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Lecture: 43 Conference Presentations Part II

Good morning friends and welcome back to NPTEL online certification course on Public Speaking. My dear friends, in the previous lecture I tried my level best to familiarize you all with conferences its types and its requirements. You might have realized that while organizing conferences is challenging, more challenging is giving conference presentations and that is why I believe conference presentations should also be a part of public speaking.

The moment we make use of the word conference presentations, many of you actually are gripped with a sort of fear and this fear is not only because of your interference, your interactions and also your presentations before the strangers. But also because of the experts in your field, who perhaps might be listening to your presentations, and might be thinking of putting questions to you.

But then as you have already realized and experienced in some of the lectures that the sort of fear which actually invites anxiety and nervousness is natural not only in conference presentations but in other sorts of interactions as well. Of course, the sort of nervousness and hesitations that one comes across in conferences is of a different sort. And today we are going to talk about how one can make a conference presentation successful.

But before we go into the details of conference presentations I would actually like to remind you of one very famous name and the name that you are very much familiar with and this name is that of Paulo Coelho. who has not among you heard Paulo Coelho and his famous novel *The Alchemist*. Actually Paulo Coelho is a Brazilian journalist turned writer who actually took the entire world by surprise with some of his very beautiful creations in the form of novel.

And it was in 1988 when the book the alchemist came everyone actually wanted to read the alchemist and the alchemist actually became a world class book his other books were also very famous one of his books and title the pilgrimage which came in 1987 and then there are

quite a good many books. Now why I am mentioning his name is that Paulo Coelho once said and what he said is actually true of nervousness and the fright that one can have during conference presentations.

Now let us see what Paulo Coelho said—"I love almost everything except conferences. I am too shy in front of an audience but I love singings and having eye- contact with the reader who already knows my soul." So, my dear friends when such a celebrity named Paulo Coelho can be frightened of conferences why not you and that is why we are going to discuss conference presentations as also a part of public speaking.

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Now just at the outset you might actually be eager to know what is a conference. The word conference is very popular among students, teachers, faculty members fine marketing professionals I mean it has become a very common place word. Conference is actually a meeting for consultation and discussion on ideas or problems pertaining to a specific subject or topic. Now, initially when our new students new friends want to present their paper in the conference they have got so, many questions.

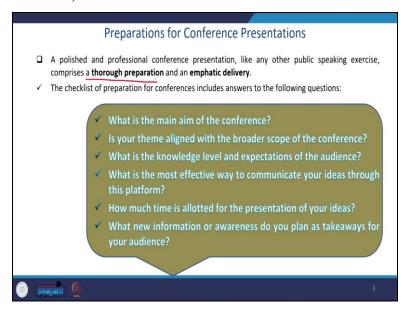
But let them also try to understand what actually are the purposes what is the significance and what are the applications of a conference the purpose of a conference is to communicate the importance of one's research. My dear friends, it is human nature that when you have done something new you actually want to share with other people and especially in academia especially in a world where there is a lot of competition everyone wants to compete with the other.

And for that it is actually a conference which acts as a platform not only to present your research but also to receive the feedback of the people of that area because as I have already said that there you can find a gathering of experts. Now what is the significance of conference. Actually conference can help people are to create a sort of network in your field fine and you know everyone has got a different feel.

And when you get yourself familiarized with people having a lot of expertise then you are in a way enriching yourself you get exposed to experts and professionals. Now what actually can be the applications of conferences. Conferences can be academic, it can be marketing it can be about launching a new product, it can be for anything and everything. Now in a particular area or a field, there are professional pitch meetings, there are entrepreneur conferences.

Now most of you might be thinking because many of you who are still students either pursuing their masters or their Ph.D they might be thinking or presenting their papers. Now it is actually right from their primary days to their colleges and universities they actually get exposed to reading papers and especially when they read their research papers in the form of conference presentations they actually should understand that it is not in a way different from other sorts of presentations.

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But then here what is needed is---- one needs to have a thorough preparation ,my dear friends and not only thorough preparation but also effective and empathic delivery. Whatever you

want to say, whatever are your findings the world must know and that is why when you are

going to participate in a conference and you are going to write a paper for the conference,

there are certain queries that might be haunting your minds, is not it?

