

Public Speaking
Prof. Binod Mishra
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology - Roorkee

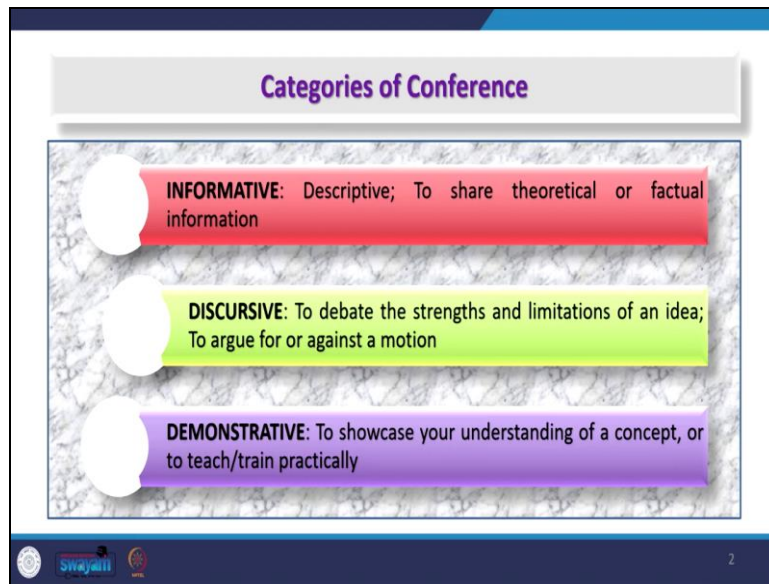
Lecture: 42
Conference Presentations Part I

Welcome back to NPTEL online certification course on Public Speaking, my dear friends. Now having discussed interviews in the previous week's lecture, we have now entered week 9 and we are going to discuss in the lectures of this week conference presentations and meeting managements. I am actually reminded of William Shakespeare, the great playwright who in one of the plays, says that all this world is just like a stage and men and women are players, they are actors. And all of us have their exits and entrances and we have to play many parts in our lives. So, is the case with public speaking. In public speaking, you are not expected of only one role, there are various roles as a professional that you have to enact from time to time. You are not supposed to speak only by giving a speech but you also have to demonstrate your speaking abilities through some other events also and today one of those events that we are going to discuss is conferences.

Now you might all be thinking that is conference also a part of public speaking? Yes, of course, because it is conference where one comes across different sorts of people and one at times, has to organize conferences, on other times one has to deliver talks in the conferences. Now through these lectures that are to follow, we shall be deliberating upon what are conference presentations, what are the types of conferences and what are the expectations and what roles are expected of us either as an organizer or as a participant.

And through this I would like to emphasize upon the fact that you can display, deliver and you can also prove your speaking abilities in the midst of the galaxy of people from different areas. Now before we go into the details of it, let us talk about the categories of conferences.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:29)



We all know that the major aim in most of the public speaking situations is to inform, to entertain and to educate through different ways and that is how the conferences also can be informative. So, informative conferences are very descriptive where one shares theoretical or factual information. Then there is discursive conference where one debates on the strengths and limitations of an idea of a proposal of a policy and then demonstrative where the speaker or the candidate showcases his or her understanding of a concept in order to teach or train practically.

Now let us also spend some time on conference types whenever we speak the word conference most of us start thinking that it could only be academic. My dear friends, today conference has become an integral part and it is not confined only to academics but then at the outset let us talk about the academic conferences because many of you who are in a profession, from time- to- time depending upon your profession you may be asked to organize an academic conference.


(Refer Slide Time: 05:08)

Conference: Types

1. Academic Conference: An academic conference (also called **academic congress** or **research conference**) refers to meetings organized by associations to present and discuss the findings of ongoing academic researches (either narrow & discipline-specific or interdisciplinary).

Attending academic conferences assumes a **pivotal significance in one's academic career**, as they:

- ✓ offer intellectual exposure to the researchers by providing them with a platform to present their ideas to experts for their feedback.
- ✓ apprise of new discoveries in the discipline.
- ✓ open new insights for them about the challenges in their project.
- ✓ help the participants to improve upon their presentation skills
- ✓ Provide with opportunities to forge valuable connections with knowledgeable experts on the topic
- ✓ disseminate the results of your research for the benefit of the society



3

So, an academic conference actually refers to such a sort of gathering or meeting of people in organizations and associations to present and discuss the findings of ongoing academic researches, fine? Sometimes we narrow it down and sometimes it is actually discipline oriented or sometimes it is inter-disciplinary. Attending academic conferences that actually assumes a pivotal significance in one's academic career.

As people who are in the profession of teaching- learning, they often come across academic conferences. These conferences provide different opportunities to learn, to unlearn, to add to increase one's knowledge. So, here are some of the points: academic conferences often offer intellectual exposure to the budding scholars by providing them with a platform to present their ideas to experts for their feedback.

