

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 3478
ANSWERED ON- 13/03/2026

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

3478. SHRI TEJASVI SURYA

SHRI ALOK SHARMA

SHRI CAPTAIN BRIJESH CHOWTA

SHRI PRADEEP KUMAR SINGH

SHRI BHARATSINHJI SHANKARJI DABHI

SHRI BIDYUT BARAN MAHATO

SHRI DAMODAR AGRAWAL

SHRI SHANKAR LALWANI

SHRI CHAVAN RAVINDRA VASANTRAO

SHRI DINESHBHAI MAKWANA

SHRI DHAIRYASHEEL SAMBHAJIRAO MANE

SMT. SHOBHANABEN MAHENDRASINH BARAIYA

SHRI SUDHEER GUPTA

SHRI PRADEEP PUROHIT

DR. HEMANG JOSHI

SHRI NALIN SOREN

SHRI BIBHU PRASAD TARAI

SHRI HARIBHAI PATEL

SHRI JAGDAMBIKA PAL

SHRI MADHAVANENI RAGHUNANDAN RAO

SMT. MALVIKA DEVI

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:-

(a) the details of assessment and impact of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarship schemes on strengthening India's cultural diplomacy and global outreach;

(b) the plans of Government to increase the number of scholarship slots for foreign nationals in the coming academic years;

(c) whether the Government is planning to expand the number of seats of Indian Studies in foreign universities to promote Indian languages and culture abroad, if so, the details and the status thereof; and

(d) whether the Government has any proposal to strengthen promotion of Hindi and other Indian languages abroad through publications and cultural collaborations, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA)

(a) The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) offers around 4000 scholarships annually to foreign students to pursue studies in around 134 Indian universities/institutions in various mainstream disciplines, as well as in Indian music, dance, art, Yoga and Ayurveda. ICCR

scholarships equip foreign students to pursue careers in various sectors after leaving India while also enabling them to experience and appreciate Indian art, heritage, and culture firsthand. This not only generates awareness about India but also fosters constituencies of goodwill for India in different countries of the world while also creating thousands of young, informal ambassadors of India abroad. Considering that more than 90% of ICCR scholarships are availed of by students from developing countries, ICCR's Scholarship programs position India as a global education hub and serves as a visible and impactful demonstration of India's strong commitment to South-South cooperation and capacity building. With several ICCR Alumni serving in important positions in foreign countries, ICCR Scholarships also enhance India's global outreach and serve as a key instrument of India's cultural diplomacy.

(b) The number of ICCR scholarship slots has increased by 400 in this academic year 2026-27. While ICCR offered a total of 4047 scholarships in the last academic year 2025-26, the number has increased to 4447 in the current academic year 2026-27.

(c & d) The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) promotes Indian languages and culture abroad by setting up Chairs of Indian Studies in foreign universities, in consultation with Indian Embassies and Consulates. At present, 9 such Chairs of Indian Studies are currently operational in foreign universities, out of which 6 Chairs teach Hindi and the remaining 3 teach Sanskrit, Tamil and Music, respectively. The deployment of 7 more Chairs to teach Hindi and an additional Chair in Sanskrit at various foreign Universities is under process. The ICCR Chairs are also mandated to promote an understanding of India, Indian civilisation and culture as part of their academic activities abroad. ICCR also publishes articles of foreign nationals and Indian writers in its bi-monthly magazine “Ganganachal” to promote Hindi worldwide.

Under its Grant-in-Aid Scheme, the Ministry of Culture provides grants to Indo-foreign friendship societies for promotion of cultural activities, including various events/ presentations in Hindi and other Indian languages.
