

'We encourage research at UG level'

Director of IIT-Indore **Pradeep Mathur** speaks to **PRIYANKA SRIVASTAVA** on making the first appearance in the Times Higher Education ranking and on his vision to increase the number of international students

While Indian Institute of Science (IISc) retains the lead, the Indian Institute of Technology, Indore (IIT-Indore) emerged as India's second highest-ranked university in an impressive debut entry, in the Times Higher



■ Pradeep Mathur

Education (THE) ranking, announced recently. Making a presence in the 351-400 best universities category, the Institute now aims to make a strong presence in the Institutions of Eminence (IoE) initiated by the Indian government.

In an exclusive chat with the *Education Times*, Pradeep Mathur, director of IIT-Indore, spoke of how presence in THE ranking did not come as a surprise to him and the institute. "We had proposed to break into at the international level, two years back. Since then, our focus has been to enhance the overall quality of education, research and attract best faculty members," he said.

"We have managed to get seasoned, well educated foreign-trained faculty members. Around 80 % of the faculty members have been hand-picked during our foreign travels, where we analysed their work vis-a-vis our requirements," added Mathur, stressing on the need for high-level research in the education sector.

Research excellence was the main reason that the institute topped the list, ahead of old and established IITs in Delhi, Madras and Mumbai. However, Mathur credits it to 'no rigid boundary' ideology followed by the institute. "We encourage interdisciplinary work in our labs which increases the research output. Stressing on the dictum that teaching and research go hand in hand, we inculcate the research orientation right from the undergraduate level," said Mathur.

"It's a myth that India is not at par with the international standard of research. The international ranking system is based on unique parameters. We need to attract international students at Master's and post-doctoral level to remain in the race," he added.

At present, two students have been enrolled in the Master's programme and around 15-20 students come to IIT-Indore for short-term courses, annually. "In the top 20 universities in the world, the number of international students is around 30%. We plan to increase our intake of international students to 5-10% by 2020," he said. IIT-Indore came into existence in 2009 and battled several hurdles such as not having land allotted for the first four years and operating out of temporary campus, but that did not deter the institute from building the state-of-the-art infrastructure to facilitate research.

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