Academic conferences also apprise of new discoveries in their discipline. My dear friends, the world is beautiful and we are surviving despite the onslaughts of several diseases, several dangerous, I mean from time- to- time, we come across for example over the last two years we have already survived, we have already triumphed over pandemic and this had been possible only because of conferences where people might have, where scientists might have, where medical practitioners might have tried their level best to discover.

How one can guide oneself from these dangers? Academic conferences often open new insights for researchers about the challenges in their products. It actually helps participants also to improve upon their presentation skills. You will find that specially those people who

are new to the academia when they have to go to present their papers or discuss their problems they feel very shy. They are very hesitant.

So, they are provided with the opportunity to forge valuable connections with experts on the topic. Academic conferences also help spread the results of one's research for the benefit of society. That is why academic conferences are important. Next is business conferences--- as the term itself suggests it is meant for business.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:19)

The slide is titled "Conference: Types (Contd.)" and contains the following text:

2. **Business Conference:** These are professional gatherings which bring together business leaders, economists, techies from across the globe to discuss the trends, challenges and opportunities pertaining to their industry.

Participating in business conferences enables the entrepreneurs to:

- Learn innovative business skills and marketing techniques
- Showcase business expertise among clients
- Expand network, stimulate new ideas, create valuable contacts
- Launch new services, ideas and products, or advertise the existing ones
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of the competing market rivals

The slide also features a footer with logos for Swayam and a small number '4'.

Now in these business conferences it is actually a meeting of professionals who can bring and discuss trends, challenges, and opportunities pertaining to their particular business or industry. Participating in business conferences can help many start-ups, many entrepreneurs to learn innovative business skills to showcase their business expertise among other clients, customers also to expand their network, stimulate, encourage new ideas launch new services or products. And also help them assess the strengths and weaknesses of the competing market rivals. Every day or the other when you might be watching movies or watching news on the TV channels, you might have come across several such advertisements through which they are promoting their products but that could also have been a result of these business conferences. Then, authors conference or writers conference, my dear friends. There is not any area where this conference has not got its use and that is why we have included in public speaking some of the lectures on conferences.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:39)

Contd...

3. Authors' Conference:
 Also called writers' conference

- ❑ A conference of literary professionals attended by authors, editors, publishers and members of literary fraternity
- ✓ Purpose – To discuss and review written works




4. Judicial Settlement Conference:

- ❑ An informal meeting between conflicting parties of a lawsuit in the presence of a judicial officer to discuss, negotiate and resolve issues

5. Press Conference:

- ❑ A media event to officially broadcast a message/news out to the general public



Swayamii 5

Now such conferences, especially the conferences of on authors, on poets this is actually combination of literary professionals who actually make it a point to attend and people who are attending such conferences are often authors, publishers, members of literary fraternity. And the purpose behind such conferences is to discuss and review written works. My dear friends, there are also conferences which are in judicial fields, judicial settlement, conferences press which are very common you might have heard.

Most of the time these press conferences are meant to officially broadcast a message or news in order to spread it to the general people.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:20)

Contd...

6. Global Conference:
 International forum to call on governments, business institutions, and global stakeholders to formulate plans and proposals towards achieving shared global goals.
Examples include – United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, United Nations Climate Change Conference.



7. Peace Conference:
 International meet between representative diplomats of warring nations to end antagonism and to negotiate a peace treaty.



8. Unconference:
 Participation-oriented conference in a loosely structured, informal format, unlike the conventional structured conferences.

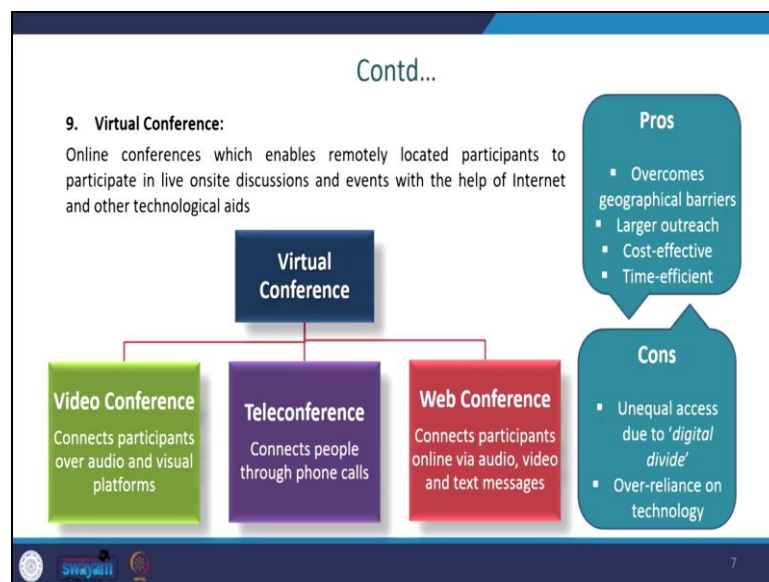
Swayamii 6

There are conferences which are global, sometimes there are conferences on nature. Now these global conferences often internationally are acclaimed conferences on government,

business, institutions and global stockholders. They organize such conferences to formulate new plans, proposals towards achieving shared goals. We can often find that sometimes there is a SAARC conference sometimes there is a United Nations Conference, sometimes there is Climate Change conference, peace conferences.

