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

- Session 1 : Role and Activities of Regional Centres of ICCR
- Session 2 : India & neighborhood through shared Culture and Connect
- Session 3 : International Cultural Centre(ICC) in catering Indian Footprints across regions
- Session 4 : Interaction with International Students of ICCRs
- Visit- I : Visit to Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata & Lecture on “Sri Aurobindo’s Ideas on Bharatvarsha”

**DAY 3 : 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

- Session 1 : Buddha Connectivity
- Session 2 : ICCR as Spring Board of Indian Cultural Diplomacy
- Session 3 : The Ramayana and Mahabharata Tradition in South Asia
- Session 4 : Indian Cinema: Connecting territories and intersecting cultures
- Visit- II : Visit to American Center, Kolkata

**DAY 4: 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

- Session 1 : Special Lecture- The relevance and meaning of the Bharatiya Jnana Parampara (Indian Wisdom Tradition) in the modern age of reason and scientific temper
- Session 2 : Major Indian dance forms: origins and regions of practice
- Session 3 : Management of ICCR Students Scholarship Scheme
- Session 4 : Workshop on Media and Press Handling Techniques

**DAY 5: 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**

- Session 1 : The Changing Face of Sufism in South Asia
- Session 2 : Multicultural Identity of Indian Diaspora
- Session 3 : The Great Indian Emigration of “Girmitias” and The Port of Calcutta
- Visit- III : Maritime Archives and Heritage Centre, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata

**DAY 6: 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2022**


- Session 1 : Special Session–Conversation with Diplomats
- Session 2 : Valedictory





Mahabalipuram Shore Temple is standing near Chennai in Tamilnadu, at Mahabalipuram that lies on the eastern coast of Southern India. This monument is constructed in 700A.D. by the Pallava Kings. This is one of the Heritages listed by UNESCO.





The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies (ISCS), India that as an autonomous organization for more than a decade has involved itself in defining history, shared legacies and variance of culture through in-depth research, regular writings and publications, has organized a Week-Long Course work for the newly recruited 32 officials of The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) at the premises of RTC, ICCR Kolkata itself.

The main objectives behind comprehending the course work were to promote ideas and concepts on the history and social dynamics shaping India and defining its role at the global stage; to facilitate an idea on how soft diplomacy as a creative process through discourses, research and experimentation against given situations are corresponding on the areas that are of national interest; and most importantly, through this course work orient the officials about the key objectives of ICC and the regional centers of ICCR in catering culture and contributing to Indian Cultural diplomacy.



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**Inaugural Session**

The Course work commenced with an Inaugural on the 11th July in the morning and it was addressed by Sri Arindam Mukherjee, Director, ISCS India– who shared a significant outline of how the Kolkata, through multifarious infrastructure, cultural diversities, cuisines and handicrafts plays a significant role in amending cultural confluences with neighboring countries. Smt. Minakshi Mishra- a newly appointed Director, Zonal Office, ICCR Kolkata reciprocated her best wishes to the participants and elaborated how the course work could become beneficial for the participants who would be interrogating and disseminating the cultural diversities after being posted in different regions of India as well as in abroad. Amb. Kumar Tuhin–DG, ICCR, who also addressed the Inaugural Session as a Keynote Speaker, highlighted the attributes that the officials should be aware and possess the potential of representing ICCR at a global stage. He defined the essential components of soft diplomacy and policy approach, the essential steps of promoting Indian Culture, the need of revisiting cultural lineages and fermenting objectives that are of national interests. Sri Ashish Middha- Regional Passport Officer and Head, Branch Secretariat (MEA), Kolkata who also attended the Inaugural Session as a Guest of Honour, shared his experiences in order to make the participants understand how culture is an essential tool for the Indian soft diplomacy and how tactfully the government officials should use them to attain country’s progress and strengthening developments at multiple fields. The Inaugural Session was concluded with the remarks of Ms. Kankana Roy, Coordinator of the Coursework, who interpreted the course work module with the participants and the dignitaries.



