

The Journal of Engineering Education : It's Journey from Issue No. 1 to 100 and 106 and Beyond

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Abstract : *The article presents the story of “Journal Engineering Education” which was published from Pune from 1986 to 2014 under my editorship. I started this Journal and was editor for all the issues, from Issue No. 1 to Issue No. 106. I may also mention here that , this also is the story of my own dream --- to become a Professor and also a Journalist --- and how I realized this dream.*

It describes why and how a journal started in 1986, and how it continued publication, involving 14 special issues which was then, important and burning issues of Engineering Education in India. At the end of 26 years of publishing this Journal, with my advancing age - ----- I am now 88++plus years ----- I felt the necessity of handing over this Journal to the environment with their new dreams. Fortunately, I could find such a younger team who have taken up this Journal activity and are even elevating the Journal to International standards and is well set on the never ending path of global Quality and Excellence. The new team consist of Dr. Mrs. Sushama Kulkarni, Director, Rajaram Bapu Institute of Technology, Islampur, Dist. Sangali, Maharashtra, India. and her colleagues.

1. Introduction

I had a dream in my school days ... i). To become a Professor ii) And also to become a Journalist .That time, I did not know what is a Professor and what Journalist is.. I thought a Professor is, just, a teacher in a college .I was also fascinated by the Journalism because I saw young Journalists asking questions to dignitaries, which many times were Chief Ministers or even the Prime Minister. Sometimes these Journalists

asked questions and placed them in awkward situations, and , the Journalists insisted on an answer from these dignitaries. It is a different matter that the dignitaries cleverly sidetracked the main question and managed to give some answers and get over the situations. This is what fascinated me.

I started my career in Hydro-electric project Department of the erstwhile State of Hyderabad in 1952 where I worked as an Engineer on the famous Nizam Sagar and Tungbhadra Hydro-electric projects. At the end of 5 years, I began to feel that my interest lies in a teaching career and not on the executive job as an engineer on the project. Soon I set out in search of a teaching job as a lecturer and shortly, I found a job as a lecturer in a newly set up Polytechnic in Aurangabad. Thus, I was on the path of fulfilling my dream of becoming a Professor. This path, I was sure, will lead ,one day, to a Professor's job.

I did become a Professor, and worked at Govt, Colleges of Engineering, Karad, Amaravati and finally, at Pune, at the prestigious college-- Government college of Engineering , Pune, which has a history of nearly 150 years and is the IV Engineering College to be established in India. It is at this College where Sir. M. Visvesvaraya, who is now considered as “Father of Engineering Profession “was a student of this institution, long back. Any way I was Professor for more than 25 years of which the last 8 years , I worked at this prestigious College, from where I retired in 1984. After retirement from

this College, I started to work for the Quality & Excellence in Engineering Education by establishing a Charitable Trust- “The Engineering Education Foundation, Pune” of which I am the Founder President and through the Journal of Engineering Education of which I am the Founder Editor and I continue to work, to this day, for the Quality and Excellence and now, I have a sense of feeling that I could achieve my dream of becoming a Professor and also a Journalist, may be to some extent.

Regarding Journalism I have some satisfaction that I became Editor of the Journal of Engineering Education, in 1986. I had the honor to start this Journal and continue its publication under my editorship & bring out 106 Issues over a period of 26 years and I would like to narrate here, the story of the JEE --- i.e. Journal of Engineering Education. Here I may mention that this is also the story of how I realized my dream to become a Professor and also a Journalist,

2. The Story Begins

In June 1983, the Government of Maharashtra adopted the policy of privatization for the Engineering Colleges and Polytechnics. Similar policies were adopted earlier by the Governments of Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

Then, the number of Engineering colleges in Maharashtra, was only 9 and Polytechnics were just 28, upto the end of 1982-83. But with the policy of privatization announced in June 1983, within one month the number went up to more than 60 Engineering colleges and Polytechnics more than 50 in Maharashtra.

The author organized a 2 day Conference at Pune on 23-24th October 1983, on “Engineering Education”, at the Institutions of Engineers, Pune local centre, Pune. In this conference, more than 40 Engineering colleges and 30 Polytechnics participated.

Soon, the necessity for a common platform for exchange of experiences, sharing of views, discussion on emerging problems was felt. It is at

that time, the then Director of Technical Education Maharashtra State Prof. G. S. Kadu organized various Annual Conferences of Engineering colleges and Polytechnics of Maharashtra. This went on for a few years. In one of these conferences held in 1986 at Panhala (Dist. Kolhapur, Maharashtra State) the author proposed that, with such a sudden expansion of the system and so many technical Institutions coming up, we must bring out Journal on Engineering Education. In this conference, I tabled a resolution for such a Journal. After the Resolution was passed, Prof. G. S. Kadu announced that Prof. Ratnalikar will take up the responsibility for the Journal as an editor. This came as a bolt from the blue : Yet, I decided to take up this challenge and started editing and publishing the Journal as a quarterly Journal from July 1986.