And then the last conference that I am going to talk about is unconference. Now as the term itself says it is unconference, meaning thereby, in such a conference the participation is oriented and people may float their ideas views and all. Now during this pandemic we could see when conferences in physical modes were a challenge, we started a new conference that is virtual conference. Even it was there earlier also but it was not so popular. After pandemic it again its momentum.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:35)

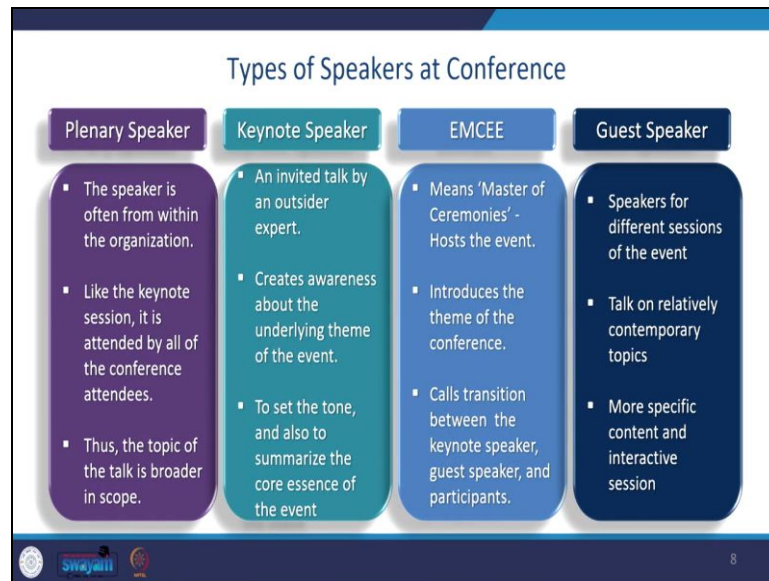


So, this virtual conferences enable people in remote corners to get connected to participants and they provide their ideas. There they read their papers online with the help of Internet and other technological tools. Now these virtual conferences can be organized through video conferences, teleconferencing, through web conference and there are different pros and cons of this. These conferences overcome geographical barriers.

We can find its advantages which are--- that it is less time- consuming. It is from the economic point of view also, it is less expensive but at the same time it actually provides a sort of dependence, which is too much on technology and at times there are technological glitches which actually hamper the spirit of such conferences. Now you might also be eager

to know as to what sort of people are there and who actually hold important positions during these conferences.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:48)



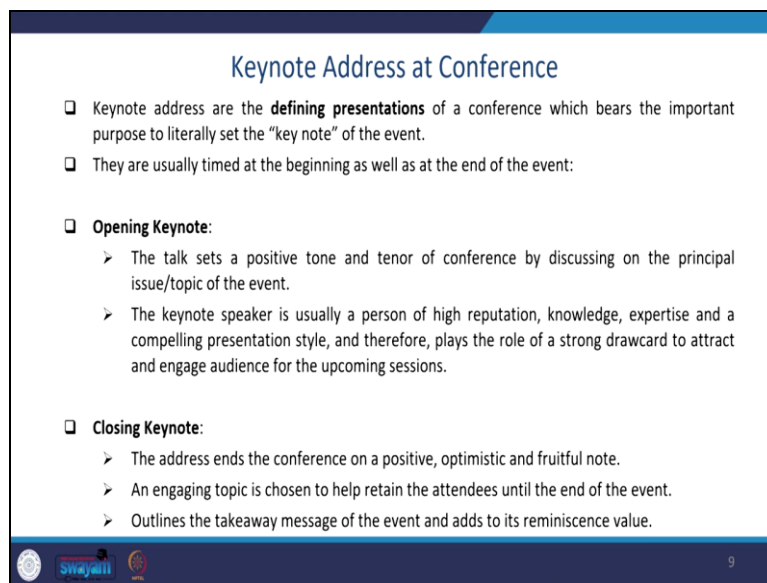
What sort of speakers? You may at times get the opportunity of becoming a plenary speaker, sometimes you can be a keynote speaker, sometimes you also have the opportunity of becoming EMCEE that is master of events sometimes you can be invited as a guest speaker. So, now what are the roles as a public speaker to do in such conferences?