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Day -1 (11th July, 2022)

Session -1

**Indian Culture: An Overview**– was addressed by

**Sri Tarun Goswami**, *Resident Editor, Millennium Post.*

The lecture demonstrated how the popularity of Indian philosophy is increasing day by day even in the socialist and communist countries like Russia or China as there is a great interest to know about the Indian Philosophy. The lecture elucidated the Ideas and the works of Swami Vivekananda and also talked on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore, and their efforts to promote Indian culture.





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**Session -2**

**An Enquiry to the Tools of Soft Diplomacy**-was addressed by

**Prof. Ishani Naskar**, *Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University.*

The lecture arrested thoughts on how soft power has become increasingly relevant for the Indian foreign policy and soft diplomacy. In the present days, India's outreach programmes are based on cooperation and partnerships like development partnership programmes that entail number of projects, infrastructure initiatives and supportive educational and financial systems. The purpose of her talk was to acquaint participants with various means and methods along with the tools of Indian soft diplomacy.



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**Session -3**

**Special Session – Significance of the Azadi Ki Amrit Mahotsav: India and Abroad (Special Emphasis on the India’s Tradition of Democracy)**

The Special Session was addressed by

**Prof. Radharaman Chakrabarti**, *Former Vice Chancellor of Netaji Subhash Open University*

The Speaker demonstrated that the ‘Amrit Mahotsav’ is a proud occasion for every Indian who nurtures the sense of belonging to the nation. It is also a reflection on what we all have achieved over the past 75years. As the post-colonial years have signalled the beginning of the new and challenging task of nation building that involves endless areas of activities into multiple fields, the youths of this country should understand the legacies and the transformation that the country has attained to sketch the blueprint of development, growth and nation building.





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**Session -4**

**A Documentary film was shown to the participants “Living Stories: The Story Telling Tradition of India**

Directed by Neela Venkatraman- The movie was an illustration of Indian traditional folk music, the history behind it and how it has been promoted at the global forums by the regional and contemporary artists.

*(Movie Link - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgcCsh\\_8f50](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgcCsh_8f50))*



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**Day -2 (12th July, 2022)**

**Session -1**

**Roles and Activities of Regional Centres of ICCR-** was addressed by

**Dr. Kamal Kishor Mishra**, *Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta & Former Director, ICC, ICCR, Fiji.*

The session was more of an interactive one, where the speaker shared multiple experiences of his own in dealing with situations, organizing events and inviting foreign delegations. He added that the objective of the participants is to learn from each other, channelize energy in one way/direction with utmost integrity, devotion and professionalism in multiple circumstances.





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**Session -2**

**India and neighborhood through Shared Culture and Connect-** was addressed by  
**Mohit Musaddi**, *Senior Research Associate, ISCS, India*

The speaker began his lecture mentioning that cultural values impact what people and therefore states, want and think in world affairs, often subconsciously. India's social fabric itself bears the cultural imprints of many civilizations. It is internationally recognized that one of India's significant global contributions has been the exercise of its soft power, drawing on its ancient and civilizational roots. Through a power point presentation, the Speaker illustrated about India's cultural connections with neighbours like Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka.



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**Session -3**

**International Cultural Centres (ICC) in catering Indian Footprints across regions-**  
was addressed by

**Sri Mrityunjay Kumar Singh**, *Commandant General and Director General of Police, Home Guards, West Bengal & Former Director, ICC, ICCR, Jakarta and Bali.*

The Speaker briefed about the importance and the need of the cultural centres. Drawing multiple references, he remarked that there is a wide collage of cultural heritage and symbols which we share with the larger part of the world. From Europe to Japan via Africa, South Asia, South East Asia and even China, there is always a common cultural tradition or symbol that connects us historically to the garland of culture that shapes as a shared history. He further classified the tools and strategies that should be adopted to enhance and inform the operation of ICC and he also mentioned about certain skills that are to be adopted to add values of each desk of ICCR as a resource treasure.





