

PROCEEDINGS

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RECENT ADVANCES IN STATISTICS
"Statistics, Biostatistics and Econometrics"

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In the honour of
Dr. Shahjahan Khan
President, ISOSS
for

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and Leadership in Promoting the ISOSS*

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Address by Dr. Munir Ahmad
Founding President and Patron ISOSS

- **Dr. Shahjahan Khan, Mian Shamim Haider, Dr. Ghapor,**
- **Dr. Ahmed Abdulatif Bahnassy, Dr. Qamar-ul-Islam,**
- **Dr. Ashraf Chaudhry, Delegates from Pakistan,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen!**

I on my behalf and on behalf of members of ISOSS welcome you to the 8th International Conference on Recent Advances in Statistics being held in the honour of Dr. Shahjahan Khan for his outstanding contribution to the development and leadership in ISOSS.

I thank Dr. Shahjahan Khan in particular, Dr. Ghapor, Ahmad, Qamar-ul-Islam, Ashraf for their presence on this occasion.

I also want to thank Mian Shamim Haider, Chairman, NCBA&E and former Federal Minister for his presence on this occasion, who for the love of education has dedicated himself to the spreading of knowledge. I deeply appreciate his efforts for NCBA&E programs by creating alliances amongst statisticians and encouraging us in organizing such conferences for exchange of knowledge and experiences for better understanding and advancement of knowledge.

I feel proud that our efforts have become fruitful in holding the 8th International Conference when there are many socio-political changes being held in the Islamic World.

The society, which had celebrate its 20 years journey in 2008, was established way back in 1988, during the first Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences held at Lahore.

I feel really proud of its existence, as the Society had held ten Islamic Countries Conferences on Statistical Sciences at Lahore, Morocco, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and numerous national conferences, seminars and workshops. The 11th Conference will be held in Jordan in 2011.

Prior to this conference, more than 37 countries participated in the conference deliberations, but due to security measures, only a few countries participated. In some cases, Pakistan Embassies did not issue visa to some participants. In fact, we had received papers from 42 foreign participants.

You will be glad to know that ISOSS has now built ISOSS House on the land allotted by Mian Nawaz Sharif when he was the Chief Minister, Punjab on the recommendations of Dr. Abudllah Bin Omar Nasseef who came to Lahore from Saudi Arabia to personally request Mian Nazwaz Sharif, who very gracefully accepted his recommendations. Members and friends of ISOSS had generously contributed and are contributing / finances for the ISOSS House.

We still need help from all friends of Statistics for setting up internationally recognized Research Institution and equipping with necessary facilities. ISOSS activities

have been internationally recognized. In this connection, I thank Mian Shahid Ali Haider who had offered full support to make ISOSS activities fully operational.

I strongly believe that planning has to be knowledge based and to be monitored by a strong team of statisticians. At present, there is no interaction between academicians and Statistics Officials at Federal as well as provincial levels. If Official Statistics is to be improved, academia must be involved very effectively and if statistical agencies need qualified incumbents, statistical agencies must be effectively involved in colleges and universities so that statisticians produced by colleges and universities are directly inducted in statistical organizations.

ISOSS has prepared a type of 'white paper' on the Statistics and 63-years history of Statistics in Pakistan with a large number of practical proposals and recommendations for the Government which had already been will be mailed to all the concerned quarters.

I foresee ISOSS would develop into as a World Forum that can be managed on a collective vision of its active members. Dignity of top statisticians working both in public and private sectors is a pre-requisite to Society's strategy and action plans.

In the end, I thank my team of volunteers, mostly students and professors from National College of Business Administration and Economics, especially Mian Shahid Ali Haider, Prof. Shumas-ur-Rehman, Major Ehsan, Dr. Muhammad Hanif, Prof. Akhlaq Ahmad and ISOSS Secretariat staff Muhammad Iftikhar, Muhammad Imtiaz and Saif-ur-Rehman and others for their untiring work. There is a long list of students who made this conference a success.

I am again grateful to Dr. Shahjahan Khan for sparing their precious time for the inauguration ceremony of the conference.

