

President's Message

Dear Members of ISA Research Committee on Sociology of Leisure,

Greetings from Jaipur, India and Ishwar Modi, President, ISA RC 13.

I had been in communication with you but not so frequently so far. The launch of our own website will provide me an enhanced opportunity to be in touch with you more often. And as such I look forward to a much more regular communication and interaction with you.

Let me first of all thank all the members of RC 13 for my unanimous election as President. I would also like to mention and express my gratitude to all the three immediate past Presidents - Teus Kamphorst, Ken Roberts and Francis Lobo who thought it was time that I assume this responsibility with the hope and reposing their faith in me that it would be possible for me to strengthen RC 13 at this much needed juncture. I shall try my best with the help and support of RC 13 Board (which was also elected unanimously) to fulfill their expectations as well as to carry through the aspirations of the members of RC 13 as a whole. It is also a matter of great pleasure that the RC 13 Board for 2006 – 2010 has a wide representation from as many as eight countries right from Australia to Brazil spread over the continents (except Africa).

Now, let me apprise you with the state of affairs of our research committee. When I assumed my role as President on the occasion of the XVI ISA World Congress of Sociology at Durban during July 2006, I had no idea of the membership of RC 13 registered with ISA. At that time I also had no idea as to who were and who were not the registered members of ISA RC 13. The elections of the Board of RC 13 for the period 2006-2010 took place on the basis of those who were present at the business meeting. However, it was in September 2006, that I came to know about the actual number of RC 13 members from the ISA Secretariat. It stood at 39 at that time, but it soon came down to 30 as membership of nine members expired within the year 2006. It was an alarm bell to the existence of the research committee. As informed by ISA even a few Board members and functionaries of RC 13 were not official members of RC 13 until that time. It was such a piquant situation. As such something had to be done immediately and urgently particularly keeping in view that the RC 13 application for grant of financial support from ISA would not be considered if all the Board members were not the members of both ISA as well as RC 13 in good standing. While some Board members immediately became/renewed their membership of RC 13 some others in spite of repeated reminders failed to do so well in time and as a consequence, the Executive Committee of ISA, on recommendation from the Research Coordinating Committee, refused to consider the request of RC 13 for any financial support for its activities. It was such an unpleasant blow.

Hence forward, every possible effort was made to increase the membership of RC 13. Members of various international associations and organizations viz, World Leisure Organization, Leisure Studies Association of UK (LSA), Canadian Associations of Leisure Studies (CALs), Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS) as well as other known individuals and scholars interested in leisure studies were approached to become the members of RC 13. A lot of hectic and time consuming exercise had to be undertaken for this cause. I am happy to bring it to your kind notice that at long last, the membership of RC 13 has not only crossed the golden mark of 50 but will also soon cross the diamond mark of 60 members within the month of August 2007. RC 13 is now spread over as many as 24 countries all over the world, in fact, practically now we have presence on all the continents. However, we should not stop at that and for the time being our target must be to cross another magic mark of 100 members. I take this opportunity to appeal to all the

members of RC 13 to do their utmost to achieve this target. I do hope that in spite of your very busy schedules each one of you will make a very sincere effort in enrolling and adding as many members as possible to RC 13. I am sure, given your will, this target can be achieved within a few months time. I am stretching this point so much since ISA will once again consider financial support to our RC early next year. More the number of members in our RC, commensurately more will be the financial support from ISA for our activities. Even if each one of you can add one or two more members to RC 13, we will soon win the race.

Let me now draw your attention to still more pleasant things. Things for which we have all gathered together i.e., to promote Sociology of Leisure and in the process also to strengthen our own understanding of the wider leisure phenomenon in the context of other social phenomena and advancements in the broader context of globalization which are leading to social transformation all over the world. Probably we all share the feeling that the fast changing socio-economic and political milieus in many parts of the world due to factors like urbanization, industrialization, labour movements, globalization, privatization, colonial heritage, religion, modernization, large scale migrations, scientific and technological advancements etc., traditional leisure practices have undergone significant changes and modifications, giving rise to several new/hybrid forms of leisure. The interconnection and mutual impacts of these social transformations and leisure practices require more serious analyses and public debate in order to bring out the co-relationship between them. In pursuance of these issues the main theme of the RC 13 sessions at Barcelona ISA World Forum of Sociology will focus on: "Leisure and Social Transformation."

As soon as we received the invitation for participation at the First ISA Forum of Sociology to be held in Barcelona, Spain during 5-8 September 2008 we communicated our acceptance to the organizers with the consent of the Board. The Board decided that RC 13 will organize not one but two interim conferences until the next world congress of sociology to be held in Sweden in July 2010. As such the first interim conference of RC 13 will take place on the occasion of Barcelona Forum and the second one in India at Jaipur during November 2009. Immediately after, the main theme of RC 13 sessions: "**Leisure and Social Transformation**" was also communicated to ISA along with a large list of proposed sessions which was communicated to all the members of RC 13. The proposed list of sessions was kept large so that not only the varied academic interests of the members could be accommodated but also participation could be sought from the members of other RCs of ISA to strengthen the sessions in terms of both numerical participation as well as strong academic inputs. Association of other specialized Research Committees with the Research Committee on Leisure is also important to widen the scope of our own RC and to reinforce the relationship of leisure to various other social phenomena.

However, to have the consent of other concerned RCs for joint sessions was not an easy affair. It was only after a long and sustained communication with the Presidents/Chairpersons and other functionaries of the other RCs that I can now happily bring it to your kind notice that several ISA RCs have accepted our proposals of having joint sessions which has also been communicated to our members. Similarly, other RCs have also communicated about these joint sessions with RC 13 to their members. As such I will like to appeal to all our members that to make the RC 13 sessions / joint sessions successful it is our collective responsibility to contribute at least one and if possible may be even two papers to the chosen sessions. I look forward to receiving your abstract(s) at the earliest opportunity. I will also appreciate to know about your confirmed participation as soon as possible for you.

I would also like to once again request all the members to communicate their CVs to me with a copy to the Secretary of RC 13 Dr. Veena Sharma as early as possible so that special interest areas and specializations of the members are readily available while considering chairs/co-chairs of the sessions at Barcelona. This will also help me to keep the members informed about various related activities and events which are taking place elsewhere and

for other academic activities which RC 13 may plan to undertake in near future. Please feel free to suggest any activities which you would like RC 13 to undertake.

To make use of the wisdom, vision and academic eminence and excellence of the past Presidents of RC 13, I had proposed to the Board Members that I would like to constitute a Presidential Advisory Committee to guide me in my functioning and to share with us their wisdom and vision to take RC 13 ahead of others. Almost all the Board members appreciated and consented for constituting the PAC. As such I am happy to announce the formation of the Presidential Advisory Committee having the following Past Presidents of ISA RC 13:

Anna Olszewska, Poland (1982-1986)
Stanley Parker, U.K. (1986-1990)
Teus J. Kamphorst, Netherlands (1990-1994)
Gilles Pronovost, Canada (1994-1998)
Kenneth Roberts, U.K. (1998-2002)
Francis Lobo, Australia (2002-2006)

We do look forward to see each other a year or so from now in Barcelona. Bring your best ideas there to make the RC 13 sessions as intellectually vibrating and stimulating as possible. Please consider yourself very cordially and warmly invited to the various sessions / joint sessions of RC 13.

With best wishes and regards,

Prof. Dr. Ishwar Modi
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& Delegate to the Assembly of Councils
International Sociological Association.
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