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**Session -4**

**Interaction with International Students of ICCR- the Session was chaired by**

**Smt. Minakshi Mishra**, *Director, Zonal Office, ICCR, Kolkata and*  
**Sri R. Parthiban**, *Regional Director, ICCR, Kolkata.*

The session was more of an interactive one again as the participants got to interact with the foreign students from Nepal, Africa, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who are pursuing their academic courses as parts of ICCR International Scholarships Programme. After the preliminary introduction amongst the students and the participants, the students shared their journey narrating how they got to know about the scholarships, the process of application, getting through the colleges and other challenges they had to confront and how the ICCR acted as their local guardian and supported them. The students answered questions of the participants also narrated how, during pandemic, they had to face tremendous difficulties and how ICCR helped them to meet their needs and exigencies. The students mentioned that the scholarship opportunities, apart from their academics, gave them an orientation about Indian culture, tradition and warmth that the people share over here, and they would also tell and share with the people back in their countries and would further encourage others from their land to opt for this programme. Thus, they would act as cultural ambassadors of India in their land and would sustain effort to enhance their connect connection with us through educational programme.



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**Visit-I**

**Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Kolkata & Lecture on “Sri Aurobindo’s Ideas on Bharatvarsha”**

The participants were taken to the Sri Aurobindo Bhavan Kolkata, which is the birth place of an icon, who, through his works, activities and revolutionary endeavors has tried to foster the role of India and Indian culture in the process of development. A lecture on the ideas of Sri Aurobindo was organized at the premises itself by Dr. Amartya Kumar Dutta, Professor of Mathematics, Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata. The speaker shared the fundamental ideas defined by Sri Aurobindo himself while attaining development of the country and transforming human entity. He did punctuate the quotes of Sri Aurobindo that– Indian Civilization Should be judged by the greatness of its Millennium and not by the weakness of centuries.



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Day -3 (13th July, 2022)

Session -1

**Buddha Connectivity**—was addressed by

**Sri Supratim Basu**, *Convener, Association for Conservation and Tourism*

The Speaker through his presentation denoted how Buddhism has facilitated the trade prospects and connectivity for the country with the neighbouring countries. The merchant roots, religious tourisms connecting east with Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and China became crucial through Buddhist religious connections. As a result of which those areas attained development, employment opportunities gained strength and relations between neighbourhood also boosted. The presentations, mappings and notations helped the participants to understand the regional and inter-country connections through Buddhism.





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**Session -2**

**ICCR as Springboard of Indian Cultural Diplomacy-** was addressed by

**Amb. Satish Mehta, Former DG, ICCR**

Amb. Mehta tried to define how ICCR as an important agent have been trending efforts to demonstrate culture and cultural linkages in multiple ways and thereby boosting development opportunities with neighbouring territories. The speaker emphasized on principles of bureaucracy, management techniques that should be incorporated to cater the growth and development of ICCR and its multiple chapters. He outlined that the involvement of regional communities along with multi-sectoral forums should be ensured for the growth of the organization.



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**Session -3**

**The Ramayana and The Mahabharata Tradition in South Asia-** was addressed by  
**Sri Rajesh Purohit**, *Former Director, Indian Museum, Kolkata*

The Speaker illustrated how the two epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* have deeply influenced the people of South Asia. As the history of civilization, which is related to culture and the values of Human life is deeply expressed in the narratives of these two epics. *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* are not merely poetic or rhetorical expressions, rather they have surpassed dramatic impacts and brilliance and it is a treasure house of information on polity, philosophy of life, social and moral values, human relations, justice, ethics on the one hand and science like medicine, geology, botany, geography, military science, warfare strategy and every facet of civilization on the other. The epics impart values which operate locally as well as globally.