Now, what can they be first you would like to know what is actually the main aim or the

theme of the conference whether your paper fits in suits in the conference theme or not what

is your knowledge level how much have you gathered what new thing are you going to

contribute and when you have done that in the form of a paper. Now you actually are

preparing yourself mentally to communicate your ideas through this platform.

Now imagine that you have sent an abstract and the abstract has been accepted, you have also

been provided with the time slot and the day and you want to now present your people. So,

they will provide you a time slot. In this age where there is a very tough competition,

everyone wants to compete with the other person and that is why there is a time limitation.

So, they provide you, the host organization provides you a particular time slot in which you

have to present your paper.

How you can present your entire paper in the conference is also a sort of art. What new

information or awareness do you plan as a takeaway from your audience members because

when you present your paper there can be many sorts of observations there can be many sorts

of feedback and as a participant not only are you going to participate and present your paper

but you also want to see and know and discover what other people are doing.

How much and in what way is your paper different from others. Now having understood the

purpose, now you already know the purpose of conference is to inform, to discuss, to share

you might be knowing because you are going to participate in a conference which is

somehow or the other related to your area.

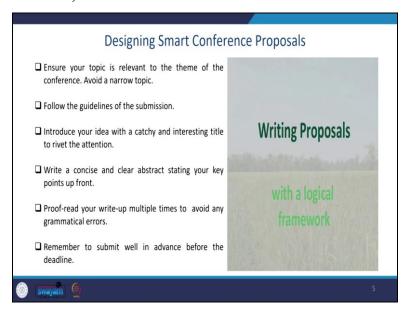
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Naturally, you know your audience members and their background. So, the concentration is very high and with the time allotted and with the sort of paper that you are going to present how you are going to present the entire content in the limited amount of time. How you are going to make your task easier by providing certain aids in order to make or drive home your point in a less amount of time that has been given to you.

You are actually going to familiarize others with operation and functioning if you are actually using data projector or whiteboard just to make your presentation very effective. Now since all of us are eager people we actually want to know how to design smart conference proposals.

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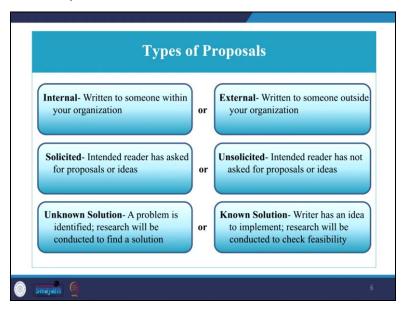


Because before you go to present your paper you actually need to prepare a sort of proposal, is not it? Now what actually are the key points that are required to present a sort of proposal? First is whether your paper matches the theme of the conference. You will find if you are a conscious scholar or a student, you will find that the host organization or the organizing committee provides certain guidelines. Are you following these guidelines?

Now most of the people, despite the best efforts they make, they actually are not in a situation or condition to decide the exact title. Your title should be so catchy that it actually attracts the interest of the audience members. Now abstract you will write for that fine. And when you send the abstract but remember before you write your abstract you have already completed your entire paper. This abstract is actually a reminder as to whether you have been able to cover the points that you have mentioned in the abstract.

Now having done that having sent your abstract but before sending it you will already proofread it and one must always remember that one's proposal or one's abstract is sent well before the deadline.

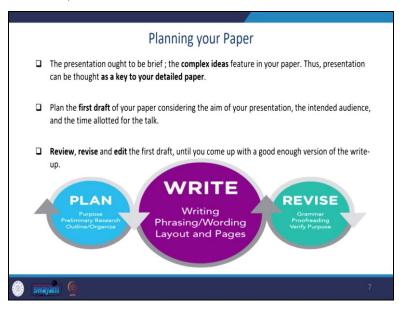
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Now what sorts of proposal can be also you might be thinking sometimes your proposal might be internal, which is actually a written to someone within the organization. Sometimes it might be external outside organization it might be at times solicited where the intended reader has asked for proposals or ideas. Sometimes it may be unsolicited where the reader does not ask for proposals rather it is job proposal.