3. The First Issue

The Journal was published in a small function held at College of Engineering, Aurangabad on 28th August, 1986. This contained articles from authors from all over India including one from Dr. O. N. Wakhlu, Principal Regional Engineering College, Srinagar. Messages were received from Hon. Shri. S.B. Chavan, then Chief Minister of Maharashtra and many other dignitaries for the success of the Journal.

The objectives of the journal were published in the first issue itself, which are reproduced below :

1. To collect and disseminate information about the activities in the field of Engineering Education, in and outside Maharashtra.
2. To work for the development of polytechnics, Engineering Colleges and other institutions imparting Engineering Education.
3. To focus on the problem of research in Engineering Education.
4. To work for the involvement of industry in Engineering Education.
5. To raise the standards of Engineering Education.
6. To discuss and review the working of Institutions connected with Engineering Education.

7. To acquaint and review the working of Institutions connected with Engineering Education.
8. To promote the use of Educational Technology.
9. To keep abreast of the recent trends in the international field of Engineering Education worldwide.
10. To provide technologist and Engineers who not only keep the wheels of industry rolling and help to attain material progress but also provide culture and spiritual background so that the material progress becomes meaningful.

Thus, the Journey of my quarterly Journal commenced in 1986. I was keeping these objectives in view all these years and making efforts to fulfill these to the best of my knowledge and ability.

4. The Journey of JEE (Journal of Engineering Education)

The author had the honor of being its Founder Editor and has been working in the capacity all these years; Many others joined and left as they had their own priorities. We had even members on our Editorial Board, but these members rarely evinced any interest in this activity and the Board had to be soon discontinued.

Our editorials are comments on the matters of current interest and not mere introduction of the contents and authors of the Journal, as is the case with many professional journals. I, as an editor had the privilege of writing all these 106 editorials. May be, sometimes in future, we may bring out all these editorials in the form of a book which might reflect the then current topics of interest and burning issues from time to time,

5. Special Issues

I had come across a special issue of the International Journal of Engineering Education published in U.S.A. on “Engineering Education in India”. Dr. R. Natarajan, the then Director of IIT Chennai, was the Guest Editor of this issue. Since then I had in mind the idea of Special issue and Guest Editor. In 1997, I went to U. K. and spent 4

months with my son and his family. I used to visit the Stafford University Library, which was, located just 2 kilometers from our residence. Here, I had access to journals on Engineering Education from U.K. and from other countries. It was then that, this idea of a special issue flashed across my mind and I wrote letters to some of the U.K. authors asking them if they could write articles for my journal. To my surprise, every one whom I wrote replied on the third day mentioning that either he would write an article for me or not. They kept their word and on the mentioned date, the article was in my hands. (My experience in India is altogether different. Our authors particularly top leaders are too busy and rarely do we get prompt replies. We have to send them reminders, telephone calls a number of times and then only we may get response). On returning to India, we brought out first Special Issue “Engineering Education in U.K.”.

Similarly when I went to Singapore, in December 2000, I visited all the four Polytechnics and one University of Singapore. I approached the potential authors for articles and on returning to India, we brought out the V Special Issue on “Engineering Education in Singapore in April 2001”. In Singapore and even in U.K. I was an unknown entity; my only identity was my own statement that I was an Editor from India and had access to many authors including the Vice Chancellors, Directors and Principals etc. This paved the way for special issues and by now, we have published 14 such Special issues as given below in Table 1. These 14 Special issues are, now, available on the website of the Engineering Foundation.

The publication continued regularly till the 100 th issue, which was the 14 th special Issue on “Engineering Education on the global plane” in September 2012.

The Story continues beyond till we reach the 106 th issue as mentioned in – “Section 8. And Beyond..” which follows shortly.

