

## Sibal roots for Joshi's NISc, Arjun not so sure

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Posted: Sep 08, 2004 at 0110 hrs IST

**NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 7** The HRD Ministry looks set to steamroll another pet project of Murli Manohar Joshi's — the proposed National Institute of Science to turn out researchers. The Arjun Singh dispensation is reviewing the project entirely, as the institutes would seem to be questioning science education offered at colleges and universities.

Joshi felt the NISCs would produce "highly-trained, creative" manpower for research. After 10+2, meritorious students compete for admission to IITs and the renowned medical colleges. On graduation, they opt for IIMs. Few stay back to pursue research in basic science. Joshi called for a five-year basic science course after school, which would be taught at the NISCs proposed at Allahabad, Pune, Bhubaneswar and Chennai.

A project report drawn up by Joshi's planners said: "These institutions are envisioned as academic institutions of excellence imparting quality education in pure and applied sciences leading to postgraduate degree in the ambience of creative and innovative research and development and ensure an adequate supply of highly talented, highly skilled and highly motivated science and technology manpower to lead research and development groups in our national laboratories... in industries."

Now, questions have been raised if it would be possible for the government to develop brand NISc and over how many years. The Ministry also feels NISCs would overlap with and question the undergraduate and postgraduate courses taught "quite professionally and competently in universities and higher learning centres throughout the country", a senior HRD official said. "Should not we help inject a fresh lease of life in the science institutions that already exist? Why build a completely separate academic brand from scratch?"

The HRD official denied allegations that the Ministry, was merely revising and relaunching Joshi's programmes. "We are reviewing the programme only because we have to be convinced ourselves that there is a serious need for these NISCs," the official said.

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