

PEEPing at the future while pondering the past...

- Kamal Khokhani
Director - AIM

During my decade long association with IPA, I have been meeting lot of people, across the country. I have been meeting people from many walks of life – manufacturers, architects, builders, bureaucrats, academicians and so on. While discussing with them, an invariable question was – ‘now that IPA is doing such a good work of integrating the industry, why isn’t it launching plumbing education programmes?’.

I have been discussing this with Mr. S. G. Deolalikar, Mr. Sudhakaran Nair, Mr. Chandra Shekhar Gupta, Mr. BSA Narayan and many more. They were all convinced – and rather keen to launch such programmes, but, somehow or the other, things did not immediately materialize.

In fact, SGD had been working single-handedly on developing the syllabus for plumbing education. Whenever I used to visit his office in GK-III, he used to show me bunches of papers, web-links and so many things he was preparing in that direction. But at the same time, he was always frank and sporty enough to admit that –“my age is on the wrong side and I have my own limitations”.



However, things changed dramatically, when he passed on the baton to Mr Sudhakaran Nair. Immediately after accepting the responsibilities of leading IPA, Mr. Nair initiated a number of activities. I still remember that the first thing he started working on was the Uniform Plumbing Code – India (UPC-I), immediately after he took over from SGD at Pune. I am witness to the first-ever dialogue, he had with a few of his NEC colleagues in the corridor of Yashvantrao Natya Gruh of Pune to forge an alliance with IAPMO for formalizing UPC-I. The rest, as they say, is history...

IPA has, in a record time, created an 'Indianized' version of UPC and made it UPC-I which has become a well respected and well accepted document in just five months from its launch in February, 2008! (Incidentally, my organization – AIM has the pleasure and privilege of publishing and marketing UPC-I in India). This reminds me of what somebody has said – **“Most of the critical things in life, which become the starting points of human destiny, are little things!”** This saying is most appropriate for the situation because, a small initiative that took place in Pune has now become an indomitable movement towards standardizing plumbing practices in the country!

With my own experience, I can say that Sudhakaran is a restless person – he wants to achieve too many things for IPA, as quickly as possible. So, the next thing on the agenda was plumbing education, based on UPC-I. Because, I guess, he firmly believes in what Henry Ford-II had once said – **“We can't take a slipshod and easygoing attitude towards education in this country. And by “we” I don't mean ‘somebody else’ but I mean “me” and I mean “you”. It is the future of our country - yours and mine, which is at stake.”** I think if one changes the country context from US to India and simply adds plumbing before education in that quote, one will arrive at a point close to what Sudhakaran believes and wishes to achieve !

So, he started in right earnest along this direction and initiated a dialogue with IAPMO for launching nation-wide plumbing education programmes. Mr. G. P. Russ Chaney and Allen Inlow were prompt to respond and the discussion took concrete shape sooner than expected. Once again, I had the privilege of remaining present when a MoU was signed between Sudhakaran Nair and G. P. Russ Chaney at Frankfurt on 17th October 2007. Besides me, those who were present at this quiet but historic moment were Mr. BSA Narayan, Mr. Chandra Shekhar Gupta and Mr. Allen Inlow...



MoU for launching Plumbing Training & Education being signed by G P Russ Chaney and Sudhakaran Nair at Frankfurt. Also seen in the picture are Allen Inlow and BSA Narayan.

Plumbing Education to Employment Programme (**PEEP**). With a view to propagate the concept of PEEP across the country, IPA – IAPMO launched a Dialogue Tour on a pan-India basis and I had the proud privilege to participate on this hectic tour. I have used the phrase – ‘proud privilege’ because, I received an opportunity to remain witness while a new chapter in the history of plumbing education in India was being written!

Although plumbing is given utmost importance and treated as a highly technical profession in developed countries, in developing countries of the world, the picture is reverse and anybody picking-up a wrench can become a plumber with impunity. Such casualness inevitably leads to casualties, and the first victim is the health of the public. In Germany or USA, it can take up to seven years of rigorous work and training to earn the title of a Master Plumber but in most underdeveloped parts of the world, one can earn the title within seven days, if not in seven hours! In developing countries, lack of alternatives, force people to accept the help of whoever makes a claim of knowing plumbing and the common plumber is a man, who usually enters the trade, driven by the needs of instant income generation and who learns through trials and errors made at the cost of end-users!

Poor awareness of the symbiotic relationship between public health and plumbing is the root cause of this syndrome. At government levels, there are not sufficient checks and balances that prevent anybody and everybody to become self-certified plumbers. At the same time, there are too few structured courses or programmes, aimed at practical and modern plumbing and the result is that the demand for professional plumbers in the society exceeds by far the puny numbers of truly skilled and trained workers available.