If somebody is invited as a plenary speaker, so, the expectations of a plenary speaker are---- plenary speakers most of the times are from within the organization and like the keynote session plenary addresses are attended by majority of the members of the conferences and the topic of such a speech is often broader either in scope. Now if somebody has been invited as a keynote speaker because the entire conference actually begins with a keynote speech. So, the keynote speaker is supposedly a man of expertise a man who is a big gun who a man who actually holds a prominent position and this is usually given by an invited speaker from outside. And the purpose behind such a keynote speech is to create awareness about underlining theme of the conference. And a keynote speaker sets the tone and also summarizes the core essence of the event.

So, the keynote speaker may also be in the inaugural and as well as in the valedictory session. Also we have in some of the lectures talked about valedictory speech, keynote speech. Now comes MC actually is the abbreviated form for MC that is Master of Ceremonies. Now, here your role as a public speaker is to introduce the theme of the conference.

Usually such a person is from within the organization and this person calls the transition between the keynote speaker, the guest speaker and the participants. So, much care and concern have to be reflected by the master of the ceremonies. Now, comes guest speaker. So, guest speakers are those speakers who actually are supposed to speak on different sessions of the event. They actually talk on relatively contemporary topics, fine? Topics which are very much in demand and all. So, more specific content and interactive session are actually are the key mantras of a guest speaker.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:21)



Keynote Address at Conference

- ❑ Keynote address are the **defining presentations** of a conference which bears the important purpose to literally set the "key note" of the event.
- ❑ They are usually timed at the beginning as well as at the end of the event:
- ❑ **Opening Keynote:**
 - The talk sets a positive tone and tenor of conference by discussing on the principal issue/topic of the event.
 - The keynote speaker is usually a person of high reputation, knowledge, expertise and a compelling presentation style, and therefore, plays the role of a strong drawcard to attract and engage audience for the upcoming sessions.
- ❑ **Closing Keynote:**
 - The address ends the conference on a positive, optimistic and fruitful note.
 - An engaging topic is chosen to help retain the attendees until the end of the event.
 - Outlines the takeaway message of the event and adds to its reminiscence value.

9

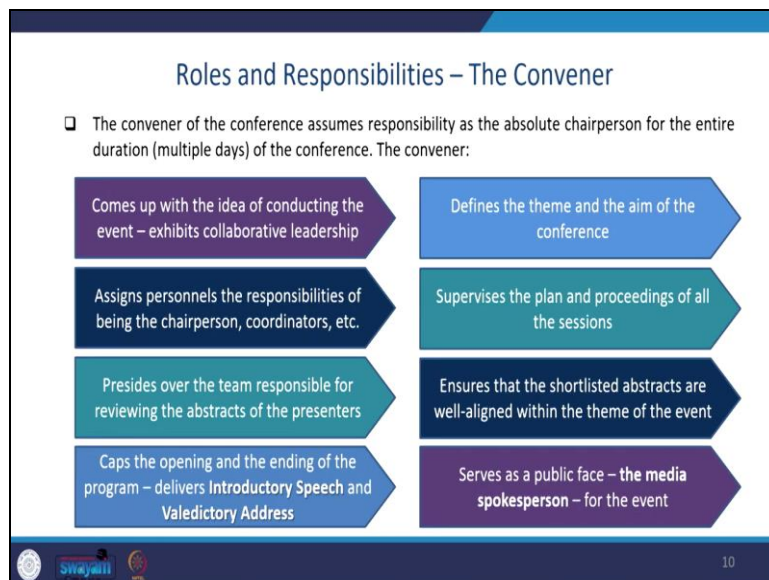
Now as a keynote speaker or keynote address what is one supposed to do? A keynote speaker provides defining the presentations of a conference which actually bears a hallmark and can set the keynote of the event. So, usually such a sort of keynote address starts in the beginning or sometimes also at the end of the event. Now, when it is an opening keynote, so, the tone is that of very positive.

So, the aim is to motivate the participants. We often have seen people saying that people participants who have come from far and wide. They will take from this conference some very valuable relations and suggestions. So, the keynote speaker is usually a person of high reputation, knowledge, expertise and a compelling presentation style which actually helps him play a very pivotal role of a strong person who actually draws others to attract and engage the audience for all the upcoming sessions.

But if **if** somebody has to deliver a closing keynote, so, this actually as the term itself says it ends the conference on a positive optimistic and fruitful note. An engaging topic is chosen to help retain the attendees until the end of the event and it actually provides a sort of such a sort of reminiscent experience that participants often carry it as a take- away. Now every now and then we cannot be the keynote speakers nor the plenary speakers.

