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Engineering profession lacking women in the field

Increased numbers of engineers entering private sector

By DAMAYANTHI HEWAMANNA

President of the Institute of Engineers of Sri Lanka (IESL) Jayantha Ranatunga said that seventy percent of the graduates have joined the private sector and are continuing to do so with a lack of women in the sector clearly evident.

"Private sector has been limited to trade and there are new organisations in the sector such as Jinasena, MAS Holdings and Brandix and are all lead by visionary engineers", Mr. Ranatunga stated at the 100 Annual Sessions inauguration held at the BMICH yesterday.

IESL has initiated a program to take their products and services to the rural sector where the folk in these areas have not benefited as much as people in the urban sector.

Mr. Ranatunga said that 450 years ago the country was in a dark era when foreign civilisation took over the island and didn't produce great engineers like the great King Parakramabahu who built buildings that considered the tallest in the world and man made reservoirs that are still producing clean water making steel and bronze castings.

A point that was brought out at the event was that the engineering field was lacking

women. "The engineering institute is worried that it was not attracting women", Mr. Ranatunga said.

He said that they need women of all sections of the society and need to somehow attract more women into the field.

"We have tremendous challenges in the engineering sector, and around 29 percent of the children under the age of five are malnourished and this is because they don't have enough income to buy the food", Minister of Science and Technology Tissa Vitharana said.

He also said that a million or more were unemployed and many were so because of the free education system and other problems such as the conflict in the North and East which demand meaningful and rapid answers.

"The engineering profession is playing a key role in the world over generating technology and applying technology," Mr. Vitharana added.

Of the 192 international countries that are in the United Nations (UN) 150 of them are poor countries and even through all the science and technology the gap between the rich and poor is widening.

Mr. Vitharana states that they have a tremendous task before them asserting that the

engineering profession was second to none. There has also been a brain drain because almost the best engineers are abroad serving countries that are already having the best of everything.

Awards were given to people who had passed examination in research finding and analysing them.

They were Dr. S A Nanayakkara, Mrs. VASP Nanayakkara, N. Y. Zenudin and Ajith Banagoda and several other engineers who participated in these examinations.

Ananda College won an award for the school producing the best students in winning awards. Fellowships were also given to life member engineers Dr. K. Vigneswaran and W. I. V. de Mel. Others chosen as fellows were Engineers E. A. C. Ekanayake, M. G. M. Gunawardena, B. W. R. Balasuriya, S. G. A. Rajkumar, D. M. W. Dassanayake and A. C. Yapa.

"The Institute of Mechanical Engineers (IMEchE) has had a long relationship with IESL from 1927 and it is one of the largest stage wide variety of events and is dedicated to members around the world", Guest of Honour and IMechE President Alek Osbourne said.



(Left) R N S Rajapaksha of Ananda College receiving his award from Minister of Science and Technology Tissa Vitharana for his efficient funnel project at the Junior Exhibition of the Young Engineers of Sri Lanka event at the 11 convocation of the IESL. (Right) Engineer Dr. K Vigneswaran receiving the life membership fellowship. Pix by Pradeep Dilrukshana.