And sometimes you know the solution, sometimes you do not know the solution when it is unknown solution, the problem is identified the research will be conducted to find a solution but when you know the solution, actually research will be conducted to check the feasibility whether it is possible or not. Now comes, you see half of the job is done before you go to present your paper. So, now designing your paper, fine, I mean it is a part of written communication and you are well aware of the fact that when you are writing it for the presentation.

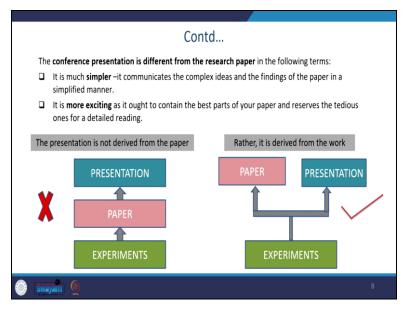
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Write it in such a manner that even the complex ideas which you have put in your paper that actually can be presented in this slotted time. You must also think of the intended audience and the time allotted as we have said and like any other written document as a careful you know presenter what you will do is before sending it off you will plan you will write you will revise and then you will send it.

Now you might be thinking that you have already written the paper and the same paper will be presented, my dear friends. Your paper is a detailed analysis and you will not get that much of time to present the entire paper. So, what is required is---- you have actually to present the sum and substance, the findings, the discoveries that you have made. And that is why a research paper actually is different from the conference presentation.

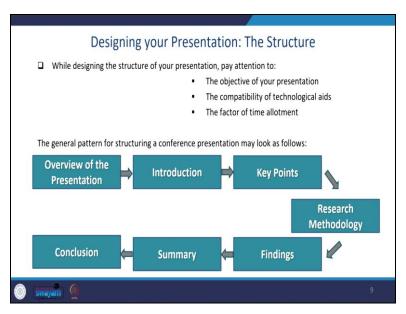
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And in what manner conference presentation is simpler, fine? And those people who are interested would go through your entire research paper conference presentation should be more exciting because the best parts of your paper are to be read and actually it reserves the tedious ones for a detailed reading is not it. So, when you think of a paper, the paper will be based on the presentation is not derived from the paper. The presentation actually is based on the experiment that you have done if it is a scientific one, fine?

So, from the experiment the paper will come and out of the paper again, you will take some of the key points, the main discoveries are to be presented in the conference. Now when you have done all these what you are supposed to do? You are actually going to design your presentation, I mean, how to structure your presentation. It is not that your research paper is very detailed. So, everything must also be there in the presentation for that you have already given the abstract.

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Now as a presenter when you are designing your presentation, keeping into consideration the time you must clarify the objective of your presentation, what is the main objective of your presentation. Then if you are using some technological tools, whether it is compatible or not the compatibility that is also very important and of course, time you know as always because in the given time may be 15 minutes 20 minutes or say 13 minutes.

Because there is some time also allotted for discussion. So, you need to take into consideration the limit of the time. The general pattern for structuring a conference presentation can be in this sequence: overview, introduction, of course, you will give the introduction. Then key points in many of the organizations they ask you to mention at least five or ten key points.

And then what sort of methodology have you used? Research methodology. Then what are your findings and then summary and then conclusion. So, this is actually the sequence that your presentation should be. Now remember in the allotted time you have to do all these you have to present all these. Now coming to the content part of your presentation what should actually be there in the first page or if you are using a PowerPoint presentation on the first slide.

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Designing Your Presentation: The Content The First Page: It should include the title of your paper, author, affiliation and venue. Check for any template/styles recommended exclusively for use in the particularly conference. Message: Do not overcrowd your slides with tedious information. Keep the font size readable. Maintain consistency in using colour combinations. Stick to the Rule of Five: To attain clarity and focus in your argument, ensure that you do not use more than five main points in a slide. Graphics, Pictures and Animations: Relieve boredom by incorporating graphics and animations in an appropriate manner. Right goes the adage — A picture is worth a thousand words. Also, avoid populating your slides with too many graphics or effects, as it will distract the audience.

