

## Industry ready to join hands with engineering colleges

Indian industry leaders agreed to forge partnership with educational institutions to upgrade engineering education and research in the country to counter talent crunch.

They were speaking at a panel discussion organised by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), a New Delhi-based think tank, Saturday.

The discussion was based on a study report commissioned by the ORF and conducted by the department of energy science and engineering at Indian Institute of Technology-Bombay (IIT-B).

Padma Vibhushan R. Chidambaram, principal scientific adviser to the government, said on the sidelines of the conference: "The challenge before India is to attract talented young people into engineering research and technology development. Industry should play a major role in this."

He said the government wanted to upgrade the engineering education system and it needed support from the industry.

According to the research, only one percent of engineering students in India go for doctorate degrees, that too from foreign universities. In 2006, India awarded about 230,000 engineering degrees, 20,000 engineering masters degrees and only about 1,000 engineering PhDs.

The study recommended a national PhD scheme, which would offer lucrative fellowships.

It added that premier institutes like IITs and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) are unable to convert themselves into well-defined research centres.

"At present our engineering education system is unable to attract our best students to a career in research. Often, those who wish to pursue a PhD prefer to study abroad. If we need to become the leaders in research work, we will have to take a leap and take advantage of the fact that we have the best students," said Rangan Banerjee, head of the department of energy science and engineering at IIT-B.

The conference was attended by Rajeev Katyal, director of education, Microsoft Corp, Eaton Corp's Shyam Kambeyanda, Walchandnagar Industries managing director Chirag Doshi and Ceekay-Daikan managing director Pradeep Chinai.

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