



भारतीय सांस्कृतिक संबंध परिषद्
Indian Council for Cultural Relations



सत्यमेव जयते
Government Of India



अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सहयोग परिषद्
Indian Council for
International Co-operation



Ministry of External Affairs

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad

present

PBD Conference

Leveraging the Soft Power of India

(Goodwill through craft, cuisine and creativity)

Date: 16 October 2021

SEGMENT I : Eastern Region

(Africa, South, South East Asia & Far East)

Time: 11.00 - 12.30 IST

SEGMENT II : Western Region

(Gulf, Europe, Americas and the Caribbean)

Time: 19.00 - 20.30 IST

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Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference on Leveraging the Soft Power of India

(Goodwill through craft, cuisine and creativity)

Since the beginning of the civilizations, nations and societies have deployed a mix of hard and soft power to promote and defend their larger geo-political interests. For responding to particular situations or goals, various soft measures of economic, cultural, educational, development partnership diplomacy are deployed. Overtime, diaspora has also emerged as a potent and effective resource of soft power.

Having historically been a global meeting point of civilizations and ideas, India has emerged as one of the largest diasporic countries with a rich history and experience of syncretic bridge building of goodwill. This reach has expanded with a strong 30 million members of Indian diaspora spread in over 100 countries.

Given their democratic values and creativity, the Indian Diaspora has evolved as one of the most successful with extraordinary prosperity, higher education, technological skills,

entrepreneurship and of late important political role, occupying high constitutional positions.

Government of India has always valued the importance of diaspora in soft power projection and has introduced a variety of initiatives and measures to strengthen and support their connect with Indian roots and heritage. The diaspora has also reciprocated in equal measure. Responding to the disruptions caused by Covid, this engagement shifted to virtual digital mode. The last PBD was accordingly conducted entirely through virtual channels.

Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad) had jointly organised a very successful overarching conference on "Role of Diaspora in Promotion of Indian Culture Abroad" in the run up to the 16 PBD. We are glad to organise the next phase of this



interaction by plunging to the sub thematic level so that the various aspects of cultural engagement could be addressed with a greater focus and specialisation. This conference would accordingly deliberate on craft, cuisine and creativity. With the passage of time, Indian cuisine has emerged amongst the most popular globally. Craft is also evolving as a growing new sector especially in fashion design, ethnic craft and painting, also resulting in emergence of some reputed Indian craft research centres in several diaspora countries.

Ironically, these segments have suffered serious Covid-19 disruptions because of prolonged, repeated and widespread lockdowns and other restrictions. Objective of the conference would also be to understand the magnitude and depth of these setbacks and explore the mitigating measures, including appropriate policy adaptations.

Several academics and experts from abroad and India would deliberate at the conference to access the growing importance of diaspora's contribution to soft power projection and suggest further measures for making this valuable asset more effective. The proceedings of the conference will be captured in a report identifying the way forward for consideration by the relevant stakeholders.



Eastern Region (Africa, South, South East Asia & Far East)

Date : 16 October 2021

Time : 1100-1230 IST

INAUGURAL SESSION



Chair/ Opening Remarks – **Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya**, Secretary (CPV & OIA), MEA

Introductory Remarks - **Shri Shyam Parande**, Secretary General, ARSP

Keynote - **Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe**, Hon'ble President, ICCR

Guest of Honour – **Ms. Rosy Akbar**, Hon'ble Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Government of **Fiji**

Inaugural Address - **Shri V. Muraleedharan**, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India

TECHNICAL SESSION



Chair/Moderator – **Amb. Anup Mudgal**, Chairperson, DRRC

Ms. Kshipra Shukla, Chairman, Uttar Pradesh Institute of Design and Research, India

Mrs. Mala Chumman Ramyeed, Former Associate Professor Arts and Crafts, MGI, **Mauritius**

Ms. Asha Maharaj, Chef and Food Columnist, **South Africa**

Mrs. Prabha Ravi, Art Practitioner and Administrator, **New Zealand**

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS



Summing up and Vote of Thanks- Prof. Gopal Arora, Secretary, ARSP

Western Region (Gulf, Europe, Americas and the Caribbean)