I thank you Sir, and thank you all.

KEY NOTE SPEECH
on
A STATISTICAL JOURNEY – MOVING FORWARD ISOSS
by
Dr. Shahjahan Khan
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Like many others I came to study statistics by chance. In the admission test for BSc entry at the Jahangirnagar University, Bangladesh I was on the top of the list. Although the test had nothing to do with statistics, as such, I thought I might do well in the subject. When Professor Kazi Saleh Ahmed, the Chairman of the Department asked me if I would study statistics, my response was 'yes'. As an undergraduate student I found the subject interesting and challenging, but not exciting – too many jargons. It is only when I was a research student at the University of Western Ontario, Canada I discovered that statistics can be exciting. The real meaning of statistics and its unique role in the modern science and contemporary society were unfolded to me much later. The scientific community now knows that statistics is capable of helping solve most of the measurement problems – starting from issues under the sea to those above the sky, let alone on the earth.

As an undergraduate student of statistics I thought it was a good subject to get jobs in the academia, government and industry. At this stage, to me, statistics was more of a tool to be used by others, when needed. In my early career in statistics I found it useful to design studies, analyze data, and interpret results to be used in real life. With the passage of time and growing experience and interaction with colleagues in various professions I realized the extent and depth of the diverse use of statistics. At this stage, I started viewing statistics more than a tool. In fact it is a science of making decisions in the face of uncertainty. Further engagement with a wide range of applications of statistics and its ability to address complex problems, which otherwise can't be solved, now I believe that the main task of statistics is to formulate strategies. Statisticians must be strategists to secure their rightful position in the scientific community and at the high echelon of the socio-political structure of the contemporary world. No one would offer it to statisticians, rather we will have to achieve and earn it overcoming all hurdles.

ISOSS has played a crucial role in shaping my professional position and global perspectives on statistics. It provided me a platform to implement my professional vision to improve the quality of statistics, enhance collaboration and interaction among statisticians of diverse backgrounds, improve the quality of government/official statistics, and promote state-of-the-art statistical research. I am grateful to ISOSS, its members and management, for entrusting me with the biggest challenge of leading ISOSS at a very crucial time of our time. The unfailing support and rock-solid unity of the members of ISOSS helped me to move forward to regain the declining glory of

ISOSS and take it from a regional institution to a prestigious international professional organization.

In 1994, I participated my first ISOSS Conference in the Avari Hotel, Lahore, Pakistan. This is the first time I met Dr. Munir Ahmad and Dr. Mohammad Hanif Mian along with many other pioneering members of ISOSS. I was inspired by them, and committed myself to the service of this professional body. Ever since, I have been able to participate in most of the Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences (ICCS). I proposed to honour statisticians of high achievements by ISOSS in 1998, I am glad it was implemented in 1999. The first two recipients of the ISOSS Gold Medal that year were Professor A K Md Ehsanes Saleh and Professor Emad Eldin Aly. I had the honour to edit a special volume of Pakistan Journal of Statistics in 2000 in their honour.

The 8th Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences (ICCS) held in December 2005 in the FAST University, Lahore. To my surprise I was elected as the President of ISOSS in the business session of the conference. Although I was not quite prepared to take the heavy responsibilities, I didn't want to disappoint the delegates, especially Dr. Munir and his team, by any means. I simply knew how difficult it was to fill the shoes of Dr. Munir. Some of you may remember, on accepting the position of the President of ISOSS, in my first speech in Lahore, I proposed to build ISOSS Head Quarters in Lahore and name it after Dr. Munir. I also announced to create a true sense of belongingness to all ISOSS members and engage them in the activities of ISOSS.

My first challenge was to engage with statisticians of the South East Asia, namely Indonesia and Malaysia, and in the Arab World. The second challenge was to create an environment to attract and interact with statisticians outside the Islamic Countries, particularly those in the West. My third challenge was to bring ISOSS in the global stage alongside other international professional statistical organizations. None of the challenges was easy to deal with, but over the years we have been able met them with significant successes. The ICCS-IX in Kuala Lumpur in 2007 and ICCS-X in Cairo have give us the opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to those regions and we are so grateful for the unbelievable support that ISOSS received from the local and international organizers and participants. In increasing interaction and involvement of Western statisticians in ISOSS activities, cooperation with the ISI, and remarkable national and international coverage of major events organized by ISOSS have been instrumental to its global acknowledgement.

