

EDITORIAL

"SEARCH FOR QUALITY IN ENGINEERING EDUCATION"

We have today a large network of Engineering colleges and polytechnic in the country, specially in the four southern states namely Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamilnadu. A phenomenal growth has occurred that could not even be dreamt, some years back.

We also have set-up bodies like state Directorates of Technical Education, various universities (more than 200) and at the top, AICTE, a statutory body setup by an act of parliament in 1986 which has been entrusted with the task of coordinating & maintaining standards of Engineering Education in the country. AICTE is functioning for more than a decade. We have a National board of Accreditation. But, has there been any perceptible enhancement in the standards of Engineering Education ? It is difficult to answer the question and say yes.

We have been just talking about norms and standards, quality and excellence; little is being done to identify the factors that contribute to quality and excellence. We are causal in our approach, contented with a few pockets of quality, noticed, here and there. Any conscious effort to identify and enhance Quality in a scientific organized basis, is yet to come up. We talk of Autonomy, a separate Technical University, a Deemed University, but do not exhibit the courage and confidence to implement them. As we enter the 21 country, this picture has to change. In the global market, there are already onslaughts on our engineering education system from Universities in USA, UK and Australia and these will be on increase, unless we take immediate steps to go in for Quality.

We have our accreditation process, the ISO 9000, the university committees, inspection committees by the Directorates and State Govts.. Yet on path of Quality, we make no progress.

Some efforts are being made by TTTI's. IIT's do not feel that any special efforts need to be done in this direction. Only well qualified faculty, PHDs and research and consultation, according to them, brings in Quality, It may be true for them (there are only 7 IIT's in the country); not for the vast number of colleges and polytechnics in the country.

It is time that Quality vision is built up, search for Quality is commenced and a Quality movement is launched at local, state and National level. One day seminar for Quality awareness at local level (say university wise area) and study groups by experts in Engineering Education for investigating various aspects of Engineering Education Quality, must be organized. Efforts for generating Quality awareness on the one hand and search for Quality factors that lead to excellence must be taken up on the academic plane.

We must start and act and try to catch with the developments in western countries like US, UK, Australia & Japan. It will be, in a short period, a battle for survival for us in the global market.

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Prof. N. V. Ratnalikar,

- Editor.