I mean the title has to be very clear. The title of the paper, your author if you are going to participate in an international conference and they will have a different sort of pattern and we must follow that, fine? And then if they provide some templates because if any organization is holding a conference they will provide some sort of emblem for that, so that also has to be taken into consideration. Then when you come to the content or the message part, all you need to understand is that you are making slides.

But see to it that you must not crowd your slides. You must not put too much of information on the slides. Actually, you must simply put the pointers, the bullets, the points and remember there are certain other things also to be taken care of, the font size if one provides too much of information on one slide maybe it is not readable for the audience members. And if you feel that there are certain things which have to be highlighted you are making use of colours.

So, see to it that there is a sort of consistency in using colour combinations. Experts have gone to the extent of saying that it is better if one can stick to the rule of five. What is this rule of five? Meaning thereby, in order to make your point very clear and focused, one should always see that on one slide let there not be more than five points. Enthusiastic presenters often want to put everything on the slides and if everything is put on the slides where is the scope for the presenter, my dear friends.

Sometimes or the other if your topic is of a scientific nature--- analytical nature experimental nature and you feel the requirement of putting graphics and pictures and animations that will

actually make your task easier because a picture is worth a thousand words, my dear friends. But do not make pictures like the modern art where people are not able to understand or try to extract what is being said.

Avoid populating your slides with too many graphics or effects as it may create a sort of distraction for the audience members, am I right? Yes.

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Now let us design our presentation. In every presentation, you will find as you also might have found in the lectures that I am delivering---- the first slide is the title slide and after the title slide there are texts contents. So, you are going to use bullet points and while it may vary from person to person but the usual norm is six to six, fine. Six bullets in a slide, five bullets in a slide, and if it is so please see that six words in each bullet, fine? You have some space and you know your space speaks and your time talks.

If you feel that there are certain important points. They have to be highlighted, it is always better that specially on the slides, you need to be as concise as possible. Discretion should also be used as to how you are making use of diagrams, figures charts graphs, pie charts whatsoever. And when you have been able to do all these things and discuss finally you are coming to the summary part at the end.

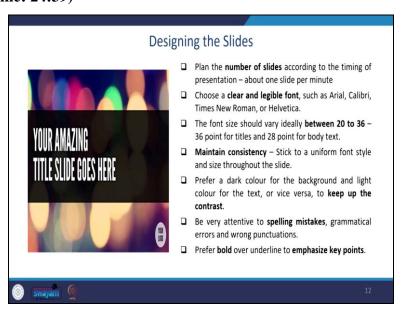
And you know when you have spoken all these points in and between, it is always needed to summarize because the audience members, as I have been telling, that they also have a sort of crowd mentality and they cannot endure you for a long time. So, if you can summarize

perhaps that will make their task easier and then when you have summarized, then actually decide the main point of the conference and related to your previous arguments in order to reach the conclusion.

My dear friends, it is very important to divide the entire message or the content into several parts where you can talk about several sections sub-sections and on one slide, you must confine yourself only to one thing. And what can make your presentation effective is that the flow which you are going to create through your slides should be very seamless. It should actually appear that the audience members do not have to make too much of effort that actually flows like the natural flow.

Nowadays people actually are attracted towards so many designs. I often tell my students that if you could go for a design which some way or the other relates to or provides or indicates the theme of your paper, perhaps that will also be appreciated too much. So, while you are going to design these slides. So, first you know when you have the content ready, it is for you to decide depending upon the time and depending upon your slot depending upon also time in time. Meaning thereby, what time is your presentation going to be. Are you going to be the first presenter or you are going to be the last presenter? It is up to you, my dear friend, that at times you can skip certain parts but while skipping also you must be very careful.

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So, plan the number of slides if it is a 20 minutes or say 30- minutes presentation, you better know how fast you speak, how fast you explain and how you can create a sort of say sync with the audience members' understanding so that much of time to be given while explaining

these slides. You can go for choosing a legible font. There are nowadays, there is no limitation of phones. So, you all you have to do is---- you have to go for a font and that font should be consistent.

