

29. 1.99

BANGALORE

'Technology must suit real needs'

The Times of India News Service

BANGALORE: Eminent social scientists on Thursday called for evolving scientific policies that would be of use to people at the grassroot level and for developing technology that would suit "real needs".

At a discussion on, "Technology development and poverty elimination," which is a part of the three-day symposium on "Science in society: a new social contract," the speakers said: "It is not technology per se, but technological development that may eliminate poverty. There is no single module for eradicating poverty. There ought to be specific solutions for countries, depending on their cultural and

social conditions."

Sociologist Yogesh Atal stressed the need for studying the response of the society to technological advancements. "Nobody is questioning the technology or its feasibility. But what is to be questioned is the social desirability of these technologies and if the society can afford a particular technology."

Stating that development of new technologies cannot replace old ones, Mr Atal quipped: "India is the best example for parallel technologies. The advent of the jumbo jet has not phased out the good-old bullock cart."

Dr Anil Bhattarai, a delegate from Nepal said technology development should be country-specific. "What is followed by a developed

country may not necessarily suit a developing country. It will only erode into the existing practice."

Noted sociologist M.N. Srinivas who chaired the session said technology should only be a tool for development. "Planning should be done at the micro-level if the society is to benefit from technology. Solutions should be geared to the local level. It is a question of how you can make technology an instrument for human development."

The symposium which is a preparatory to UNESCO's world conference on Science scheduled to be held at Budapest, Hungary in June this year, has been organised by the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore.