

THE INITIATIVE OF G. SWARUP AND V.G. BHIDE BEHIND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF IISERS: AN UNTOLD STORY

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The first IISERs started functioning in Pune and Kolkata from 2006. Around 1996 a group of academics from Pune, led by G. Swarup and V.G. Bhide, along with a few leaders of industry, had proposed a centre at the University of Pune for a 5-year undergraduate programme for teaching science in close association with industry: Advanced Centre for Science and Technology (ACST). Based on primary source materials, we discuss how this proposal transformed during the next few years and played a role in the establishment of the IISERs. Although the IISERs eventually followed a model considerably different from what was envisaged in the early proposal, a critical evaluation of the early proposal is important in a history of how the IISERs were initiated. While the earlier proposed name ACST had ‘technology’ in it, it may be noted that it was envisaged as an institute for training students in science in close collaboration with industry and usual departments in a typical engineering college were not planned.