Date : 16 October 2021

Time : 1900-2030 IST

INAUGURAL SESSION



Chair/ Opening Remarks – **Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya**, Secretary (CPV & OIA), MEA

Introductory Remarks - **Amb. Virendra Gupta**, President, ARSP

Keynote - **Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe**, Hon'ble President, ICCR

Guest of Honour – **Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud**, MP and Hon'ble Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Government of Cooperative Republic of Guyana **Guyana**

Inaugural Address - **Shri V. Muraleedharan**, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of **India**

TECHNICAL SESSION



Chair/Moderator – **Shri Dinesh K Patnaik**, Director General, ICCR

Mr Vikas Khanna, Indian American Chef, Filmmaker and Author, **USA**

Ms Usha Bora, CEO and Founder of Jamini, **France**

Mr. Ashok Kalra, Hotelier and Advisor to Indian Business Network, **Kuwait**

Ms. Anjana Das-Hasper, Textile Designer, **Germany**

Ms. Shefali Adhikari, Artistic Director/ TV Host / Director - Culture and Programs - Indo Canadian community

Mr. Nirav K Patel, Businessman and Youth Community Leader, **USA**

Ms. Rama Vaidyanathan, Bharatanatyam Artist, Directors, Ganesha Natyalaya, **India**

DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS



Summing up and Vote of Thanks- **Shri Narayan Kumar**, Hon. Director, ARSP

**Honorable Rosy Akbar**

Minster for Women, Children and Poverty
Alleviation for Fiji

Honorable Rosy Akbar is the current Minster for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation for Fiji. She has been serving as a Cabinet Minister since 2014, which was also the beginning of her political career and went to serve a second term following the 2018 elections.

Before becoming the Minster for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation, Hon. Akbar was the Minister for Education Heritage and Arts from 2018-2021. In her previous terms as Cabinet Minister, she held the portfolios of Minster for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation from 2014-2016 and Minister for Health and Medical Services from 2016-2018.

She is a forward thinking, innovative and results driven professional. She is a passionate advocate of Non-Communicable Diseases, Communicable Diseases and Environmental Health, Gender Equality and Elderly Care.

Hon. Akbar hails from Ba and was a school teacher for over 20 years, teaching English Language and Literature before joining politics. She has two daughters.

Brief introduction of
Participant speakers in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference On

Leveraging the Soft Power of India

(Goodwill through craft, cuisine and creativity)

SESSION I



Kshipra Shukla

Kshipra Shukla is the Chairman of Uttar Pradesh Institute of Design and Research (UPIDR), an autonomous body under the aegis of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department of Government of Uttar Pradesh. She is a post graduate in journalism & mass communication, also in medieval and modern Indian history. She has done accessory design course from National Institute for Fashion and Technology (NIFT), Delhi. She has extensively and closely worked with the grass root level artisans & weavers of UP, by giving them design intervention, tool kit, direct market linkage and conducting hundreds of design workshops, buyer seller meets, by imparting training to almost 20000 artisans/ weavers covering almost 45 districts of UP. Kshipra has also initiated a new scheme 'Samman, Kaushal se Bhavishya Nirman' for the boys and girls of the government shelter homes, by giving them design workshops & branding/ marketing their products. Very soon, this initiative will cover all the shelter homes of Uttar Pradesh.



Mala Ramyead

Mala Ramyead is former Associate Professor in School of Fine Arts, Mahatma Gandhi Institute and office-in-charge of Rabindra Nath Tagore Institute, where she started certificate course in Ceramics and diploma in arts & crafts. She did a Diploma in Fine Art & Crafts from Shanti Niketan, West Bengal. She has completed her master's from College of Art's, Delhi (Indian Commonwealth Scholarship). She has carried out numerous exhibitions and workshops to showcase Indian art, craft and culture.