Sometimes we may also have to organize the conference. So, as the organizing secretary or the convener also we have certain roles and responsibilities which actually play a lot of importance which carry a lot of weight in public speaking. So, if your responsibility is that of a convener what are you supposed to do?

(Refer Slide Time: 17:35)



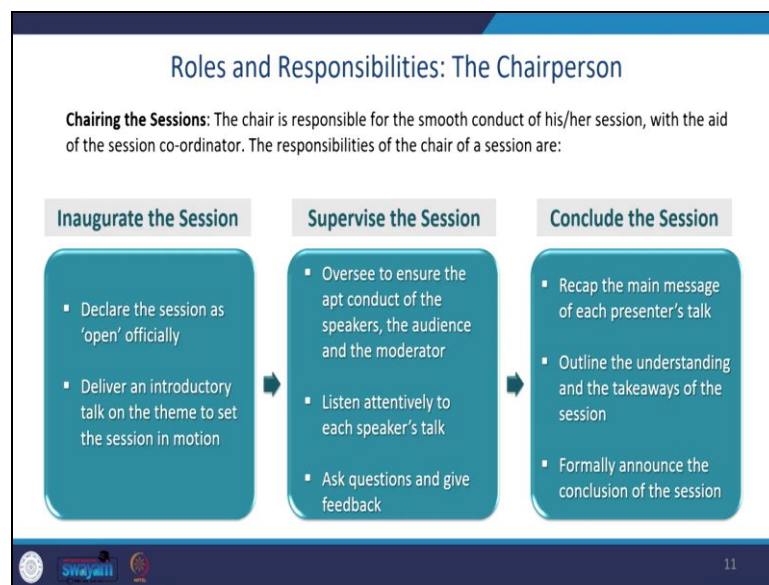
The convener actually assumes the responsibility as the absolute chair person for the entire duration may be of two- days, three- days fine so, depending upon the time. Now the convener has a great role to play the convener actually comes with the idea of conducting the event, fine? And for that he distributes roles allocates roles presides over the team are responsible for reviewing the abstracts.

Because for every conference you will find in the beginning, abstracts are invited and these abstracts are reviewed, viewed and then finally a book of abstracts is prepared. So, all these roles are decided by the convener. The convener also caps the opening and the ending of the program, convening also at times, to give introductory speech and also the valedictory. So, as a convener one has to define the theme supervise the plan and ensure that all those abstracts which have been shortlisted, the participants of those abstracts are able to read their papers.

In fact, this convener serves as a public face he also has to initiate the dialogues with the media he is actually a spokesperson of the entire event. Now in certain conferences especially in conferences which are longer and are having for two days or three days, you will find that since quite a good number of papers good number of abstracts have been sent we have to divide academic sessions.

And for that there can be quite a good number of sessions and we need somebody to supervise somebody to convene somebody to chair these sessions and that is why we require a sort of chairperson. And this chairperson's responsibility is to smoothly conduct the session, fine, not only by inaugurating by introducing the presenters, by listening to the presentations by supervising the entire session, and also by concluding and if time permits can take the questions from the participants which actually are to be answered by the participants.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:08)



So, the roles are to inaugurate, to supervise, and to conclude and you can find the details which I have already provided. Formally, it is actually the chair person who announces the conclusion of the entire session. Now, when you are going to organize a huge conference it cannot be organized without the help of so many people and that is why you have to deal with so many people from different corners and for different roles.

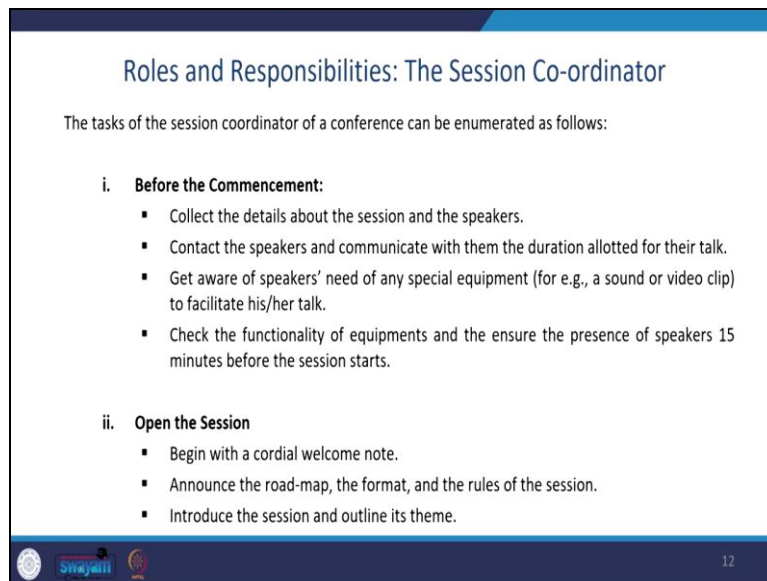
Naturally, only the session chair cannot do everything because when a session is in force, there has to be somebody who is going to coordinate and we call such people as session coordinator, who before the commencement, his roles are to introduce to collect information

about the presenter or to get aware of the speakers need of the gadgets or the mode of presentation or to ensure that everything is in order--- the gadgets and equipments are properly functioning.

