



It was early this year we launched AABP magazine at the bi-annual New Delhi World Book Fair held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The fair was widely appreciated except for a few shortcomings like lack of proper signages and the thinly attended and less lively book launch events.

After this fair, I happened to visit the Turin Book Fair in Italy which was totally mind-boggling, in terms of its overall size, number of exhibitors and impressive number of 3,15,013 visitors. The liveliness of the show was so epidemic that it continued everyday till 10 pm. Visitors who entered the halls did not even feel like going out to fill their tummies as there was hygienically prepared food like sandwiches, icecreams, etc, available within the fair grounds. And book launch functions were buzzing with excitement.

The audience presence at such events was 3-4 times more than the capacity of the halls! The authors connected with the audience, leaving them attached and captivated. Though language was a limiting factor, the show was a big hit. It even attracted families as there was something for each member of the family. Even toddlers could enjoy drawing on the walls! Infact, those who have not seen Turin Book Fair have missed something really enchanting in life, such remains the enthusiasm and the pull of the show!

Another fair attended by me this year was the Cape Town Book Fair in South Africa which though small but smart show, was systematically revived by the Frankfurt Book Fair authorities. The show was so meticulously planned and marketed that attracted people like Mridul Kumar, head of office, High Commission of India to South Africa, Cape Town as well. He came to visit the fair on a personal level with his family members but was pleasantly surprised to see a lot of Indians participating at the show. That's how the push and pull theory actually works!

More recently, there was the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany which needs no introduction. The salient features of this show cannot be compared to any domestic show. What I liked most was the way it was divided into various segments, making it much easier to navigate. Then, the antique books section was very attractive. In India, we have a wealth of antique literature, specially within every religion. If these books are displayed at our book fairs, they will attract many eyeballs.

Thus, organizers of the Indian book fairs can definitely take some positive cues from these international fairs and replicate them here for the benefit of the book-lovers at large. The Delhi Book Fair is just round the corner; let's hope that it is better and more useful than it was previously. Wishing you all 'the year 2011' with happy reading!