SESSION I



Asha Maharaj

Asha Maharaj is a professional chef who has made her mark nationally and internationally in the Food & Hospitality Industry for over 4 decades. She is the author of many cook books. She has been the Celebrity chef at many food shows nationally. With numerous awards and accolades, Asha is recognized as a Top Culinary Expert in South Africa. She has also worked extensively in identifying, training aspirant chefs and skills development amongst the less privileged. She is a Multi Media Personality. She has presented her own radio show on food & home and produced a radio magazine program. Asha has also worked as the Regional Home Economist for a multi-national food company for many years.



Prabha Ravi

Prabha Ravi is a very experienced and respected art practitioner and administrator. She is the founder, producer, director and choreographer of Natraj School of Dance, an Indian classical dance school established in 1999 specialising in teaching Bharatanatyam. Her work and contribution to dance and the ethnic community has been well recognised by the community and by both regional and central government through several awards. Prabha is a facilitator, coach, mentor, assessor, presenter, panel speaker and an experienced governor and sits on various boards in New Zealand. She also works as Principal-Strategy Delivery for Stats, a government agency responsible for all data in New Zealand.

**Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud**

Hon'ble MP and Minister of Human Services and Social Security,
Government of Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Guyana

Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud is the Minister of Human Services and Social Security of the Government of Guyana, a Member of Parliament and President of the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha. She is a physician by profession. She was a former lecturer at the University of Guyana School of Medicine and worked in the Emergency and Surgery Departments at St. Joseph and Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation.

Dr. Persaud served as Assistant General Secretary and Youth Advisor of the Sabha and Chair of the Mahila Mandalee (Women's Section of the Sabha) from her late teens; positions she held until her unanimous election as President of the Guyana Hindu Dharmic Sabha in 2013. Over the years, she has worked integrally with many communities and mandirs and developed initiatives to improve the welfare of women, youths and the underprivileged through Dharmic Free Health Centre in Betterhope (2005), GHDS's HIV/AIDS outreach programme in collaboration with Global Fund and Ministry of Health, GHDS's Voices Against Child Abuse programme, Women's Literacy and Empowerment, Suicide Prevention and Intervention initiative, GHDS's Youth programmes and many others. She has conceptualized and spearheaded community outreaches comprising of medical teams, counselors, peer educators and youths in an effort reach out to all communities in an effort to arrest suicide, abuse and violence and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Dr. Vindhya Persaud has been an outspoken and proactive advocate against many social ills. In 2014, an initiative of hers was realized; Bal Nivas - a shelter for Children who have been abused.

Dr. Persaud has been hosting Kala Milan a popular television programme of the Sabha which features Indian culture, the art forms and Hinduism from her teens and hosts a daily radio programme "Sanskaar" and a weekly radio programme Dharmic Milan. A trained Kathak dancer, she has been voluntarily teaching dance at the Pandit Reepu Daman Persaud Sanskritik Kendra. She is the Director, Choreographer, creative mind and writer behind Naya Zamana, an award winning dance-drama production which is staged to sold out audiences annually at the National Cultural Centre, Georgetown and New York. Dr. Persaud writes for and is the Editor of the "Horizons" magazine; a cultural/heritage magazine which is published annually.

Dr. Vindhya Persaud was the Chair of the Social Services Sector Committee in the last Parliament, former Chair of the Guyana Women's Leadership Institute and a commissioner on the National Family Commission.

SESSION II



Vikas Khanna

Vikas Khanna is an internationally acclaimed Indian American chef, filmmaker and author. He is a James Beard nominee and one of the first Indian chefs to be awarded a Michelin Star in the U.S. He has been featured amongst the 10 most influential chefs in the world by Deutsche Welle and Gazette Review. He is the host of Master Chef India, Twist of Taste and Mega Kitchens on National Geographic. He is the author of 37 award winning books, including UTSAV (World's most expensive cookbook) and the creator of documentary series Holy Kitchens and Kitchens of Gratitude. He founded the Museum of Kitchen Arts at Manipal, India. His initiative Feed India served more than 51 million meals during the covid pandemic. The Last Color marks Khanna's debut as a film writer and director which was eligible for OSCAR's race for best feature, 2020.