Considering the scene in India, in a detailed article on vocational training, “All Theory and No Practice” published in November 2006 at www.indiatogether.org the author Varupi Jain laments *“In reality, most curricula ‘followed’ at institutes imparting vocational training have little relevance for wage or self employment of the trainees...Plumbing courses which have been running for the past five decades continue to be taught irrespective of the market demand for plumbers in the region.”* She goes on to say, *“Often the ITIs and other institutes are enmeshed in such an impenetrable web of bureaucratic functioning that by the time any recommendations from the industry find their way into practice, they become irrelevant.”*

But this was written in 2006. While Ms. Jain's terse comments continue to be true with respect to most channels of imparting vocational training and education, there will be a sea-change now onwards in India, thanks to the by IPA-IAPMO led initiative in vocational education for plumbing.

Dr. V. S. Mehrotra of the PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education – Bhopal has made an interesting analysis in an article – “Training for a Vocation” based on a CII Survey. While quoting the findings of the Survey, he writes – **“54 percent of the firms covered in the Survey, feel that there is lack of trained professionals in the market and 31 percent feel that the supply is not able to match the demand, both in terms of skills and numbers. The challenge is, therefore, to create required infrastructure and trainers for meeting the training demands of the next generation and translate their potential and talents into products and services”.**

The goal of the IPA-IAPMO Plumbing Education to Employment Program is to prepare multiple levels of professional groups in India to read, understand, interpret, engage, and apply the provisions of India's Uniform Plumbing Code to initial installations and continued maintenance of plumbing systems. This goal can be successfully met only through partnerships with established education institutions throughout India. Therefore, the program seeks partnerships with Indian Universities, Colleges and Vocational Institutions that can provide quality instruction toward stated goals.



Looking at the abysmal current scenario and vast magnitude of the operation, IPA-IAPMO has initiated a dialogue with the vocational training institutes.

Because, IPA-IAPMO strongly believes that its 'goal' of Plumbing Education to Employment Programme (PEEP) can only be successfully met through partnerships with established educational institutions throughout India. The programme seeks partnership with universities, colleges, vocational training institutions, that can provide quality instruction towards the stated goal – which is to prepare the multiple levels of professionals and professional groups in India to read, understand, interpret, engage and apply the provisions of UPC-I to initiate installations and continued maintenance of plumbing systems.

PEEP at Bangalore

With this broad outline, we launched PEEP at Bangalore on 23rd June 2008. Mr. Sudhakaran Nair, President – IPA, Mr. BSA Narayan, Vice President – IPA, Mr. M. N. Raghavendra Rao, Chairman of IPA Bangalore Chapter and Mr. Rajgopal Murthy, the enthusiastic Secretary of IPA BC, were eager to witness Allen's maiden presentation on PEEP. Sudhakaran Nair



briefed the 100 plus audience about the IPA commitment and IAPMO initiative on this ambitious programme. This was followed by a lucid presentation by Allen Inlow, outlining the Agenda for Action.

The audience consisted of professionals from various academic institutions like – M. E. I. Polytechnic, S. J. Polytechnic, Bangalore University and R. V. College and also the representatives of large real estate development companies from Bangalore. All were excited to join this programme, which is bound to create its own impact in the country. The interest of the audience was evident from the multiple queries Allen had to face after his presentation. I observed that people wanted to clear all their apprehensions and doubts about the programme. I could see that all were satisfied and contented with the answers by Allen, Sudhakaran, MNR and BSAN.



The presentation on PEEP was followed by a small presentation on 12th Indian Plumbing Conference – Jaipur and a sponsoral presentation by Mr. Jayant Kumar of Ashirvad Pipes. During his short speech, Mr. Kumar committed his organization's co-operation to propagate PEEP in this country and assured all possible help and support.

PEEP at Chennai



The Second destination was Chennai. The date – 25th June 2008 and venue – The Alumni Club of Anna University. In spite of heavy rains, there was a gathering of about 80 people. There were IPA members and some outstanding academicians like – Mr. J. Ilangumaran of PAC Ramasamy Raja Polytechnic College situated at Rajapalayam; Head of Department at Central Polytechnic College at Chennai – Mr. V. Abrahm, Chellappa Dhas was also a part of the enlightened audience. Some of the senior officials of L&T who are involved with in-house training & education on plumbing for their captive use were also there, led by ‘friend of IPA’ Mr. S. Virapan. Mr. George Mathew, Managing Director of Fluidline Systems & Controls Pvt. Ltd. set the ball rolling on the issue, whereas IPA Chennai Chairman, Mr. Ajit Nair explained the objectives of this initiative. This was followed by a presentation by Allen and question-answers. Thereafter, Mr. Swapnil of M/s. Norit of Netherlands, who sponsored the programme, made an excellent presentation on their water treatment technologies. At the end, Mr. S. Virapan, Secretary of IPA Chennai Chapter made a very informal and yet very interesting & interactive Vote of Thanks.