On my way back to Australia from Pakistan in January 2006 I had a short stopover in Dhaka, Bangladesh. With the next ICSS in mind I met the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Professor Eajuddin Ahmed, a former senior colleague of mine in the University of Dhaka, for his support and participation in the conference if Dhaka was chosen as the venue. On my next stop in Kuala Lumpur, on the way to Australia, I met Professor Datu Jamil Bin Osman, Dean of Faculty of Business, International Islamic University Malaysia. After my visit he re-organized the Malaysia Institute of Statistics (ISM) and became its new president. A year later I visited several Universities of Malaysia. My first host was University Putra Malaysia (UPM) where I met with the Executive Committee of the ISM to formally host the ICCS-IX. I am very

grateful to Professor Datu Kamel Atan, Director of INSPEM, UPM for his generous support during my stay there. Later I was able to secure the support of Professor Nur Hasna Moin, Head, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, University of Malaya to provide us with a conference office as well as a support staff to run it. In that trip I also met the Head, Department of Statistics Malaysia in Putra Jaya. The ISM organized a one-day symposium during my visit to revitalize SIM. This visit was invaluable to lay the foundation of successful organization of ICCS-IX in December 2007. The dedication and contributions of Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed, Dr. Abdul Gapor Hussin, Dr. Noor Akma Ibrahim and many others were highly appreciated by everyone.

A special session of the conference was dedicated to the memory of Professor M Safiul Haq, University of Western Ontario, Canada who died in 2007. The keynote addresses were made by Ali S Hadi (Egypt/USA), Malay Ghosh (USA), and Kerrie Mengersen (Australia). We were able get funding from the SESRIC, an Ankara based OIC subsidiary through sponsoring of the government statistics session, and several other local sponsors. As the Founding Chief Editor, I was able to include a number of selected articles presented in the conference in a special issue of the Journal of Applied Probability and Statistics (JAPS). The proceedings of the conference were published in due time.

Being invited by the Carlton University, Canada and North South University (NSU), Bangladesh I served as the Chair of the International Scientific Committee of an international statistics conference held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Convention Centre, Dhaka, Bangladesh in December 2008. Many prominent statisticians from home and abroad participated in the conference to honour Professor A K Md Ehsanes Saleh, Carleton University, Canada. Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury of NSU was the main organizer of the conference. The President of the Bangladesh Academy of Science, Professor M Shamsher Ali, Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Dr. Saleh Uddin, and Chairman of the University Grants Commission, Professor Nazrul Islam highlighted various applications of statistics. Both Dr. Munir and Dr. Hanif participated in the conference as guests of honour. The event received significant media attention.

The search for the host for the next ICCS started from Kuala Lumpur. My target was a venue in the Middle East to take ISOSS at the door step of the Arab world. I met Professor Abdelhamid Elshaarawi and Professor Ali S Hadi in an international conference in Rajshahi University, Bangladesh in December 2006. I approached Ali in Kuala Lumpur to host the ICCS-X in Egypt. Later I contacted Abdel for his support. Both of them were interested but took about a year to finally commit to host ICCS-X. It was the wisdom of Ali to elect Dr. Magued Osman, Head of Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Centre as the Chair of the Local Organizing Committee. I first met Dr. Osman in Ras AlKhaimah, United Arab Emirates in a conference in November 2008 along with Abdel. In the side line of the conference, we were able to discuss and decide on some of the main aspects of the conference. The hard work of many Egyptian colleagues, especially Dr. Ali Hadi, Dr. Zeinab Amin, Dr. Wafik Younan, and several staff from the office of Dr. Magued Osman and the American University in Cairo were keys to the success of ICCS-X. The Islamic Development Bank made modest financial contribution for the conference. The

participation of Jim Berger and Edward Wegman from USA, Jef Teugels, ISI President, and Kaye Basford from Australia as keynote speakers contributed to the success of the conference. The proceedings of the conference have been published in two volumes.

