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Role of Varsities in Training Leaders Stressed

MADRAS, March 25.

University education in India should be oriented to make graduates "more employable" and committed to the cause of the nation, said Rev Fr. Kuriakose, Principal, Loyola College, participating in a seminar to-day.

Speaking on "Universities and development", he said the ideal of knowledge for knowledge's sake was seldom voiced nowadays. Universities should be the training ground for leaders in technology, politics, economics, etc., whom a developing country badly needed; but in India, they were "primarily examining bodies."

Fr. Kuriakose said education fostered development in three ways—by improving the efficiency, motivation and national spirit of the working forces; by generating a desire for better living; and by removing the obstacles arising from tradition; custom or superstition.

The Deputy Director of the I.I.T., Prof. S. Sampath, whose topic was "Universities and Technological Revolution", wanted sufficient attention to be paid to application of knowledge. Fundamental research should be undertaken to the extent to which it was relevant to the nation's needs. He suggested the under-developed countries taking up for research sophisticated technological problems not yet solved by other countries.

Sister Sheila O'Neill of Stella Maris College regretted that humanities were looked down upon, particularly by students and parents, and spurned as useless, unproductive studies. Humanities were concerned with man not merely as an individual but as a member of society. She pleaded for a proper balance to be struck between science and humanities in the scheme of education and a mutual understanding and appreciation to be developed between the students of the two branches of knowledge.

A balanced course of study so as to prevent students from developing a "one-track" mind was demanded by Mr. K. Muralidharan Nair of Jain College, who spoke on "Universities and Society". Specialisation, which was the keynote of scientific and technological progress left the students neither the time nor the inclination to acquire the finer things of life. He favoured "general education" at the under-graduate stage, and specialisation at the post-graduate level.

Mr. Brendan J. Carroll, Education Officer, British Council, who was the Co-ordinator, said there could be no dogmatic answer to the question "what should be the role of a university?" It was a matter of giving emphasis and priority to its different functions.

Earlier, Prof. K. N. Rao, President of the Association of University Teachers, under whose auspices the seminar was held, in welcoming the gathering,

Mr. T. Rajagopalan, Secretary, proposed a vote of thanks.