So, these are actually done before the commencement and the session coordinator has to take care of all these things. Then, when the session opens the coordinator begins with a very cordial and welcome note you might have found and then the coordinators announce the road map. The coordinator also announces the about the session chair are giving a brief about the session chairs and then introduce the session and also the theme.

It is actually for the coordinator who will tell you how many participants are going to present their paper in this session. And then the entire session is run not only with the help of the session chair but also with the help of the coordinator who introduces the speaker their presentation topics.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:03)



Roles and Responsibilities: The Session Co-ordinator

The tasks of the session coordinator of a conference can be enumerated as follows:

- i. **Before the Commencement:**
 - Collect the details about the session and the speakers.
 - Contact the speakers and communicate with them the duration allotted for their talk.
 - Get aware of speakers' need of any special equipment (for e.g., a sound or video clip) to facilitate his/her talk.
 - Check the functionality of equipments and the ensure the presence of speakers 15 minutes before the session starts.
- ii. **Open the Session**
 - Begin with a cordial welcome note.
 - Announce the road-map, the format, and the rules of the session.
 - Introduce the session and outline its theme.

12

And who sees to it that every presenter maintains the time schedule and after every presentation is done it is actually followed by sort of applause or praise and then encourage discussion and feedback towards the end. When the session is to come to an end or the session is to a wind up, the coordinator requests attendees to fill up the feedback form or the appraisal form and then makes concluding remarks before the session chair has said something.

And it is also the role of the coordinator to applaud and thank all the audience members and the speakers. My dear friends, we are living in an age where any such event like a conference cannot be successful without having somebody who can work as a reporter. Now you might be thinking what are the roles of the reporter? And as I said in the beginning just like life we also have in public speaking situations.

(Refer Slide Time: 23:23)

Contd...

iii. Run the Session

- Introduce the speakers, their topic of presentation and the time allotted for the talk.
- Ensure that speakers begin and end their talk within the specified time duration.
- See to it that the session sticks to its schedule.
- Run the Question-Answer session, select relevant and interesting questions for the speaker to answer.
- Remember to applaud each speaker after his/her talk.
- Encourage discussion and feedback at the end of the session.

iv. Wind up the Session

- Request attendees to fill up the feedback form towards the end of the session.
- Make concluding remarks; applaud and thank the audience and the speakers.

13

so many roles to play, sometimes you also may have to play the role of a reporter where you will be appointed to prepare a report which can summarize the entire, resolutions and outcome of the conference. Such a person is required to sit anywhere, I mean, the seat is not fixed. Such a person can sit anywhere but the responsibilities of such a person include listening attentively, marking or writing jotting down the main points if it is to be recorded it is actually responsibility of the reporter.

And then if any handouts are to be are distributed then again the reporter it is actually the reporter who will perhaps provide or disseminate the information or pass on the information to the conference organizing secretary about the events and it is the report here who will ensure that the report is comprehensive and well edited. There are certain skill sets also required for the report here what are they listening.

My dear friends, we have been talking that listening is one of the crucial requisite skills of all sorts of public speaking and then one also needs to have some amount of literary bent so that when they are going to write something, it actually should have a sort of literary flavour, then the presenter speaks a lot but then reporter actually edits and with his or her organizational

skill finally comes out with the sort of visions or with the sort of the summary of the entire thing.

Now you might be thinking that if you ever get a chance to organize a conference there might be certain tasks which are involved the tasks may be before the conference during the conference and after the conference as well. So, during before the conference what one has to do, one has to start planning quite early. Because you know for the success of any conference which actually draws a lot of people from different corners of the world, you need a good amount of times, may be six months.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:43)

Roles and Responsibilities – The Rapporteur

A rapporteur is appointed to prepare a report summarizing the proceedings, resolutions, and outcome of the conference. S/He is required to:

- Grab a seat which begets minimal disruptions
- Listen attentively and take prompt notes
- Concentrate on – the key issues raised, main findings, remarks and feedback – in each presentation
- Record audio and capture photographs of vital informations
- Collect document detailing the participant list with titles of their presentation
- Avail yourself of all the handouts and other takeaways
- Get to work immediately post the event to minimize memory fade away
- Ensure that the report is comprehensive and well-edited

Requisite Skill Sets

- Effective Listening Skill
- Literary Skill
- Editing Skill
- Analytical Skill
- Organizational Skill

14


If you can, if you have an access to international conferences, you will find that they make an announcement one year before. So, and then you also think about the suitable date then you think about the venue you think about the conference theme and title the schedule and then you also invite, you give a call for papers you provide a conference browser then you also decide the conference fee.

