

## BACK TO BASICS BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPERTS

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*In India, nuclear learning at the intersection of science and diplomacy is largely absent.*

The Annual Residential Young Scholars' Workshop, a flagship feature of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi, provides a unique opportunity to gain meaningful insight into nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues. It serves three primary objectives:

- **CAPACITY-BUILDING** at the national and regional levels in the next generation of scholars and policy-makers
- **DEMOCRATISING NUCLEAR DISCOURSES** in India by attempting to take debates that are generally confined to New Delhi beyond the boundaries of the national capital
- **PROVIDING A SUSTAINABLE INTERFACE** between established government and non-government experts and emerging professionals.

India's nuclear bureaucracy has traditionally been opaque and continues to be so. Domain knowledge is restricted to policy-makers and scientists in government capacities. Young scholars and emerging specialists in the field have little to no access to information that is tightly controlled, and learning seldom goes beyond the classroom.

The **IPCS Annual Residential Young Scholars' Workshop** has over the years sought to address these gaps, which it feels are crucial for a well-rounded, advanced education on

nuclear issues. In addition to the academic and practical exposure, the workshop has also facilitated a platform for networking on two-levels.

**One**, with imminent experts in the field who have provided mentorship to participants beyond the workshop; and **two**, an alumni network for academic collaboration, support and exchange of information and opinion.

The perennial obstacles in India are access to policy-makers and the lack of practical, technical understanding since most nuclear policy analysts come from a non-scientific background.

**The basic template for the next iteration of the workshop thus is going back to the fundamentals to address insularity in the Indian nuclear establishment and contribute to nuclear learning. Here, the intersection of science and diplomacy becomes especially important.**

IPCS has liaised with the government for this workshop in the past, leading to their participation in various editions of the workshop. This allows participants to have an opening into how the government approaches and thinks about nuclear issues. In the next iteration, we also propose to introduce virtual reality-based simulations that are critical to nuclear learning.

Through this capacity-building, IPCS seeks to create a pool of experts that will go on to inform and occupy both government and non-government domains.

By drawing on faculty who have spent their careers dealing with nuclear issues – whether it be in academia, science, policy or

*The IPCS Annual Residential Nuclear Workshop aims to address, in a tactile learning environment, the gaps in nuclear learning in India and create an institutionalised network of experts that is able to effectively contribute to policy in the long-term.*

the military – the aim is to provide a well-rounded course in all aspects of nuclear studies, starting with the very basics of nuclear physics to history and policy issues.

**On this basis, the workshop has four clear goals:**

- 1) To act in an interpretive role by bringing in external views and debates into the discourse in India
- 2) To get back to the basics with capacity-building among India's youth and institutions
- 3) To support advanced education on nuclear issues tangibly
- 4) To encourage and develop effective policy oriented research and writing.