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# Institutes face challenges of scaling up with quality, say academics in Pune

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PUNE: Noted academics and Padma awardees K N Ganesh, founder-director Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Tirupati, and Deepak Dhar, distinguished professor emeritus at IISER, Pune, spoke about the challenges faced by institutes in scaling up while keeping the quality intact, and in attracting and retaining teachers during an interaction-cum-felicitation ceremony at the IISER, Pune, on Saturday. They also flagged several issues such as lack of enough senior faculty members at the graduate and undergraduate level, dearth of passionate science and mathematics teachers at the school level, paucity of knowledge to scale up an institute, and the need for flexibility in the National Education Policy (NEP).

“Look at IITs. You have first, second, and third-generation IITs. The first-generation IITs are well established. The second generation took some time, but the third-generation IITs are as good as any other institution. Now you compare it with institutions abroad. Harvard could have had 14 Harvards, or Stanford could have had as many institutes. But they are not expanding that way. On the other hand, to maintain the standard, they are expanding at the same place and the number of students is increasing. But India is in a different situation because the country has a huge population.

So, certainly more institutions must come, but what happens is that it dilutes the brand name. Hence when the IISERs were started, there was a thought of starting it as IISc Pune, Mohali, Kolkata, etc but IISc didn't want it because its brand is over 100 years old and would have gotten diluted. Despite the large population, we do not know how to scale up, keeping the quality intact,” said Ganesh adding that attracting good faculty and retaining them was the biggest challenge faced by all institutes in

India.

“We need to improve our instruction methods at the primary and secondary education levels. We need to train our teachers better and need to invest more in school education. Only then can we expect the benefits from the demographic dividend,” said Dhar.

Ganesh further said that the National Education Policy should be looked at positively, however, the broad guidelines mentioned in the policy should not be made mandatory for institutes.

“We need a bottom-up approach than a top-down approach in education because the top-down approach only works in industrial products. The National Education Policy should allow flexibility and imagination to flourish,” he said.

The academics also said that the way to attract foreign universities is to get them to tie-up with existing institutes and offer sought-after courses rather than starting a new institute altogether.