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### India's Influence on Soviet Culture

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# INDIA'S INFLUENCE ON SOVIET CULTURE

*Ashley Ferguson*

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Throughout the twentieth century, the Soviet Union worked to establish a strong political friendship with India, recognizing the importance of having a powerful ally in Asia. While there has been a significant amount of research on the political relations between these two, I explore the way that this political relationship influenced culture within the Soviet Union.

I conducted the research using the archives at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. I worked with a number of primary sources by Soviet and Indian artists, writers, and diplomats, in which they discussed the various ways in which they had seen a blending of their two cultures. There were a number of accounts addressing the popularity of Indian music, poetry and literature, and its rapid spread throughout all regions of the Soviet Union. I also found that there was much cooperation between filmmakers and scientists, where representatives from both India and the Soviet Union worked side by side towards a common goal. Indian and Soviet citizens also published travel accounts in which they described their positive experiences traveling between the two countries.

This research exposes an often-overlooked aspect of Indo-Soviet relations. By looking at the music, literature, and films that citizens were exposed to, one is able to gain a greater understanding of their daily life and personal experiences. This research also shows how the Soviet government not only tried to pursue close political bonds, but also pushed the idea of close personal ties between their two countries.