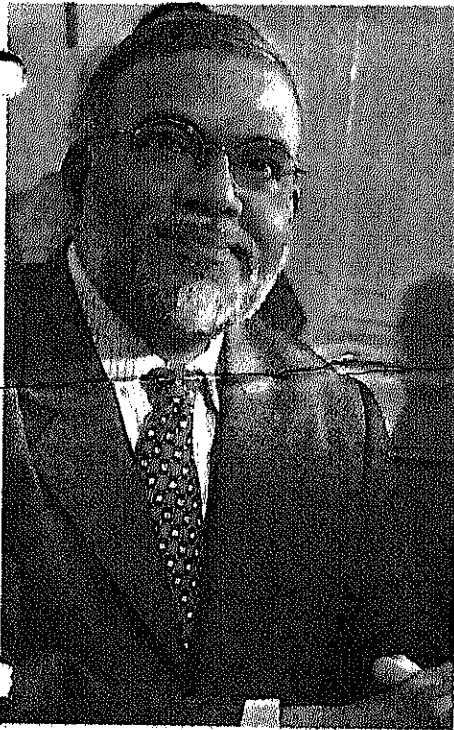


In the fourth edition of the series on Education in Transition, Ujjwal K Chowdhury and Shruti Khairnar talk to the vice-chancellor of the University of Pune, Dr. Narendra Jadhav. Dr. Jadhav is a leading educationist, renowned economist and policy maker, best-selling author and recipient of numerous prestigious awards

**UKC:** What is your opinion on the quality of



Vice-chancellor of the University of Pune, Dr. Narendra Jadhav

education in contrast to the access to higher education?

**NJ:** There can be no trade-off between access and quality. The access ratio in our country is abysmal. Even in many a developing country, 23 percent of the people have access to higher education on an average. In India this figure is only 9.5 percent. In the 11th Plan, the Government has ambitious plans to increase access to 15 percent and in the 12th Plan to 20 percent of the entire population of the country.

China has improved the access by several points and is ahead of us. There is also an enormous need to increase the quality of education.

**UKC:** The quality of the education imparted by our system is still very poor. Why is it so?  
**NJ:** The education imparted is third rate. We have not managed to achieve quality even with restricted access. There are three main reasons for this. Firstly, the syllabi have not been revised for the last ten to fifteen years. A three-year plan has been chalked down for revising the syllabus of 484 courses that the University of Pune offers.

This will be done keeping in mind the industry needs. By 2010, all the courses will

**NJ:** We have tremendous potential but we are not world class due to the low level of research and poor infrastructure of our universities. Also, no branding or promotion is done of Indian universities. By December 2008, the IT infrastructure of University of Pune will be comparable to that of MIT and Harvard. Due to the measures we are taking, the ranking of University of Pune will take a big jump.

Right now we are amongst the top 300 in the world. In the next three years we will be in the top hundred. This will happen because we are taking measures to improve our governance. We are also developing Management Information Systems (MIS) and have a high-quality Statistical Data Center in the

# 'GIVE VOICE TO THE SILENT REVOLUTION'

have a revised syllabus. The private universities tend to copy what the good state universities have done.

Secondly, the amount of research being done is very less. Till 1985, the number of research papers of China and India were comparable. But today, China is doing five times better. Now, the University of Pune is promoting research by offering Rs 50,000 to Rs 3,00,000 per selected research project. We have already received six hundred project proposals and a majority of them are from the rural areas.

**UKC:** How can we be world class in the field of education? No Indian university appears in the top 200 of the world.

University.

**UKC:** What are the changes that have been introduced at the University of Pune?

**NJ:** The main objectives of universities is threefold - teaching, research and social extension. The aspect of social extension is the least explored and thus we have launched four initiatives to bring back the connect between education and society. We have started the Samarth Bharat Abhiyan, a comprehensive rural development programme to direct youth towards constructive social engagement in rural areas. All the University departments and colleges would adopt five hundred villages for all round socio-economic development.

**EDUCATION IN TRANSITION**

चिंतन इमेज मेकर्स

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