

Opinion

Role of engineers in Sri Lanka

"Techno 2002 - 17th Anniversary Exhibition" held recently at the BMICH organised by the Institution of Engineers in Sri Lanka gave a glimpse of achievements of the industry in Sri Lanka. Engineering disciplines of civil, mechanical, electrical, information technology, agriculture, plantation and chemical engineering displayed their talents by way of models and various methods of applications. The section allocated to school children and junior inventors, displayed excellent exhibits.

When the engineers in Sri Lanka, undergraduates and school children were exhibiting their skillfulness, dexterity, adroitness and expertise, we hear of their Sri Lankan counter parts in Australia, being acknowledged and recognized for their excellence, ingenuity, capacity and resourcefulness at the "2002 Australian Museum Eureka Awards".

Dr. Dan Godamunne, General Manager of an Eco Manufacturing Centre - a leading manufacturing concern from Sydney, Australia was recently awarded the 2002 A.M.E Award for industry. Institution of Engineers Australia offers this prize for innovative or outstanding commitment to research, development or training, and it carries prestige, distinction and recognition. A newly discovered shrimp like crea-

ture from Queensland waterways has been named "Eco Manufactia" in recognition of the Eco Manufacturing Center's achievement.

Dr. Godamunne had introduced a new method of recycling, redesigning and remanufacturing out of broken office machines. Nearly 80 percent of company spare parts are now manufactured from used metal, circuit boards and photo conductors, as well as plastics and chemicals. This had enabled a 10 percent reduction in the number of parts in new machines, and thereby save A\$ 26 million and bring in a further A\$ 2.5 million in export earnings. Dr. Godamunne is now negotiating with other industries to introduce this method.

The prize for school children on "Lateral thinking" - a plan to overcome problems on lack of commitment to research and development - a four point plan submitted by Year 12 students from Mount Waverly Secondary College in Melbourne, Masters Sandun Amadoru from Sri Lanka and Australian Peter Clark included mandatory random involvement in human science experiments.

Similarly, Engineers in Sri Lanka or abroad are a capable of developing highways, railways, irrigation, drainage, sewerage, harbours, airports, power, telecommu-

nications, environment. Hence, they are the most vital link in the decision making process; and should be involved in the political processes of planning and development of urban and sub-urban infrastructure. It is their duty to send clear messages to the community, to the politicians, to the administrators, and funding agencies on infrastructure needs and investments. They should get involved in the country's political debate and find solutions to problems in decision-making.

For example in the transport sector, we do not need ring roads and super highways to accommodate ever-increasing number of automobiles. What we need are solutions to congestion, air pollution such as efficient use of energy, restriction of imports, better use of inter modality, accident prevention, up-liftment of safety standards, and improvement to driving standards. Furthermore, restriction of number of three wheelers within the city and buses with a smaller passenger capacity entering the city, container carriers etc should be given serious thought.

The able leadership of the Institution of Engineers in Sri Lanka has a leading role to play.

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