Usha Bora is an entrepreneur of Indian art & craft. Born in Assam and educated in Delhi & Ahmedabad, Usha moved to Paris after her MBA from IIMA and started her career as a Marketing executive at the Luxury product division of L'Oréal. She soon recognized the potential for a high-end brand that embodies the craftsmanship of Indian artisans combined with French design aesthetics. Usha created Jamini, a home décor and accessories brand that promotes Indian savoir faire and helps preserve traditional craft techniques. Encouraged by the tremendous response to the brand, Usha has showcased Indian cuisine by organizing food pop ups in Paris, store pop ups in New York & Bordeaux, and led culture & craft focused travel groups to Bengal & Gujarat. Through Jamini's flagship store in Paris, the eshop, and a network of distributors across Europe, Usha introduces European consumers to lesser-known forms of Indian craft & cuisine as well as interesting travel destinations.



Usha Bora



Ashok Kalra

Ashok Kalra is an hotelier and advisor to Indian Business Network in Kuwait. He is a science graduate with a degree in Hotel Management from IHM Pusa Institute in New Delhi. In 1985, along with his partners, he opened the first Mughal Mahal restaurant in Kuwait. In 1987, he was assigned to provide banquet catering to monarchs, presidents and heads of state from 44 nations attending the Fifth Islamic Summit. Today, Mughal Mahal is the most popular fine-dining Indian restaurant chain with 11 branches that employ over 450 staff. The brand successfully promotes a form of culinary diplomacy that creates a lasting fondness for Indian dishes and cuisines, which has translated into an abiding love for India and its culture among Kuwaitis and international expatriates. He is actively engaged in social, cultural and humanitarian initiatives among the Indian community in Kuwait, and in supporting noble causes in India.

Anjana Das can be described as a global nomad. After a childhood in Germany as the daughter of Bengali parents, she lived for quite a few years in various places in India and Southeast Asia. She now runs her clothing label 'White Champa' and is sharing her time between Berlin, New Delhi, and Washington. Concurrently, she is working on the research project, made in India and Germany which focuses on textile handcraft in both countries. This project is funded by the German Foreign Office and the Tagore Centre of the Indian Embassy in Berlin. Her expertise lies in building bridges between India and Europe in the field of textiles and fashion. She has gained her understanding through years of working with artisans in the field of embroidery. With a focus on intangible cultural heritage and creating awareness of methods of traditional sustainability, she also aims to connect long-established forms of textile production with textile innovation.



Anjana Das



Shefali Adhikari

Shefali Adhikari is an Indo Canadian residing in Ottawa for over 15 years. She has been actively involved in widely promoting Indian Arts, Music, and women empowerment in Canada through variety of events, TV shows and through hosting multiple conferences. Being an active member on the Board of Directors for Overseas Friends of India in Canada, Mahaganeshutsav and Program Director at Diwali on the hill at Parliament of Canada, she has been a key member in supporting and promoting cultural awareness. She also hosts programmes on a local Indian TV Channel. Shefali has been a four time recipient of award and recognition by House of Commons, Government of Canada for her exemplary services in the community for promoting multiculturalism. She is also a recipient of felicitation by Legislative assembly of Ontario for contribution in arts in the community.



Nirav K Patel

Nirav K Patel was born in Gujarat India, from freedom fighter family background. As a successful entrepreneur, he is closely associated with supporting and promoting small handicraft specialty items in USA. He is highly interested in and supports Indian art, culture and craft in USA. Nirav is an organizer of business Expo, Indian culture events to promote Indian craft, art and cuisines. He is also involved in a series of social activities such as installing water purification plant in 37 under privilege villages of Gujarat. During covid crises, he has supported many Indian students. Nirav is also a Youth community leader and PR coordinator VHAP North America.