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**Session -4**

**Indian Cinema: Connecting Territories and Intersecting Cultures-** was addressed by

**Sri Sekhar Das**, *National and International award winner film Director- screen writer, associated with film institutes as guest faculty, Jury of film festivals, essayist and travel writer*

The speaker, through a power point presentation, audio-visuals and movie clippings tried to explain the ages of Indian cinema, the evolution that had taken place and slowly how with connectivity Bollywood cinema has made its reach to the western world. He also added that cinema has facilitated tourism and has substituted to the economy and most importantly a visual reciprocity between different parts of the country as a movie or a particular song may feature infrastructure or historic place of India and just with a blink it may take its viewers to some other parts. Bollywood Movies and Indian cinema as a whole have played a major role in attaining connectivity and cultural promotion of our country.





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**Visit-II**

**American Centre, Kolkata**

Participants were taken to American Centre, Kolkata to provide them an idea about the working and the initiatives that are been carried out by foreign missions in our country. The visit proved to be very useful as the participants got a chance to acknowledge multiple initiatives, activities, student's programmes including Fulbright scholarship and other academic exchange programmes carried out by American centre. After an infrastructural tour and a quiz contest hosted by the administration of the centre. Participants were addressed by Adrian Pratt, Director, American Centre and Ms. Sohini Das, Cultural Affair Specialist, who also briefed that apart from policy approach, cultural exchanges should also be a prime approach to strengthen Indo-US relations in future.



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**Day -4 (14th July, 2022)**

**Session 1 (Special Lecture)**

**The Relevance and Meaning of Bhartiya Jnana Parampara (Indian Wisdom Tradition) in the modern age of reason and scientific temper-**was addressed by

**Swami Atmapriyananda Maharaj**, *Pro-Chancellor, Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Education and Research Institute.*

The lecture led to a scientific investigation, inner exploration of Indian spiritual pursuit from most ancient Vedic and Upanishadic age. Swamiji added that science and religion would meet and shake hands, poetry and philosophy would become friends as this would be the religion of the future. He enunciated three fundamental principles namely classification principles, generalization principle and unification principle as these are common to modern science and ancient Vedanta, the spiritual science of India and tried to draw a roadmap for the scientifically tempered and rationally trained modern man to recover his spiritual moorings based on the eternal principles of Vedanta.



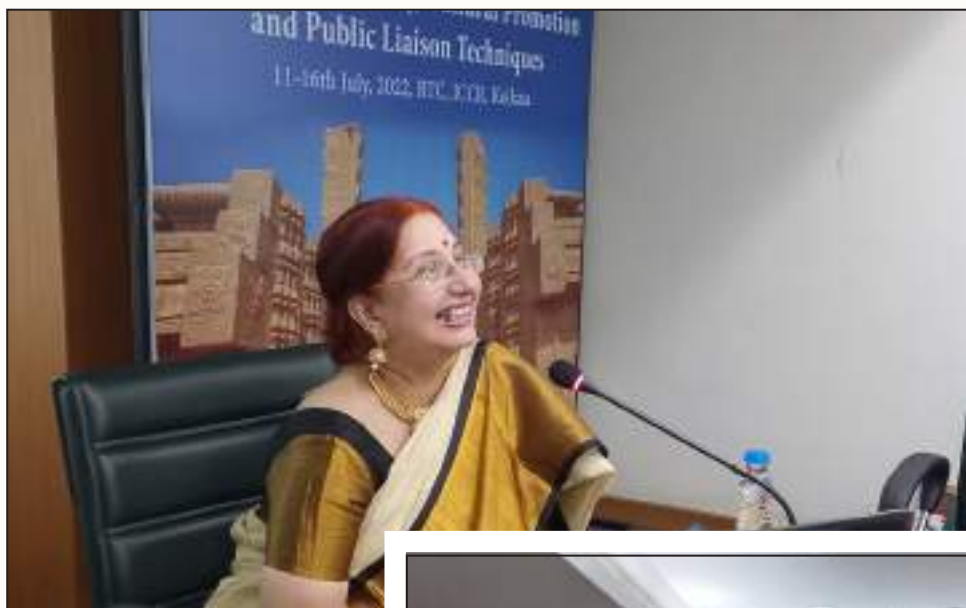
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**Session 2**

