

My Experience with IFLA 2010

“Great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events; small minds discuss people.”

- Eleanor Roosevelt

As expected, IFLA 2010 Congress gathered more than 3500 young and matured minds to discuss their ideas, reflections on the changing global orders and research results in their specialized domains. This conference had given us an opportunity to learn from the great minds and global leaders on the issues beyond its main theme “Open access to knowledge - promoting sustainable progress”. Five congress tracks expanded around this main theme, namely, (1) Open access and digital resources; (2) Policy, strategy and advocacy; (3) Users driving access and services; (4) Tools and techniques; and (5): Ideas, innovations, anticipating the new.

Although, there were many professional attractions in the Congress, plenary sessions gave us a rare opportunity to listen to illustrated lectures by internationally renowned social thinkers and bestselling writers, viz., Jan Eliasson, Henning Mankell, Hans Rosling and Sture Allén. These world leaders talked about how bridging digital and knowledge divides helps in socio-economic empowerment of marginalized communities, particularly who live in developing and least-developed countries across the regions. They also mentioned how some countries and communities are progressing by creating a pool of knowledge capitals and human capitals. They also praised IFLA and its partner institutions for creating an equitable platform for international collaborations, cooperation and exchanges to overcome many socio-political challenges in the member countries.

I participated in this conference as a paper presenter and a professional delegate. I had a paper presentation titled “Library advocacy in India in the light of education for sustainable development - perspectives of an emerging economy” on 12th August 2010 in the Session 87. This session covered Congress Track 2: Policy, Strategy and Advocacy, with a sub-theme “Towards national library strategy: opening up access to research”. This Session was jointly organized by Sections of Management of Library Associations, Library Theory and Research, Management and Marketing, Education and Training, Statistics and Evaluation, and LIS in Developing Countries SIG. This session was chaired and moderated by Dr. Janice Lachance, Chair of Management of Library

Associations Section. Other organizing Sections' Chairs introduced their respective Section before beginning of this Session. Dr. Marian Koren of Netherlands Library Forum (FOBID) nicely introduced main theme of this session. In this session, five speakers presented country perspectives of library advocacy programs and roles national library associations played in this direction. They also mentioned how their library associations have been facilitating member libraries in outreaching, advocating and marketing public library services to the user communities. These associations felt several challenges during global economic crisis period, as legislators and policymakers could not be always supportive in continuing public library services. In my presentation, I introduced how other social movements can supplement public library movement in my country. Other social movements, namely, Right to Education (RTE), Right to Information (RTI), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), have social champions and brand ambassadors who can give strategic directions to the public library advocacy program across the country. These social movements have been trying to promote universal access to knowledge and information at the grassroots level for socio-economic empowerment and for creating an atmosphere of participatory democracy.

I have attended several other sessions throughout the Congress not only on my core research interest areas but also on peripheral professional areas.

Congress's Poster Sessions attracted many young library professionals like me, since these posters were created, displayed and demonstrated by young professionals covering all continents. Poster sessions also gave me an opportunity to interact with project managers of several national and international projects. Some of these projects can be replicated in countries like India. Exhibitors' stalls also helped me in knowing latest library technologies available in the advanced countries. Several international publishers introduced new products or services to IFLA 2010 delegates.

Social networking events, particularly, night events and cultural events helped me in meeting my old friends, new friends, my country colleagues and several future collaborators. I could discuss my future research projects with some Congress delegates, whom I met for the first time. IFLA 2010 helped me to identify several committed subject experts, which may enrich my future research projects and professional engagements. Online social networking site <http://2010.ifla.org> gave a chance to young professionals to make real time communications among themselves.

As I am coming from a global south, I was very keen to understand public and academic library systems and services in the Nordic countries. Swedish Library Association gave me a sweet introduction to warmth of library fraternities in this region. Actually, I am very much impressed with Swedish Library Association's small souvenir shop in the convention centre, from where I bought a few attractive souvenir items. Several other Nordic libraries had nicely decorated their displays at the same place.

I was fortunate enough to avail two library visits on 10th August. In the morning I visited first one, which was Majorna's Library. This is a lovely library space attractive to both children and elderly people. My second visit was to the Borås Library Museum and Library of University of Borås. I enjoyed this soul-refreshing journey to Borås city, which is now transformed to a knowledge centre from an industrial city. Borås Library Museum hosts a unique collection of many interesting items, showcasing historical evolution of public library movements, equipments and formats. Learning Resource Centre at the University of Borås gave me an opportunity to understand how art, aesthetics and science combine together to make a memorable experience for a library user in using a modern academic library.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to FOBID, the Netherlands Library Forum for a generous travel grant to facilitate my participation in this important international event. I am also very much thankful to: Dr. Marian Koren of FOBID for arranging necessary financial support within a short time, the coordinators of Session 87 of IFLA 2010 for accepting my paper, and IFLA for making other necessary arrangements.



Welcoming Design at Göteborg Botanical Garden



With Indian Delegates @ IFLA2010



In the Poster Session, with Dr. Marian Koren



Way to Göteborg's Southern Archipelago



**“Make Tea, Not War”
From a Photo Exhibition during
Göteborg Cultural Festival**



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