

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROBLEMS OF ENGINEERING SPECIALISTS

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After the Second World War all countries which could afford to do so invested large sums of money on scientific research. As a result engineering methods, analysis and technology advanced very rapidly. By cutting into the earlier factors of safety, using better materials and by more creative work it became possible to eliminate a lot of wastage and accelerate economic development.

To implement these advantages it became necessary to develop finer skills and finer understanding of engineering problems. This led to the emergence of the engineering specialists. (Design and Research Engineers). The specialists are therefore the source of technological development in any engineering organisation.

In Sri Lanka's Public Service today there are young engineers holding Masters and Doctors degrees and coming under the category of specialists. It is in the interest of national development that an Engineering Specialist cadre be created permitting the development of Engineering Specialist careers.

The above cadre should be on a transferable basis, since the in-depth knowledge possessed by specialists could be made use of by many departments (eg. in-depth knowledge in Soil Mechanics, Concrete technology etc.).

Transferability would also ensure a better and more even distribution of technology within the entire Public Service. Further this would make it possible for specialists to be easily moved to positions according to national priorities.

On wastage alone it is estimated that the creation of a specialist cadre would save the country approximately Rs. 250 million an year.

Library Facilities

Due to the vast advances in engineering methods analysis and technology, a library is an essential part of any engineering organisation.

Due to the manner with which some departments and corporations have been run there are no library facilities at all. In other places there are ill-equipped library facilities which are far from what is required.

As a matter of policy it is imperative that the development of libraries be considered with high priority.

Investigation Facilities

There is a serious shortage of laboratory facilities in Sri Lanka's Public Service. It is therefore very difficult to build up on indigenous technology in the country. It will not be possible for every department to have their complete requirements.

In the circumstances a much closer liaison between the Public Service and the University is required. Investigations into all major development projects are best carried out as a joint effort between the University and the department concerned.