

## Stockholm Diary

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1. Stockholm is a very beautiful but costly city. It costs 10 Kr (Kronor) (about Rs. 64/-) to go to a urinal in the railway station! A simple hamburger meal costs about 60-70 Kronor.
2. I was invited to the Swedish capital to accept the [Globe Award for Sustainability](#). These awards are given by the [Globe Forum](#) whose CEO is a very nice young entrepreneur Johan Gorecki. Johan made his millions as one of the founders of Skype. We received the award in Sustainable Research Category for our invention of [low grade ethanol lamp cum stove](#).



3. The award ceremony was quite an elaborate affair and started with first a cocktail with the HRH Crown Princess Victoria in a stately Royal room of the Grand Hotel (one of the prestigious hotels of Stockholm and a landmark like the Taj Hotel in Mumbai). Crown Princess is a very lovely and lively lady. She had visited

Pune last year and told me that she was amazed to see all the Swedish companies on one road and that their campuses were absolutely clean and beautiful unlike those in Sweden! I told her that an army of “malis” (gardeners) and servants do that job and the same thing can happen if they are allowed to immigrate to Sweden! I also presented my two books ([Nature of Human Thought](#) and [1970's America](#)) to her.

4. After an hour with the Crown Princess (which also included photo ops with her for all the awardees), we were lead to the dining hall of the hotel where there were assembled around 400 CEOs, Excellencies and distinguished guests of Europe and from other parts

of the world. I was seated on the table with the Crown Princess Victoria. For a villager from India (and we were only two Indians in the whole audience the other being an MD of a Swedish company) the seating was out of this world. Next to me sat the deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, Ms. Maud Olofsson who is also the minister for enterprise and energy and in front of me was the Crown Princess Victoria, Johan Gorecki and Frank Appel-the CEO of Deutsche Post DHL (the courier company). The conversation on various subjects ranging



from sustainability to rural life and the future of the world was stimulating. The deputy Prime Minister wanted me to take time off and see the world famous Swedish biogas

program. Since this was a short trip I could not take her offer but hope to go to Sweden in the near future.

5. The ceremony was a mixture of dance, drama and the awards – almost on the lines of the Oscar and Golden Globe Awards. Some of the well known Swedish actors and actresses performed a few dance numbers together with some magic performances thrown in. The prize to NARI for research was the first to be given and so had a better audience impact. I gave my 2 minute thank you speech.



6. The ceremony ended at around 11:30 p.m. and I was extremely impressed with the simplicity of Crown Princess Victoria and Madam Deputy Prime Minister. There was no fuss regarding security etc. something we see in such a crass display in India. The chief of protocol and ADC of Crown Princess were seated on a separate table and were not at all hovering around her.
7. The award ceremony was very nicely covered in the local mass and electronic media. My interview was broadcast on Swedish Radio and carried in one of the leading daily newspapers of Sweden, Svenska Dagbladet.
8. Among the four awards (the other three went to Tesla Electric Car Co. of USA for sustainable technological innovation; Cardiff, Wales for sustainable city and Novo Nordisk for CSR) our work on humble lantern somehow touched the chord in the forum since a large number of people came to congratulate me, to appreciate the invention and inquired as to how they can help. I think raising finances for this work should be easy now.

9. This was my first visit to Stockholm. I had half a day to go sight seeing around the city. My hotel Clarion Sign Stockholm-a modern 4 star hotel was situated right in the center of the city and so it was wonderful to walk to the water front. Stockholm is like an island surrounded by lakes and a river and hence few kilometers from the center of the city to all sides is water. It is a lovely city but completely Americanized with McDonalds and Burger King dotting the streets every few meters. Like all European cities Stockholm is a pedestrian's delight with broad footpaths and pedestrians and cyclists having the right of way.



10. Swedes speak excellent English since right from school they are taught English as a main subject. This is a far cry from Spain or France where it is difficult to communicate without knowing a little bit of their language.



11. Sight seeing was marred by the unpredictable Stockholm (or rather Swedish) weather. It would be quite clear and in minutes it would start raining-not very heavily but enough to force me to take shelter in a shop. With high winds blowing, the umbrella was of very little use. Going from Phaltan where the temperature was nearly 40<sup>0</sup>C to Stockholm where it was 3-4<sup>0</sup>C provided quite a thermal shock.

12. On the first day of the Forum all the awardees were asked to present their work in the afternoon after which there was a general press conference.

13. After our presentation and press conference we were taken for dinner to the exclusive [Villa Pauli](#) by boat. This Villa situated about 10-15 km from Stockholm is in an area where all the rich Swedish people live. It is owned by a couple and is right on the water front. In the stately dining room around 30 of us (the awardees, jury members and forum speakers) were feted with the finest Italian wine and Swedish food. The owner of the Villa-a rich banker told us the history of the Villa and explained about the frescos painted by the famous Swedish painter Georg Pauli.



14. The boat journey to Pauli Villa was an interesting affair. As we entered the boat we were given the champagne and for a teetotaler like me no soft drink or even water was available! Nevertheless champagne flowed like water.

15. Among the Asians in the forum were two Chinese. One Prof. Jianmin was the former Ambassador to France, Netherlands and Belgium and the other was Prof. C. S. Kiang-the chairman of Beijing University Environment Fund and in charge of running the US-China initiative on sustainability and carbon reduction. Both of these gentlemen commented that it was nice that I wore the Kurta and Nehru jacket at the award ceremony and were lamenting that now everybody in China wears the western dress.

16. The water in Stockholm is very clean and I could drink it from tap anywhere. Obviously this helped my pocket book tremendously. This drinking water from the tap used to be the case in US in 1970s but now almost everybody there uses bottled water.

17. Arlanda airport is a very modern one and is situated around 40 km north of Stockholm. It costs about 500 Kronor by taxi to reach there from the center of the city. The taxi driver who took me to the airport was quite a talkative one. He spoke, like other Swedes, excellent English and had recently retired from the Swedish Army in which he served for 37 years. Because of that he had traveled all over the world and immediately recognized

that I was an Indian. He also told me that he plays golf and enquired whether I knew Jeev Milka Singh, the great golf player. Where in the world can we get a world traveler, golfer and upto date in world affairs taxi driver but in Stockholm?

18. The whole trip was paid for by the Globe Award organizers. Otherwise it is very difficult to go to these countries since they are very costly.
19. At the Mumbai airport on my return from Stockholm there was a long queue at the customs clearance since quite a few flights land at midnight. In order to reduce it the customs officers generally interview the passengers and if satisfied they were allowed to go without the customary x-ray scanning of the baggage. The customs officer asked me from where I was coming and when I had gone to Stockholm. Eyeing the big bag he remarked that it was too big for a 4 days' trip. I told him that it contained a heavy glass Globe from the award. He wanted to see the certificate which was in my briefcase. After examining it he saluted me, shook my hand and said it was a matter of great pride for all of us and waved me off.

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