

TO THE FUTURE ARCHITECTS OF INDIA*

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I am conscious, I am speaking today, mostly of young engineers or would be engineers. These young men in particular have a lot to complain about. After all, they have taken time and expensive training and education. If they have to move from door to door in search of job like another unemployed, then surely there is something wrong with our economy and society at large. Engineers after all, are the main instruments of industrial progress. In fact, we cannot conceive of an industrial society without engineers.

Engineers had to play a vital role in managing and co-ordinating big industrial complexes that were growing over the country. Humankind at various stages of its evolution had been led by philosophers, economists and scientists. But modern times, belong to engineers, who will have to lead to a greater progress.

Bearing these facts in mind, I feel distressed that thousands of our young engineers have remained unemployed. It is really a great national tragedy. These young men went to engineering colleges and institutions in the great hope that they would find a worthwhile career after completing their education; also the various plans and blue-prints and projects run by the Government led to such expectations, being raised in the minds of our young men. The failure of our country's planning coupled with two worse and severe drought in the recent past have completely upset our

economic balance, bringing in its strains, stagnation and finally recession, in many vital sectors of the economy. This is the major reason for all our difficulties today, including the unemployment problem amongst the educated youth in the country.

But, having created the mess, we must clear it. When I say, we, I do not mean the government although the government has to play the major role, but all of us, people in every walk of life including the young engineers. Now, one may ask, what one can do to help in the solution of the various national economic problems. In answering this question everybody should find ways of helping himself, since large scale unemployment among the engineers is a major problem for the national economy.

The best way of helping oneself is by finding avenues of self-employment through industries or business ventures. It is no use merely sitting back and asking the government to find jobs for you.

"Tap the talent" is the need of the hour. Young engineers coming out of the colleges need proper guidance. At present we are faced with the problem of finding employment of engineers whose numbers are still between 30,000 to 40,000. The crash programme initiated by the government for unemployed engineers is not likely to provide jobs for more than 3,000 in the Public Sector for the time being. Every year 25,000 engineers and 50,000

* *Extract from a speech.*

diploma-holders would come out of the colleges according to present admission capacity in the country. Can we create enough jobs in Government and other bodies to absorb all the engineers? My answer to it will be 'no'. There was a proposal that every industry should employ 2/3 additional engineers for every crore of production. This may absorb some unemployed engineers for the present. But they will be an additional load for which real jobs do not exist,

According to me, the permanent solution of the problem lies in the engineers becoming self-employed. They should start small and medium industries either individually or collectively.

I have often given thoughts to the problems of engineers' employment and I am convinced that if some of them had tried seriously, they could find opportunity of self-employment in our developing economy. They can start small business ventures and industries. If they can think of and plan a sound project, then finance should not be a problem to them. The credit pattern of financial institutions all over the country including the West Bengal is being re-oriented to the objective of providing more financial assistance to young technicians and engineers specially those who have good technical know-how, but are unable to start an industry on their own and are also unable to furnish any security against financial assistance, are now being encouraged through a number of special schemes.

I am also aware that financial assistance to qualified engineers may not be enough in all cases. First of all, they need some idea of how an industry or business enterprise is to be run. I feel, there must be an effective training programme for all those young engineers who wish to start such ventures with financial assistance from the State. Well-planned courses of training for a period of at least six months should be available to such aspiring entrepre-

neurs with proper theoretical instructions in factory layout, production planning, marketing and so on.

The creation of an Industrial Assistance Cell—a central agency is very much necessary to assist the entrepreneurs regarding establishment of new industries or difficulties faced by them in the existing industries. It can also disseminate information on procedural formalities, availability of infra-structure facilities or other relevant factors.

While the central agency would guide the young entrepreneurs to locate industries suitable in particular area where there is demand for the unit, they should also be encouraged with other concessions like lower rent for the use and occupation of land and building in Industrial Estates, reduction in electricity charges, exemption of sales tax for a certain period and various other facilities as offered by other States to attract the entrepreneurs. The concessions offered will have long range benefit at the cost of immediate reduction in earning and there should be good appeal from the government side to young entrepreneurs as is being done by other States.

Larger flow of funds is also necessary so that young entrepreneurs do not feel handicapped. There are different agencies for such help and I feel here also a central agency is necessary who can take up the cause of entrepreneurs in getting all legitimate requirements of industries covering all stages of production from the stage of purchase of raw materials to the stage of realisation of bills representing the despatch of finished goods. Perhaps the practice obtaining in other countries particularly in Japan is worth emulating.

