

C-56: The need for the improvement of the country's science and technology base

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Sri Lanka cannot boast of a sound Science and Technology (S&T) base. We look forward to development, based on money received through foreign

investment, labour export, tourism service sector development etc. Institute of Chemical Engineers UK in their research plans for the 1990s states that no country will have a well fed, well-clothed, healthy population from a tourist and a service based economy. They are well aware of the reality of the statement, having led the industrial revolution. However shift to market based philosophies have led to some decline of their S&T base and today some problems are emerging. This has resulted in their current campaign of "*Save British Science*". Sri Lankans look towards management systems (forgetting that management is the means to an end, not the end, by any means...), language skills (it is perhaps better to let people use the language that they are best at and develop interpreters to do the talking to others e.g. as in Japan) and legal reforms etc. The emotional behaviour we display over irrational statements is amazing and with basic awareness in S&T this situation would not arise.

It is with the development of the S&T base that the chemical and process industry sector will prosper and the economy will truly benefit. An overall development in the S&T base would mean that many of the current hurdles that need to be overcome in setting some project in motion would not materialize. Some suggestions are forwarded for improving the situation.