**Major Indian Dance Forms: Origins and Regions of Practice-** was addressed by

**Dr. Amita Dutta**, *Former Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, Uday Shankar Professor of Dance, Director Performing Arts Therapy Centre, Rabindra Bharati University.*

The presentation on the given topic turned out to be really interesting as the speaker tried to define how dance in India has been an integral part of every social and cultural event since ancient times. The speaker through forms, formats and visuals tried to feature forms of Indian dance and the legacy, creativity and ancient connectivity behind such forms in details.





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**Session 3**

**Management of ICCR Student Scholarship Scheme-** was addressed by

**Sri Shyam Sundar Chakraborti**, *Secretary, Faculty Council & ISA Rabindra Bharati University*

**Prof. Sanjay Gopla Sarkar**, *Jt. Registrar and ISA, Jadavpur University*

As the speakers, the session had Sri Shyam Sundar Chakraborti, Secretary, Faculty Council, & ISA Rabindra Bharati University, Prof. Sanjay Gopal Sarkar, Jt. Registrar and ISA, Jadavpur University. The session led discussions on the scholarships scheme offered by ICCR, admission procedures, implications of the student's portal. Also, some details were discussed between the participants and the speakers on how to make the scholarship programmes more flexible and approachable.



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**Session 4**

**Workshop on Media and Press Handling Techniques** - was addressed by

**Prof. Arindam Basu**, *Former Journalist and Senior Faculty, Mass Communication and Journalism Department, Sister Nivedita University.*

The academic lesson cum workshop turned out to be an enriching experience for the participants as they were acquainted with the principles of media handling, such as accuracy, objectivity, balance, being concise and many more. As a part of workshop, the speaker gave a live demonstration on the steps of writing news, news highlights, presentation of headlines, press briefing methods and also ways to comprehend press statements. Participants were given activities and multiple examples regarding the media handling techniques.



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**Day -5 (15th July, 2022)**

**Session 1**

**The Changing Face of Sufism in South Asia-** was addressed by

**Dr. Kashshaf Ghani**, *Assistant Professor, School of Historical Studies, Nalanda University*

The Speaker explained that Sufism represents the spiritual tradition of Islam in doctrinal sense. For an individual formally initiated into the Sufi paths, it signifies a spiritual journey driven by a deep yearning and a quest for the divine- signifying a transition from a limited understanding of one's own self to a limitless realization of the divine essence, driven by deep emotion of love and belongingness. He further illustrated that Sufism, which was initiated towards the end of the first millennium gradually became a significant medium of cultural convergence within the central and south Asia. Thus, Sufism has not restricted itself within the religious boundaries of preaching and propagation but has extended its forces to multitude of welfare activities and service of mankind.





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**Session 2**

**Multi-Cultural Identity of Indian Diasporas-** was addressed by

**Dr. Nilufer. E. Bharucha**, *Director, Mumbai Muenster Institute of Advanced Studies (MMIAS), Kalina Campus, University of Mumbai*

The Speaker's deliberation focused on how Indian Diasporas is larger than the entire population of some nation states. As India is multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-lingual and a multi-religious country, the Indian Diasporas too display such traits. It speaks different languages—Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil and they worship in different altars—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Zoroastrian. The talk also focused on how multiculturalism in India is not only reflected through beliefs and practices but are also reciprocated through literature and world of cinema to a great extent.



