

Editorial

No Resolutions, Now. Only Charter of Demands.

At Every seminar, Conference, we discuss matters of current interest, debate, deliberate, have exchange of views and, generally, arrive at a consensus. Then, we put this consensus in a form of resolution and pass it, may be unanimously or by majority. What happens to these resolutions? What happens to the energy, time, heated discussions, involved in all this process of getting these resolution passed? Nobody knows, nobody bothers to ask. Everything evaporates and is almost forgotten. This is going on for years and years.

Some of these resolutions, which are related to professional practices, can be tackled by the professionals themselves. But some other matters, need Govt support, approval and may require policy decision, at state or national level. It is to such matters that we shall consider, now.

Can we do something about it? Why not bring out, on the basis of these resolutions, what may be called a Charter of Demands. Prepare a charter of Demands, seek an appointment with the concerned authorities of the Govt and place this Charter before them, explain them what we want and why we want. . It is quite likely, the Govt officials, may be a Minister, will give you a patient hearing, thank you for the efforts you are making and promise that he will look in the matter. Generally, this is a tactical way of putting you off, expecting that you will forget the matter, sooner or later. This has been happening, all these days. It is here, we suggest, we should not give up the matter. It is time carve out a new path.

Take an appointment with the same or higher authority, say after an interval of six months and remind them of the previous talks and persuade them to consider the matter explaining how urgent and important the matter is. Wait for some time and ask for another appointment and again take up the matter. While doing this, don't forget to seek support, co-operation and collaboration of other organizations working for the same objectives, and let the authorities come to know that that we are earnest, sincere and determined to have a specific response from the Govt based on reason, rationality and that we are working in public and professional interest. This representation to Govt authorities should continue at regular intervals. In the meanwhile you may add more demands to you Charter. Make public the outcome at regular intervals. And I have no doubt that with reason, rationality and professional integrity on our side, the Govt will have to take it seriously, sooner or later— your Charter of Demands.

Such a Charter of Demands could be:

(1) National Policy on Education. Our National Policy of Education was announced in 1986. Twenty years have passed since then.

Tremendous changes have taken place in the scenario.- Globalisation, Privatisation, Liberalisation, WTO, the GATT the Washington Accord and the onslaught of foreign universities on our soil. We, the practitioners in the field are trying to face the situation in our own way, should not there be some guide lines from the Center or State Govts?

Our sensitiveness to the rapid changes around us, must be made visible by announcing a national policy based of wide debate and deliberation all over the country. Some guidelines from the Centre or State Govts is very much desirable; we may, otherwise, work in different directions resulting in chaos and confusion.

(2) Vision for Engineering Education.

The great revolutionary, Mazinne, said, "If there is no vision, people perish". So we must have a vision. Can there be a better vision than the one, placed before us by our Hon. President Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.- Developed India by 2020". So, let us adopt this vision and work for it individually and collectively, with all determination, devotion and dedication.

(3) Teaching to be a profession in the true professional sense,

Today it is not. One takes a Degree, may be M-Tech. or even PhD and on the next day, he gets an appointment as lecturer or even as a professor. Does he know anything about the teaching learning process, curriculum developments and its implementation; has he any knowledge of pedagogy and any teaching experience?. Today we are fighting our battle with untrained soldiers. Should this situation continue like this and, if so, how long?

There are many other points. But this is not the place to chart out the demands. It has to be done in a systematic and scientific way by the professional bodies. A few demands have been given, just, by way of illustration.

The idea of the charter of the demand is just a suggestion for all concerned to consider and to consider this with a degree of seriousness that it deserves.