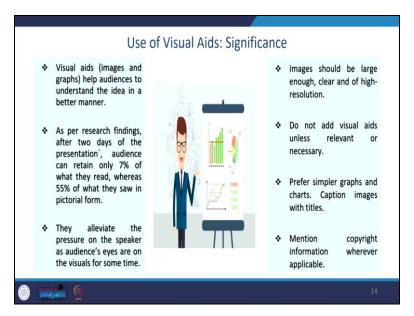
And not only the font but then you also should understand the font size, my dear friend and then stick to a uniform style prefer a dark colour for the background, a light colour for the text. So, that everything is visible and one thing is also very important here that as a presenter because you have made this presentation be careful of the grammatical nuances and the spelling errors, it is better that if you feel that certain points are to be highlighted either you use colour or you prefer bold over underline while you are emphasizing some key points.

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Now these are some of the designs you can find you are free to go with your own design and you are also free to choose this slide design as per your feasibility and as for the feasibility of the topic. Now most of you are tempted to make use of visual aids. We have been saying and we shall keep on saying that these visual aids actually play a major part by making your task easier.

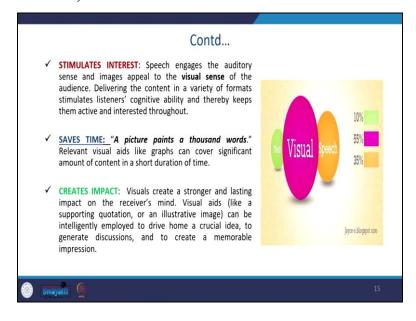
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And also bringing a sort of change for the audience, these visual aids help audience to understand the idea in a better manner. So, it is better that we use visual aids and the visual aids also lessen the pressure on the speaker when you are going to make images, see that images are clear do not add visual aids which are not relevant go for simplicity.

And remember when you are making use of visual aids see to it that if you are taking a picture from somewhere it should be free from copyright and if it is not you must actually acknowledge the source from where you have taken. Now what do visual aids do? They actually stimulate the interest, create interest among the audience every. Now and then the audience members do not want to be imposed.

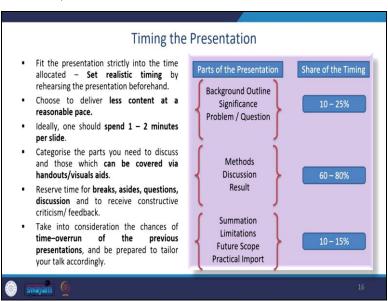
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So, speech may engage the auditory sense but the visual sense of the audience members actually is appealed by these visual aids. It also saves time as I have been saying and then the impact, overall impact that is created. This is a stronger and lasting it actually remains on the receivers or the audience's mind. Visual aids can be different in different fields sometimes if we are doing it in literature, maybe, we are providing quotes and related to the course also we are providing pictures.

But if it is a field of science there again it will differ and then it actually helps create a memorable impression that is very important. Now time, we have already said in the non-verbal part that time talks.

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So, set the realistic timing 30 minutes 20 minutes whatsoever, so set realistic timing by rehearsing the presentation we have also been saying the same thing about speech that if you have been provided the time you make a sort of rehearsal before a small group of friends, before some of your classmates, colleagues and then see how much time is given to one slide and how much time is given to the entire presentation.

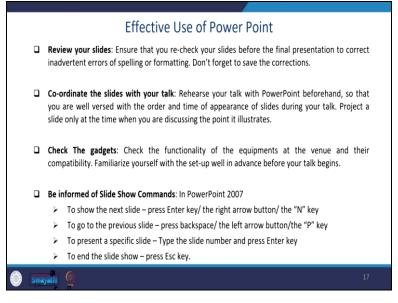
See to it that you have provided some reservation for pauses, silences and then take into consideration the chances of time over —run. Have you not heard and seen every now and then the chairman telling you time and again--- please conclude please wind up, you have only two minutes left. What happens? Enthusiastic presenters who actually have got the opportunity to speak for the first time they actually run in a sort of confusion and in this hurry

they create a sort of worry and they finally destroy everything. Why? Because they could not plan it properly.