And then you also decide all other activities which are going to take place, and then you also have to think about as we have discussed, who can be the keynote speaker who can be the plenary speaker who can be the guest speaker and then the call of papers go and then abstracts keep coming in.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:13)

Organizing a Conference: Pre-Conference Tasks

- Start **planning well ahead of time** – at least six months before the actual date of event.
- Decide a **suitable date** for the conference – one which would be preferred by most of prospective guests.
- Choose the **conference venue** – take into consideration factors like cost, accessibility of location and the available technical facilities.
- Formulate the **conference theme, title, format** and the sub-topics for discussion.
- Draw a **detailed schedule** of the event – with regard to the number of days, number of sessions per day and number of presenters per session.
- Design a **conference brochure** with all these information and communicate it with the participants and the guests through e-mail.


15


Abstracts keep flooding in, you also are supposed to think about the accommodation or the arrangement and then you also need a group of volunteers. And then you have also to create a sort of estimate as to how much cost it will entail and from where you can get money you actually have to disseminate a lot of information before going for such a sort of conference and that you can get done through advertising.

Nowadays, it is quite possible that there are several platforms through which you can advertise about your own conference and one must ensure that one is techno- savvy because nowadays it is also seen that the more accessible you are and the more net-savvy you are, you are going to create a lot of buzz among the interested participants so, that you can get more and more entries.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:10)

Contd...

- Identify and invite **guest speakers**, keynote speaker, plenary speaker, chairpersons and session coordinators and confirm their availability for the event.
- Release '**Call for Papers**' and constitute a team for reviewing and shortlisting the abstracts received.
- Make **arrangements for lodging** of the invited guests; **menu** and timing for different meals and refreshments; seating arrangements; **technological and audio-visual aids**.
- Constitute a **task force** and assign roles and responsibilities – reception and hospitality of guests, rapporteuring, technical assistance, advertising the event and overall management.
- Generate a **financial estimate** of organizing the event; enlist and **approach prospective sponsors**.
- **Create a buzz** about the event by **advertising it** on various social media platforms.


16

Now comes the days of the conference when you are organizing, maybe, it is of two- days, three- days. Now as an organizing secretary or as any as a key person of the conference, you actually have to cordially receive and welcome the guests. You have to this not only you I mean you have already allocated the task. My dear friend, now it is your duty to see how they are performed properly.

So, whether the participants are provided with the proper kits and then has everything been put in the kit, has the schedule been there because if something goes wrong or seems something is amiss, the entire conference will become quite a disappointing and defeating game.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:56)

Organizing a Conference: The Conference Day/s

- Cordially **receive and welcome** the guests and the speakers
- Distribute **conference kit** to all the attendees
- Conference kit** should include – the program schedule, list of participants with their mail ids, a brief city-guide, a list of useful contact numbers, a few white papers and a pen
- Ensure your presence** at as many lectures/sessions and events as possible
- Make yourself available to **solve inconveniences** and to **offer assistance** wherever required

17

One must also ensure one's presence in several sessions and several lectures and one has also to see that one is available to solve any sort of inconvenience any sort of difficulty to any participants so that you can provide assistance whenever they are required. Now, when you organize the conference it is not simply in the organizing, it is not simply in the beginning and the running rather even after the conference is over, you have certain post- conference tasks to be performed and what are they?

(Refer Slide Time: 28:43)



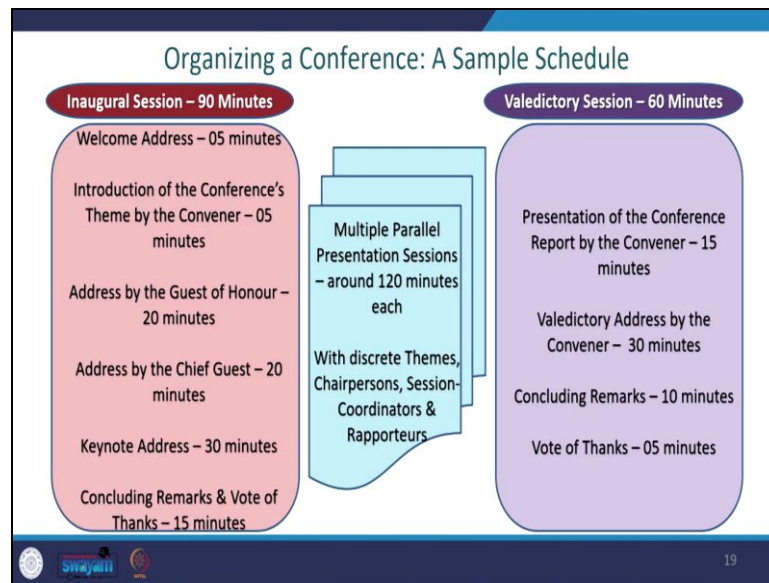
If you have invited so many people as plenary speakers and guest speakers and all you have to ensure that you have been able to reimburse their travel expenses and then there are other follow-up activities, you have also to see that your entire expenses are within the budget and if it is not, so how you can manage. You also are to see how the sponsors have also been taken care of, and then the news bulletin conference proceedings, souvenir--- all these have been put very carefully in the kit that you have provided to the participant.