Table 1. Special issues in JEE (Journal of Engineering Education)

No.	Name of Issues	Volume	Year
1	Engineering Education in U.K	XI-3	Jan.1998
2	Technical Teacher's Training Institute	XII -1	July1998
3	Quality in Engineering Education	XIII- 1&2	July/ Oct.1999
4	A.I.C.T.E.	XIII-4	April2000
5	Engineering Education in Singapore	XIV-3&4	Jan /April 2001
6	Our I.I.T.'s	XV-4 & XVI-1	April /July 2002
7	Developed India 2020 – A Vision for Engineering Education	XVII-2&3	Oct.2003 /Jan.2004
8	Current Scenario, Emerging Challenges & Future Trends	XIX-3&4	April /Jan. 2006
9	TQM in Engineering Education	XX-4&XXI-1	April / July 2007
10	Autonomy in Engineering Education	XXII-1&2	July / Oct. 2008
11	Technical University	XXIII No.4 & Vol. XXIV No.1	April/July 2010
12	Research in State Engineering Colleges- -Road Map	Volume XV th No.1 & 2	July-Oct. 2011
13	Technological Universities of India	Volume XXV No.3	January, 2012
14	Engineering Education on Global Plane	XXV- 4	Sept.2012

6. Subscribers

A word about subscribers will not be out of place. We have more than 3000 Engineering colleges, about 4000 Polytechnics in India, about 300 Engineering colleges, and more than 250 Polytechnics in Maharashtra. But our Foundation has just 400 subscribers for this Journal & of this about 150 subscribers have not paid subscription for periods ranging from 2 to 4 years, resulting in huge arrears of about 1.5 lakhs. In spite of all this, we continue our journal activity, only because we are convinced that the journal activity is inspired with noble objectives mentioned earlier and is a powerful means to serve practitioners both in Engineering Education and the industry.

7. General Apathy Towards Quality

I am sorry to mention that it is observed that there is general apathy of the all concerned with engineering education. The institutions, the principals and the readers towards Quality, Quality journals and payment of subscriptions. This has been general observation of all those working in the field of enhancement of quality and excellence. People

are happy to follow the routine and sameness and unwilling to respond to anything other than this.

We would have appreciated any reaction from our subscribers and readers, even if it meant criticism of our journal. But they have no time and no mind even for this.

If so, what will happen to our dream of Developed India by 2020? This situation is very dampening; it is very necessary that we work with more zeal and enthusiasm and put in our effort vigorously and more forcefully. Myself and my colleagues are determined to do this.

8. And Beyond

After completing the journey so far i.e. after publishing 100th and 106th Issue what next? We have always to be in search of wider horizons and higher peaks to conquer. Hence, our next destination on this un-ending path of Quality and Excellence, will be to make our Journal, an e-Journal; and, not only this, but to elevate it to international level so that it becomes an international Journal on Engineering Education on the global plane.

One more factor, my age! I am now 88+, it

is difficult for me to keep pace with the fast changing world of Engineering Education, and I think, it is time for me to handover this Journal activity to the younger generation who can comfortably keep pace with this fast changing environment and take the journal-keeping pace with the fast changing world. The younger generation have their own dreams, their own methodology not only have the capacity and competence to flow along the changing environment but also have the capacity to elevate the Journal to Global standards and making it on-line and make it freely available on the internet.

9. The New Team

I consider myself fortunate in finding the New Team working under the leadership of Dr.Sushma Kulkarni, Director Rajarambapu Institute of Technology (RIT), District Sangli, Maharashtra State, who has already taken over the Journal activity and brought out 107th and 108th issue . The next issue i.e. 109th issue will be under a slightly modified title – Journal of engineering Education Transformations— JEET—and will be an international and online Journal along with print copy.

7. Conclusion

Thus I find my dream to be a Professor and also a Journalist , was realised in a big way. Dr.A.P.J. Abdul Kalam –our scientist of international reputation and former President of India always says, “we should have big dreams”; and Shri. Narendra Modi, our Prime Minister, now, says, “you should have big dreams, no doubt, but you must plan, act and pursue the dreams in a focused and continuous manner”. And Swami Vivekanand says “ Stop not till the goal is reached”

I had a dream which I pursued to the best of my knowledge & ability and by God’s grace, not only published 106 Issues of the Journal of Engineering Education, covering the period of 26 years and I am witnessing its continuation and its elevation on the global plane. I have satisfaction to have handed over to the younger generation who

will carry on my mission of Quality & Excellence in Engineering Education into the 21 Century and will bring out 200th Issue, 300 Issue and beyond.

Let us all work together “for making India a Super power by 2020” and continue our unending journey on the path of Quality and Excellence, in a focused manner and on continuous basis, involving amore and more Engineering Teachers inducting Quality in all processes & procedures, with all changes on scientific basis; in short adopting and implementing the TQM philosophy and Methodology. It is this TQM philossophy which has worked wonders in Industry on the global plane and has helped our Industry to become players on the global plane. Now, this TQM Philosophy is knocking at the gates of Engineering Education in India and the day will not be far, when we open our gates and soon will be players on the global plane and assume global leadership.