Rama Vaidyanathan

Rama Vaidyanathan is one of the best known Bharatanatyam dancers of her generation. She trained intensively under the legendary dancer Yamini Krishnamurthy and the celebrated Guru Saroja Vaidyanathan. In a performance career spanning more than 30 years, Rama has developed her own individual style without forsaking the core principles of her dance form. Having performed at every major dance venues of the world, she has been awarded with several titles from various State governments. Rama is the recipient of the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar in the year 2017. As the Director of Ganesa Natyalaya, New Delhi, she has been actively engaged in teaching for more than twenty five years. Rama balances a hectic performance schedule while conducting workshops and master classes all over the world, inspiring a whole generation of dancers.



Indian Council For Cultural Relations



Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of Independent India, founded the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) on 9th April 1950.

The objectives of the Council are to participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes relating to India's external cultural relations; to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people; to establish and develop relations with national and international organizations in the field of culture.

ICCR is about a communion of cultures, a creative dialogue with other nations. To facilitate this interaction with world cultures, the Council strives to articulate and demonstrate the diversity and richness of the cultures of India, both in and with other countries of the world.

The Council prides itself on being a pre-eminent institution engaged in cultural diplomacy and the sponsor of intellectual exchanges between India and partner countries. ICCR's activities are aimed at reaching out to the hearts and minds of the people through a dissemination of its heritage, values and philosophy to create an endearing and everlasting image and promote India's soft power overseas.



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To address the long felt need for an organization devoted to engaging with the large number of Overseas Indians (OI), both NRIs & PIOs, some like minded intellectuals initiated a forum to discuss the issues pertaining to Pravasi Bharatiyas. Thus, the Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) or the Indian Council for International Co-operation was established in 1978 as a non-profit, non-governmental and non-political organization to promote universal brotherhood and harmony, embodied in its motto, “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” or ‘the world is one family’.

One of the key guiding spirits behind the establishment of the ARSP was Shri Baleshwar Agrawal, a veteran journalist and social activist. He was a founder member of ARSP, serving as its Secretary General from 1983 to 2013, and he contributed to bringing diaspora issues into India’s foreign policy formulation. Shri Agrawal’s contribution, inter alia, to the L.M Singhvi Committee Report on Indian Diaspora led to the introduction of a number of new diaspora related initiatives like Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and the PIO/OCI schemes.

Since its inception four decades back, the ARSP has emerged as an important non-governmental organization connecting the people of Indian origin across the world. The ARSP acts as a voice for the diaspora with the relevant Indian Ministries, departments and institutions.

The wide ranging activities of ARSP include programmes on cultural, educational, social and civilizational matters, economic links; interactions with think tanks, opinion makers like Parliamentarians, media, etc and linguistic and literary promotions.

In recognition of the diaspora as an important strategic asset, ARSP decided to set up a Diaspora Research and Resource Centre (DRRC) in the year 2017 which is also supported by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Diaspora studies has become a subject of serious academic research and scrutiny in recent times. Being an important global phenomenon, a sizeable body of literature on diaspora has evolved world over both in the form of folklore and scholarly works on the historical, anthropological, sociological, cultural, demographic, political and economic aspects.



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However, there is still a serious need of scholarly work on various aspects of Indian diaspora. DRRC has been set up keeping this purpose in mind and to undertake comprehensive and systematic studies on multifarious issues concerning diaspora in an integrated, inter disciplinary and holistic framework.

The priority objectives of the DRRC are as follows:

- i) Creation of detailed and interactive online database of institutions/ organisations working on diaspora themes within India and abroad.
- ii) Outreach and networking including through conferences/ seminars/ roundtables/ exchange of visit,
- iii) Engaging the diaspora youth through focused programme
- iv) Publications/research by way of support for publications of books by reputed authors on diaspora themes and publication of a quarterly research journal.

DRRC has launched a number of sustained initiatives and organized a series of activities to promote interaction and connectivity with the diaspora including hosting KIP delegations, diaspora delegations, special lectures. It has acted as voice for diaspora to articulate their views and opinions and a vehicle of communication with the government of India for articulating the diaspora concerns in the relevant policy initiatives. Currently, the ARSP is headed by Amb Virendra Gupta, President and Shri Shyam Parande as its Secretary General. Amb Anup Mudgal guides the work of the DRRC.



Indian Council for Cultural Relations

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