

Inequalities among nations

Union minister blames exploitative culture

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The Union human resources development minister, Dr Murali Manohar Joshi, on Wednesday said that an exploitative culture has resulted in inequalities among nations and within nations.

In a speech read out in his absence by Secretary in the Department of Science and Technology Dr V S Ramamurthy at the inauguration of a symposium on "Science in Society : A New Social Contract" at the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Dr Joshi said rapid development of science and technology had created a paradigm in which families were breaking and new social tensions created.

"We need technology with a human face, where the values of life are as highly respected as functional aspects of technology", he stated.

The three-day symposium is being organised by the NIAS in preparation for the UNESCO-convened World Conference on Science (WCS) beginning at the Hungarian capital Budapest from June 26.

The symposium has been sponsored by UNESCO, the Department of Education and Science and Technology and will submit recommendations and also suggest amendments to the "draft declaration on Science and the use of scientific knowledge" to be adopted by the WSC.

Dr Joshi hoped the seminar would articulate the hopes and aspirations that the developing countries share as they prepare to utilise science and technology for the benefit of citizens.

Heavy responsibility lies on the developed world, which accounts for a bulk of the global consumption of natural resources to ensure sustainable development in the third world.

In their introductory remarks Principal Director, Division of Social Science Research and Policy, UNESCO, France, Dr Ali Kazancigil and Director, UNESCO, New Delhi, Prof Moegiadi, pointing out the glaring poverty and unemployment wanted some sort of a new international mechanism to be developed to fund research and development in the developing countries.

The research and development funding in the developing countries was quite low compared to the western world, Dr Kazancigil stated and pointed out that India spent only 0.6 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on R&D as against the international average of 1.4 per cent. Developments in science and technology have not reached countries in Africa and Asia where the quality of life needs tremendous improvement.

Chairman of the Indian Council for Social Sciences Research Dr D M Nanjundappa, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre Director Dr Anil Kakodkar, NIAS Director Prof Roddam Narasimha who also spoke on the occasion regretted that the advanced technologies had resulted in creating more unemployment and poverty.

Dr Kakodkar said the meagre resources left in the world after they were vastly exploited by the developed countries should be effectively tapped with technical solutions for equitable distribution.