



The Engineer's Role in Tourism Development

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Machu Picchu, Peru

Those of us who have travelled to the USA before should have realised how many feats of engineering there have become very popular tourist attractions. For example, the Empire State Building in Manhattan, New York, is a must for any visitor to the Big Apple. Most tourists happily pay to get to the top of the tower to have a



The Bell Tower in Perth, Australia

beautiful view of the world famous suspension bridge, appreciate its attractive curves and international red colour, learn something about its design and construction, and buy one or two souvenirs to remember it by.

The Hoover Dam near Las Vegas in Nevada is another civil engineering masterpiece that has become a major tourist attraction. Small planes take tourists over it regularly to appreciate its immensity and strategic location. Tourists can also descend into the dam structure itself to join a guided tour of the dam and the hydroelectricity generating system.

In Sydney, Australia, the world renowned Opera House also offers guided tours at certain hours. The well-trained tour guides not only impart general statistics on the

panoramic view of New York City. The Sear's Tower in Chicago, once the world's tallest building, enjoys similar fame.

At one end of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, is a visitor's centre where tourists can have a most



St. Basil Church in Moscow, Russia

building to the visitors, they also cover some basic engineering aspects such as the use of prestressed concrete and shell structures. The equally famous Sydney Harbour Bridge nearby houses a small museum where tourists can learn about its design, construction, special features and the designer.



The Magnificent Putrajaya Bridge at dusk



Petronas Twin Towers

Some people may tend to believe that only those tourists with some engineering or related background will be interested to visit such engineering feats as mentioned above. This is not true. Those structures have become so well-known that everybody wants to know more about them, although people with different backgrounds may be interested in different aspects. The conducted tour not only satisfies the tourist's curiosity, it also enhances their knowledge and their appreciation of the engineer's contributions towards national development and the welfare of mankind.

In our country, there are also engineering masterpieces that are the pride of the nation, such as the



The Ministry of Finance offices in Putrajaya

Petronas Twin Towers, once the world's tallest building, the Penang Bridge, reputedly the third longest bridge of such design in the world, and the KL Tower, the world's 4th tallest telecommunications tower. It is good that the KL Tower and the Petronas Twin Towers cater for the ordinary tourist, although individual tourists only have access to the sky-bridge of the Twin Towers. However, tourists who want to capture the cable-stayed main spans of the Penang Bridge on film find it difficult to do so because the bridge's design has not taken the tourists' interest into account and there is no suitable place on either Penang Island or Prai from which the tourists can have a good view of the main spans.



A bird's eye view of KL Tower

It is not too difficult to provide for the ordinary tourists in the design of major engineering projects, and it will not boost the cost of the projects significantly to do so. All that is required is just a little imagination on the part of the designer as to what he will like to see when he visits such a project himself. With a little persuasion and perhaps financial justification, the owner of the project should be able to see easily the merits in that little extra effort and financial outlay.

Perhaps the engineers as a designer should be more proactive and more willing to put forward ideas that may help make the projects they are handling more tourist-friendly. ■



Penang Bridge



The Putrajaya International Convention Centre