Now you must ensure that not only the speakers, the sponsors but all the managing committee team members they are to be taken proper care of. And when everything is over, my dear friends, you must have the last laugh and you can find that if it has ended well, you are to review the entire event to see that in future if you are going to organize any others conference of such nature what were the lapses and how you could overcome them.

Finally, thank all the members for their contribution. Nowadays, e-mail has made it quite an easy task to thank the people who gathered for the conference and who help you run this conference and make this a successful affair. Now, we can also spend some time on how we can while we are going to arrange, fine ?Because if you are organizing a conference then you also should see that how you are going to have an inaugural session and valedictory.

How you are going to have a proper distribution of time because we have already said in some of the lectures that time talks and space speaks.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:31)

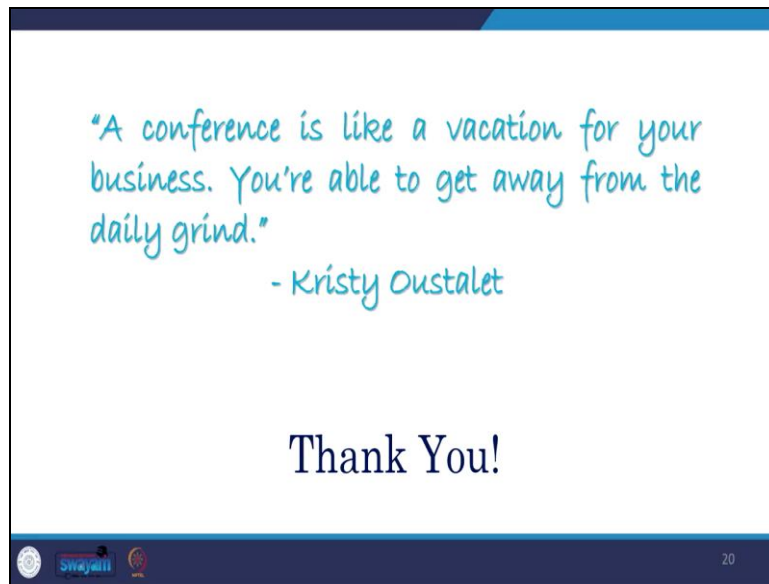


So, you are to see that everything goes in time and you are to divide the time properly as to how much time should be given to the welcome address to the plenary to the guest of owner to the keynote, and then you also should ensure that parallel sessions are also conducted and not a session is amiss without a speaker and or without a coordinator or reporter or a chairperson. Now, when it is the time for the valedictory you must see that the in the valedictory session you are going to show your gratitude to all sorts of people.

You are going to give the presentation about the conference report that you have collected from your reporters and all. So, based on that you are going to sum up everything and the for the valedictory address also, you need somebody to speak and then the concluding remarks will be by the person who are the organizing secretary or the convener and then finally will come the vote of thanks.

We have already discussed how one has to give a vote of thanks in one of the lectures on speeches. So, I think you are quite aware of it. If you have done all these, I think you are in a proper frame of mind to organize a conference but my dear friends simply organizing a conference is not enough.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:49)



You will find a conference actually is a sort of relief especially in whatever area you are going to organize a conference it is actually a sort of relief and that is why we can take a quote by Kristy Oustalet who says: “ A conference is like a vacation for your business.” Here we can say not only for business even for academics also it is a sort of occasion. It is a sort of breathing time breathing space ‘you are able to get away from the daily grind.’

Every day I teach, every day I deliver lecture, but whenever I go to a conference I feel that this is actually a breather where I can meet many like-minded people. That is why Kristy Oustalet is right by saying that “a conference is like a vacation for your business. You are able to get away from the daily grind.” My dear friends, we have discussed in this lecture how it is to organize a conference and who are the important people?

And how conference is also a part of public speech, public speaking. And in the next lecture we shall see that how when you have organized a conference and if by chance you become a presenter, what sort of conference presentation are you going to deliver and how you are going to excel in a world where every now and then knowledge comes from all the corners. I think now is the time that I give rest to my lips and to my tongue and tell you goodbye till we meet again. Au re voir. Thank you.