There are three types of entrepreneurs who go in for Industry: Technician entrepreneurs, dealer entrepreneurs and financial entrepreneurs. Technical entrepreneurs know their job well and can face all the vicissitudes of fortune with adjustments in times of necessity; the

dealer entrepreneur has the command over the market having traded on the items he ultimately resorts to manufacture with notional idea of such techniques. The financial entrepreneur is just to hire technicians to achieve his end. Our experience with the first two groups have been very good having seen their performances.

For young Engineers and Technicians who are leaving university and colleges with degrees in their pockets, with future bleak and dark, as regards prospects for employment, an humble advise will be to start any business however small it may be. I have frequently thought over a puzzling problem and never got the correct answer. How is it that the youths of Bengal who gallantly fought and won political freedom are today lagging behind in the fight for economic freedom? They are not lacking in courage and dash in undertaking risk. They braved the bullets and faced bayonets of a colonial power. How is it they are in the background now? For business one needs hard labour, perseverance, courage to undertake risk. All these are in abundance in our youths. The only conclusion that I draw is that all their efforts are being channalised in a wrong direction. A little orientation will put them on the right path and solve their problem. The people of Madras were considered as backward in business and fit for only white coloured jobs but they have exploded the myth—youths of Bengal can do the same.

Since 1958 only one country with a per capita income of Rs. 5,500/- or more had undergone violent upheaval whereas 87% of the countries with a per capita income of less than Rs. 750/- had suffered an average of two major outbreaks of violence per country. Therefore, it is clear that at the root of students unrest or political instability lies economic deficiencies.

We have obtained political freedom but the economic freedom is not yet in sight. We are fighting for it. 'But as in all fights, let the

students community come in the forefront. By fight, I do not mean processions, demonstrations, gherrao or violence in any form. I mean constructive work; let them come forward and extend a helping hand; work more, produce more, start new industry and trade, solve their own unemployment problem and create jobs for others. This is a herculean job.

'All things seem hard to man that are above his attained level and they are hard to his unaided efforts but they become at once easy and simple when God in man takes up the challenge.'

The U. S. Under-Secretary of State had once said "Can we graduate fast enough from the revolution of rising expectation to the evolution of rising responsibility". This is the challenge before our youths.

The economic crisis that we are facing at the present moment is primarily due to the fact that we have not been able to put the young-man in its proper place. I am reminded of a story of a man who was looking at a map of the world. He got disgusted with so many countries and people fighting with each other and disturbing peace of the world. He tore the map into pieces in utter disgust. At that moment his little son appeared and he handed over these pieces of papers to his son and told him 'Sonny, can you put this map of the world in order. If you can do that I will take you to the picture to-night'. He knew that his son would not be able to do it. But he was surprised when after ten minutes his son came back with perfect map in his hand. On further enquiry how he could do it, the son replied "Dady, it is simple; there was a picture of a man on the back of the map and I put the man in its proper place". This is precisely the problem before us.

I had visited Japan many times. I saw Japan immediately after war. People were walking in the streets of Tokyo. Then I saw these people using cycles and then scooters and

motorcycle and now automobiles. This fantastic progress has been made possible within a span of 15 years. So, I asked some of my Japanese friends how this has been made possible and what was the secret of it. My friends replied that only through hard labour.

I had visited West Germany. I had seen Germany immediately after war and I have seen it now with all its prosperity. Such fantastic progress was made possible only within

a period of 10 years. I had asked some of my West German friends about the secret of their success. They said that bombing had destructed their cities, their ports, their factories but it could not destroy their national character. Therefore, two things are necessary for progress and prosperity—one is hard labour and the other is strong national character. Unless we have these two things it is futile to expect an economic miracle in our country.

The Golden Jubilee

(AN ACROSTIC)

SADANANDA MOHANTY

This then is our golden-jubilee year
How unique has been the achievement here.
Engineers of the Country let all unite
Give your heart and join your hands for a fight.
On us brothers lies the future of our country
Let us march on to forge our history.
Daring sons of our land are we
Endless structures we've built as you see.
Never in history such a critical time we had to face
Jobless engineers when are roving all over the place.
Unto the last we must strive to seek
Better means to live, to see our future no longer bleak
In and around the globe has risen a tide
Let us on the crests of waves with valour ride.
Engineers' Association may grow stronger day by day
Ever united we stay let us now promise & pray.