

Time to upgrade research in country, Shourie says at IIT-K

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KANPUR, AUGUST 9

HIGHLIGHTING the deplorable condition of the educational system of the country, parliamentarian Arun Shourie came down heavily on the poor infrastructure and sub-standard research being conducted at the higher educational institutes.

Speaking at a workshop on "Challenges in Higher Education" held at the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) on Sunday, Shourie said: "We are content with the mediocre tag in the higher education sector. So no serious effort has been made to uplift the level of research and education in the country."

The workshop is a part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the institute.

Despite plans and policies, Shourie said he was surprised that no major step has been initiated to increase the standard of education and research in our country. According to him, higher educational institutes should be given complete educational, administrative and finance autonomy. "Rather than the government or one of its bodies taking decisions for the insti-



Arun Shourie addresses a workshop in IIT-K.

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tute, it will be better if the institute takes its own decision," said Shourie.

Calling for a change in the traditional form of education and policy-making, Shourie said: "Leave aside US and UK, countries like China and Japan are more advanced when it comes to research. To improve the level of research, we will have to collaborate with foreign institutes."

Opposing reservation in higher educational institutes, Shourie said: "The institute should not lower its standard for any student. Efforts should be made to upgrade the edu-

cational level of SC, ST and OBC students before they clear Class XII," he said.

Through audio-conferencing, IT expert Sam Pitroda said rather than conducting debates, discussions and workshop on how to improve higher education, there is an urgent need to take some positive decisions.

"We have been discussing the issue for the last six decades," he said. "But unfortunately, we have been restricted to debates and workshop, whereas the standards of higher education and research has gone down consid-

erably." Any plan or policy cannot please everyone, he said. "Therefore, we should stop thinking about a handful of people and take some steps to enhance the education and research work."

According to Sanjay Govind Dhande, Director of IIT-K, the institute will lose its identity in the next 25 years if a major breakthrough is not made in the field of research. "We cannot remain content with the tag of being a graduate producing institute. We have to keep abreast of western countries and improve the quality of research," he said.