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Editorial

WHETHER or not India has the third largest technical manpower in the world may depend on various interpretations. It is a fact that India has a very large pool of technical personnel at all levels with varied qualifications. Yet India has not been able to establish itself as one of the 'Asian Tigers' in the same group as Korea, Malaysia, Japan or Singapore. No doubt it has had moderate success with its own defense, space and nuclear programs. But the impact of India as a strong industrial nation as envisaged by the founding fathers nearly half a century ago has not yet been widely felt. The reason for the successes and failures could be attributed to a number of factors ranging from past and present governmental policies to the ever increasing population pressure and limited resources. But ultimately it would be the responsibility of the technical manpower which could change things in a developing country like India. Is this vast community capable and well equipped to facilitate such a transformation? Educators, by and large, will have to answer and account for the preparedness of the technical manpower. Taking into account the fact that there can not be a single or unique education system suitable for the whole world, the situation has changed considerably from the old Indian teacher-disciple (guru-shishya) system, where learning was by observing the teacher and practicing what he did. In modern India there are large numbers of colleges, universities and management schools with diverse educational methods and they are continuously increasing in number. Are these effective in delivering the goods? In this Special Issue on India experts have attempted to take a closer look at the issues related to Technical Education in India.

There are twenty-one papers in this issue from eminent Indian professionals, predominantly from the field of Technical Education. These persons are closely associated with education as administrative or executive heads, industrialists and policy makers with wide experience at both national and international levels. The papers can be broadly classified into five areas: (a) Views on engineering education from an Indian perspective; (b) Education policy aspects; (c) Manpower policy; (d) Engineering education and enterprise relations; (e) International cooperation. We observe that the opinions expressed are quite candid and frank, which is an essential requirement for a critical evaluation and improvement of the existing system. Some papers contain extensive statistical data on subjects such as migrating students and the funding patterns of various technical institutions. This type of information would hopefully provide an important input to Indian intelligentsia for any modifications in the existing pattern. Such changes might be necessary in the light of current trends in globalisation as well as liberal economic policies of the Government of India as the Indian work force has to stand up to international competition. Due to the obvious difficulties in data collection, end user (ex learner or student) response is not available in sufficient detail for a comprehensive assessment of the system. We need a lot more insight into what is right and what is not.

Bringing out an issue on a single theme is difficult and time consuming. It requires a considerable amount of coordination. Prof. R. Natarajan of the I.I.T. Madras has patiently pursued and edited the papers and we thank him for the excellent results. His own contributions are significant in the analysis of the Indian situation. We hope that this issue will not only be valuable for India but will represent an example of how the largest democracy on earth is innovatively tackling the issues of technical education. We urge all readers from countries other than India to also profit from this rich and fascinating experience.

M. S. Wald

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This is a tenth anniversary issue of the journal. The first issue was published in April 1985. It is fitting that the theme is the emergence of an engineering education picture of a country that is not yet 50 years old.

It was our original intention that the journal should be of benefit for engineering institutional development in countries building up their engineering potential. That it has succeeded in this aim is evidenced by the relatively large increase in readership of this journal in the Asian region in the past five years. The journal has now published nine volumes—53 issues and over 600 papers since its inception. From 1985 to 1991 the publishers were Pergamon Press. With the demise of the Maxwell publishing empire the journal was taken over by Tempus Publications. We are still feeling the effects of this transition, especially since the gap in publication schedule in 1991 has not yet been closed. We hope to be able to close this gap in the beginning of 1995, so that the volume and year numbers will be concurrent. Let me take this opportunity to praise the sterling work done by our editors, and our contributors. Thanks are also due to the two responsible copy editors during the past nine years—first Colin Brown of Pergamon Press who took care of the journal up to 1991, and now to the current copy editor, Nick Allen, who is doing wonders with the not always easy

manuscript materials. Our typesetters and printers Joshua Associates Ltd of Oxford, in particular Nikki Watkins, have been responsible for the consistently high quality of the print and artwork from the journal's inception. Thank you for supporting the journal and for your patience with the editor.

Michael S. Wald