From Chennai, both me and Allen went to Kochi, in God’s own country – Kerala. Once I landed, I could realize that I have entered the domain of IPA Kerala Chapter Chairman – Mr. P. Ramchandran. Being a very enthusiastic person and man of



detailing, he had left no grey area, anywhere, as far as planning of the event was concerned. He was so involved and engrossed in planning this event that he insisted to me that he would love to narrate the whole event in his own words. So here is the narration in quotes!

PEEP at Kerala



“IPA Kerala Chapter conducted a meeting on 27th June, 2008 to spread awareness on IPA/IIP/IAPMO’s ‘Plumbing Education to Employment Programme’ (PEEP). The event was held at the stately Asoka Hall of Hotel Avenue Centre in Kochi.

The meeting began with a silent prayer at 7.00 PM followed by my Welcome Address for the attendees. This was followed by the Keynote Address delivered by IPA President Mr.Sudhakaran Nair. He dwelt briefly and succinctly on the role of IPA in creating greater awareness in public on the vital need for good plumbing. He backed this with statistics to prove how little of the quantum of plumbing executed annually in India is done in an organised fashion. He introduced the Main Speaker Mr. Allen Inlow, Sr. Director, IAPMO and elaborated on the association, IPA had established with IAPMO in producing the Uniform Plumbing Code - India. He also outlined IPA, IIP’s and IAPMO’s continuing association to introduce systematic training for the plumbing professional at every level.



Mr.Allen Inlow then gave a lucid PowerPoint Presentation covering every aspect of PEEP. The presentation was followed by a very interesting interactive session with the packed audience. Mr.Allen Inlow mentioned in his speech that the



next step would be the initiation of Training-the-Trainer Program.

The presentation was attended by nearly 175 professionals representing :

Pub : Prajasakti Telugu Daily
 Head : Seperate Course for Plumbers : IPA



ప్రపంచ ప్రత్యేక విద్య : ఐపిఎ

Pub : Surya Telugu Daily
 Head : Plumbing Education Necessary : Somani

సంబంధించిన విద్య అవసరం: సామాన్య

Plumbing body plans to launch education programmes

Our Bureau
 Hyderabad, June 30
 In order to address the need for imparting education to plumbers in India, the Indian Plumbing Association (IPA), along with the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO), plans to start education programmes across the

The programme seeks to partner with colleges, universities and vocational institutions to provide the

institutions for providing the required levels of skill and expertise as mentioned in the code which was released earlier this year. The association has already started the Indian Institute of Plumbing in Pune which has trained 30

seeks to partner with colleges, universities and vocational institutions to provide required skill and

Head : Hindustan Sanitary ware Big Expanding Bhuvanagiri Glass Plant opening at Bhuvanagiri
 Good Training for Plumbers Indian Plumbing Association thinking
 Andhra Jyothi Telugu Daily

బిజినెస్

ఆంధ్రజ్యోతి
 భారతదేశం
 1 జూలై 2008

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హిందుస్థాన్ శానిటరీ వేర్ భారీ విస్తరణ

వచ్చే జనవరిలో భువనగిరి గ్లాస్ ప్లాంట్ ప్రారంభం

హిందుస్థాన్ శానిటరీ వేర్ భారీ విస్తరణ కోసం భువనగిరిలో గ్లాస్ ప్లాంట్ ప్రారంభం చేయనుంది. ఈ ప్లాంట్ ద్వారా ప్రతి సంవత్సరం 1000 కోట్ల విలువైన శానిటరీ వేర్ ఉత్పాదించబడుతుంది. ఈ ప్లాంట్ 25 మందిలో ఆరువేల మందిలో ఉంటుంది. ఈ ప్లాంట్ 25 మందిలో ఆరువేల మందిలో ఉంటుంది. ఈ ప్లాంట్ 25 మందిలో ఆరువేల మందిలో ఉంటుంది.

ప్లంబర్స్ కు మరింత మెరుగైన ఇంటియన్ ఫ్లంజింగ్ అసోసియేషన్

ప్రధాన ప్రతినిధి పాఠశాల స్థాపన
 711.25 : ప్రతి ఇంటియన్ ఫ్లంజింగ్ అసోసియేషన్ 7015 చివరకు ఉంది. ఈ స్థానంలో ప్రతి కోటాను మూడు సంవత్సరాల పాటు ఉంచాలి.

ఇంటియన్ ఫ్లంజింగ్ అసోసియేషన్ ప్రధాన ప్రతినిధి పాఠశాలను ప్రారంభించింది. ఈ పాఠశాల ద్వారా ప్రతి సంవత్సరం 1000 కోట్ల విలువైన శానిటరీ వేర్ ఉత్పాదించబడుతుంది. ఈ పాఠశాల 25 మందిలో ఆరువేల మందిలో ఉంటుంది. ఈ పాఠశాల 25 మందిలో ఆరువేల మందిలో ఉంటుంది.