I met Mr. Rashed Al Sywaidi, Director General of National Bureau of Statistics, UAE in the second Arab Statistics Conference in the city of Surt, Libya along with Dr. Haidar Fraihat, Director General of Department of Statistics, Government of Jordan. During our discussions in Surt, Mr. Al Sywaidi invited me to visit his office in Abu Dhabi. We met in his office in November 2009 about hosting ICCS-XI in 2011. Although initially he was quite interested in the idea, due to the commitment for the national census of UAE he finally decided not to proceed with the proposal. Our initial hope of Indonesia to host ICCS-XI disappeared when Professor Asef Saifuddin and Professor Maman Djouhari expressed their concerns about the unfavourable political situation to host ISOSS conference.

My next options to explore were Jordan and Qatar. I contacted Dr. Fraihat who took some time to make a final decision. In the meantime, I approached Dr. Ayman Baklizi of Qatar University. With initial support from the Department a formal application to the University authority was lodged for final approval. While the approval process was taking longer than anticipated time, I was contacted by Dr. Fraihat informing their willingness to host ICCS-XI. Later we agreed on the proposal of Dr. Hilal Albayyati to organize a joint conference of ISOSS and UAS (Union of Arab Statisticians) in Jordan in December 2011. I met Dr. Albayyati in the first Arab Statistics Conference in Amman, Jordan in 2007, and he is the main organizer of the UAS. Weeks after our agreement on the venue of the ICCS-XI, Dr. Baklizi confirmed me that Qatar University authority had approved only the application for ISOSS conference and rejected application of several other conferences. Fortunately, Qatar University is flexible about the date of the conference so we are able to plan to hold ICCS-XII in Qatar. This is the first time in the history of ISOSS we have a host for an ICCS in advance.

This is the first time a government department is hosting any ISOSS conference in its 23 year history. I hope it would be an eye opener to other government statistics offices in the OIC member states to come forward to host future ISOSS conferences. Obviously this phenomenon would contribute to the direct interaction of the primary producers of statistics and research statisticians with high potential to improve the quality of statistics. It may be noted here that the Department of Statistics, Government of Jordan received the best statistics office award in the Second Arab Statistics Conference in Libya in November 2009.

Finally, the dream to build ISOSS House has also come true. The life long efforts of Dr. Munir Ahmed and his team have produced its fruits. Financial contributions and support from everyone are highly appreciated by ISOSS family. We need young generation of statisticians who would be able to utilize the facility to benefit of the Ummah. I intend to use this building for further development of statistics in the Islamic countries and beyond. Initially we would like to foster statistical research and training activities through the ISOSS House. In addition to promote the value of statistics we

hope to build it as an institute for excellence of statistical learning and teaching. We may do so by producing high quality statisticians through undergraduate and postgraduate programs in statistics.

I always consulted ISOSS office, particularly Dr. Munir Ahmad and Dr. M. Hanif Mian, before taking any major decision. It is true that we did not agree on everything all the time, but we did not disagree on any serious matters. Their unqualified support and guidance have been a source of inspiration for me.

Every informed statistician now knows about ISOSS and the biennial ICCS. The ISOSS activities on the first World Statistics Day attracted significant global publicity of ISOSS via ISI. In the Islamic Countries ISOSS is a household name among the statisticians and statistical organizations. We need to attract more and regular sponsors to move ISOSS forward. The good wills and standing of ISOSS should be utilized to its benefit. We need to cooperate with all sister organizations and individuals who are willing to work with us. We would continue doing good and promote good in the scientific community and conscious members of the Ummah. We have travelled a long journey but a lot more to be done. Statistics is growing faster and ISOSS must be in the forefront to lead it to our benefit and the benefit of the mankind.

I thank each and every one of you who helped me and ISOSS over the years. I am really very grateful to all of you. Without your help we would not be able to achieve any successes. Certainly I did not work hard to gain any recognition from anyone other than being rewarded by Almighty Allah. I ask Him to reward you all unboundedly for your good deeds.