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**Session 3**

**The Great Indian Emigration of Girmityas and The Port of Calcutta**-was addressed by **Sri Gautam Chakraborti**, *Security Adviser (Retd) and Hony. Heritage Coordinator, SPMP*

The Speaker explained how, during colonial Emigration Acts– Private Agents, authorized by the planters of Mauritius came to India to recruit men. Girmityas also known as Jahajibhais, were indentured laborers from British India transported to work on plantation in Fiji, Mauritius, South Africa and Caribbean as a part of Indian indentured system. The rudimentary contract (The agreement or Girit as it was pronounced by native laborers) insisted laborers to work for planters or such other plantations. He may be transferred to and stipulated the duration of the contract (five years), remuneration, amount of food, clothing, medical facilities to be provided along with an optional free return passage to Calcutta at the end of the contract were promised. The Calcutta Port was the primary take-off point for the partly enticed and mostly forced human exodus to the British colonies from the vast catchment areas mainly of the Eastern province, the Gangetic plains Tamilian backward and also the Northern provinces.



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**Visit–III**

**Maritime Archives and Heritage Centre, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata**

The participants were taken to the Archives and Heritage Centre, Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, which is a 100-year-old heritage building at the Strand Road, Kolkata and was the hub of commercial activities a century ago. The archive provides an opportunity to know the history of the grand organization from its inception to present status. The institute is a repository of thousands of documents, maps, charts, photographs, memorabilia and audio-visual recordings. The participants and the coordinating group were accompanied by Sri Gautam Chakrabarti and Sri Kaushik Chatterjee, Joint Director (P&P)(I/C), SPM Port, Kolkata. A detailed description on the museums and its displays were given by Sri Kaushik Chatterjee, Security Adviser, SMPT and his research team. All the participants were given souvenir at the end of their tour.





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**Day -6 (16th July, 2022)**

**Session 1 (Special Session)**

**A Conversation with Diplomats**

On the final Day a Special session entitled “A Conversation with the Diplomats” was organized. The session was chaired by **Sri Rajiv Kumar**, *IFS, DDG, ICCR, India*. As Distinguished Speakers, the session received participation of **Mr. Piyapan Atipatya**, *Deputy Consul General, Royal Thai Consulate General in Kolkata*, **Miss Tamura Risa**, *Vice Consul, Consulate General of Japan in Kolkata*, **Mr. Sikder Mohammad Ashrafur Rahman**, *Counsellor, Bangladesh Deputy High Commission in Kolkata*. The session emanated with the remarks of **Amb. Rajib Kumar**, followed to which each of the foreign mission representative deliberated on facets of cultural diplomacy used by them and how they through activities and initiatives trying to portray their cultural aspects in foreign nation. The participants received chances to interact with the dignitaries and ask questions on the historical and shared cultural connections.



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### **Valedictory**

The event marked its end with a valedictory session. As a Distinguished Guest Ms. Alakananda Ray was present who is a well-known dancer, social reformist and also Member, RAC, ICCR, Kolkata. As a part of her remarks, she mentioned how Indian art, dance and music can be vital sources of transformation. She shared her experiences of working at a correctional home at Kolkata for the last 15 years where she orients inmates with music, art and dance forms, tries to heal them from within and tries to attain transformation in a positive way. The session was moderated by Amb. Rajiv Kumar, IFS, DDG, ICCR, India. The Distinguished Guest congratulated for been selected as ICCR officials and also for completing a week-long programme. The valedictory was also addressed by Sri Arindam Mukherjee where he thanked ICCR for providing ISCS an opportunity to impart 32 officials of ICCR for the Course Work on Cultural Diplomacy, Cultural Promotions and Public Liaison techniques.

The session ended with the distribution of Certificates among the participants by Amb. Rajib Kumar and Ms. Alakananda Ray.



### **Recommendation**

1. Participants should be given opportunities to participate in refresher course on Indian Culture and Heritage.
2. Participants should often be given chance to participate in various lectures and visit cultural fests.
3. Participants should be given opportunity to conduct field trips and field works in historical sites as well as Indian heritage centres.
4. Participants should now be motivated to have group discussions on management skills, pedagogy towards promotion and preservation of culture.



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*Cover image : Stone Chariot, Courtyard Vittala temple  
sunset Hampi, Karnataka, India*



**Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, India**

48/2, Dr. Suresh Sarkar Road,  
Kolkata- 700 014, India  
doofficeiscs@gmail.com  
www.iscskolkata.org

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