Pub : Vaarta Telugu Daily
 (A leading Telugu Daily)
 Head : Conference at Jaipur about Plumbing Enineering

జైపూర్ లో ప్లంబరింగ్ ఇంజనీరింగ్ పై సదస్సు

ప్రారంభం, జూలై 2

ఇంటియన్ ఫ్లంబరింగ్ అసోసియేషన్ జైపూర్ లో జూలై 25, 26 తేదీలలో ప్లంబరింగ్ ఇంజనీరింగ్ పై ఒక జాతీయ సదస్సును నిర్వహిస్తున్నట్లు సంగ్రహించారు.

Cochin University of Science & Technology (CUSAT); ITI, Kalamassery; Builders Association of India; Kerala Builders Association; Kerala Builders Forum; Indian Institute of Architects, Kochi; Institution of Engineers, Kerala; Members from the State Steering Committee for Centres of Excellence; Consultants / Contractors/Manufacturers from Plumbing Industry and last but not the least a delegation from Sri Ramakrishna Advanced Training Institute, Coimbatore.

It was also pleasantly heartening to note the presence of six IPA members from Coimbatore. Incidentally, Coimbatore with nearly 30 members will shortly form the next IPA Chapter.

Everybody, without exception, lauded the efforts of IPA in taking the lead in taking concrete steps to bring order to the chaotic plumbing industry. The palpable mood of the evening was one of anticipation. There is no doubt that we have taken a very small step in what promises to be a long arduous but exciting journey.

The presentation by Mr. Allen Inlow was followed by a short video on the forthcoming Jaipur event by Mr. Kamal Khokhani irector - Akar InfoMedia Pvt.Ltd.

The event was sponsored by M/s. GEBERIT who also gave a brief presentation on their world-class products. The meeting adjourned for Cocktails and Dinner hosted by M/s. GEBERIT who spared no efforts in laying out splendid hospitality."

Mr. N. Srinivasulu, Chief Engineer of Bharat Info Pvt. Ltd., Mr. Senapathi, Architect Eng of Lanco Industries Ltd., Mr. Vijay Kumar, Manager of Manjeera Construction, Mr. Vishal of Design House and Mr. Vijay Bhaskar of Genesis Consultants.

Mr. Ashok Vir, Vice Chairman of IPA HC opened the session, whereas Mr. R. K. Somany welcomed Allen and other delegates and elaborated on the IPA-IAPMO initiative. He briefed the audience about IPA activities in general and PEEP, in particular. Allen made an excellent presentation (as usual) which was followed by the question-answer session. Since Allen was to catch the flight to US from Hyderabad itself, unfortunately, there was not much time. Thereafter, Mr. K. L. Kindra, General Manager of Savoir Faire Mfg. Co. Pvt. Ltd - New Delhi, made a presentation as well as demonstration on the PP-R Pipes and joining technologies through fusion-welding. Mr. Mahesh Kumar, Secretary of IPA HC offered a Vote of Thanks.



PEEP at Hyderabad



After a very successful programme at Kochi, the last destination in the first lap was at Hyderabad. The presentation here was on 30th June 2008 and Chairman of IPA Hyderabad Chapter Mr. R. K. Somany, was all set to create an awareness about this event even through mass-media. He had, as a part of the programme, organized one-to-one meetings with the members of media prior to the presentation programme.


The programme was at Hotel Green Park of Hyderabad and there were close to 80 people from various fields, right from construction, architecture, to consultancy and infrastructure development. Prominent amongst them were Mr. Hari Kumar, Project Manager of D. S. Gupta Constructions, Mr. Santosh Kumar of R. R. Constructions, Mr. Sanjay of Techno Engineering Co.,



With this, my journey to South India came to an end. Allen went back to US and I came back to Ahmedabad. I was absolutely exhausted and tired with the hectic travel and hopping flights. But inspite of this exhaustion, I was happy and contended that I could take part in an activity, which is bound to create a great impact on the plumbing landscape of this country. I am confident that what is initiated now will change the way plumbing is being done in this country, today. I think, nothing can be more satisfying than this tour for a person like me who has spent almost one decade working shoulder-to-shoulder with IPA for propagating a single-line objective – **“Better Plumbing for Better Living”**.

While concluding this piece, I would like to share a couplet by William Boetckar which says–

*“If you want to be respected, be respectable;
If you want to be liked, be likable;
If you want to be loved, be lovable;
If you want to be employed, be employable.”*

Seeing the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response, I am sure that PEEP will create hundreds of thousands of youth who are **‘employable’** in one of the most crucial and yet, neglected aspects of the building services industry in India – **PLUMBING ! **