So, we have provided you the sharing of the time 10 to 20% time should also be shared left or given to the background. And then more time is to be given to the discussion part analysis part and towards the end when you are going to summarize, it is only 10 to 15%. But when you are going to summarize it should be in such a manner that it has got a worth, it has got an emphatic value, because this is the last opportunity which will provide the listeners or the audience members to take something back home.

Most of the time it has been seen that we are living in a world of power point presentations. So, what happens? We provide more power to the slides and make ourselves less powerful, is not it. You write everything on the slides but you do not get the time to explain and this is a general complaint about speakers in most of the situations. Why does it happen? Because you have not been able to review your slides.

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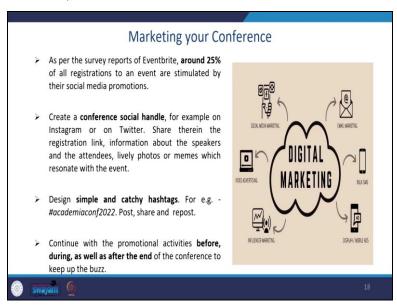


Because you have not been able to coordinate your slides with your speech or talk or presentation whatsoever. Sometimes there are chances of glitches are you really having a backup plan are you really a fluent speaker a spontaneous one. Are you really capable of doing it without even the slides? So, that is why time and again I have been saying that power point slides presentation, if you are going to make first tell yourself that you are more powerful than these power point slides, fine?

And now it is every you know young gentleman is aware of different types of devices that they know how they can go to the next slide, how they can go to the previous one how they can come to the last one how. And you know this may happen because at times you may be asked after the end of the presentation can you go to slide number 16 and you are just in a chaotic situation, because you are not aware of it my dear friends.

Now in order that your conference becomes successful, you know there are several platforms that people are using. You can also make use of them you can make certain handles but while handling it handle it with care. My dear friends, we are living in an age where we have to be very much conscious of what we are doing. It is better that the design of our slides are simple.

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And one must also try to see that both before the presentation, during the presentation and after the presentation one should keep the same sort of spirit in order to make one's conference presentation successful. Here are certain tips that will help you a lot, fine?

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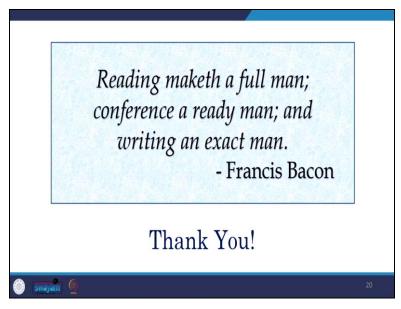


Before conferences what you are going to do you are actually going to create an awareness. So, that more and more people can join the conference you also because you know sometimes you may be organizers sometimes you may be a participant as I have discussed in the previous lecture. So, as an organizer you will keep on a pilot eye on the smooth running but as a participant please do not allow any last moment changes in your presentation, otherwise not only are you going to destroy yourself but you are also going to lessen the spirit of the presentation.

Now you have to be attentive to what others say and you can take a cue from them and even when the conference comes to an end after the conference you actually must review the entire thing as an organizer, as a participant and the feedback that you have received even on your paper or on some others papers that are going to enable you that are going to enrich you. So, highlight the contributions of individuals and thank them if you have been a party to some other presenters' presentation.

My dear friends, in the previous lecture I had said that conferences a vacation time and if you have been able to use that vacation time properly, you are getting yourself ready to be a conference man.

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And a conference man is one who reads much, who thinks much because much of the knowledge that you are going to disseminate that actually comes out of your voracious readings and your research abilities. So, the time has come that we are now ready for the conference but before you go to participate in the coming conference, let us take some inspiration from the words of Francis Bacon, who says—"Reading maketh a full man conference a ready man and writing an exact man". And who would not like to be a full man, a ready man and an exact man. And I do hope that all my listeners and my audience members might take some cues from this lecture and make themselves exact and perfect by true means. With this, kindly permit me to end this talk. Thank you very much.