# Invigorating Knowledge Sharing in Higher Education : Indian Initiatives

*A. Arun Kumar
** Vedulla Shekhar

## Abstract

Higher education institutions are temples of learning and repositories of knowledge. These are the educational hotspots which are highly responsible for knowledge creation, information storage, knowledge sharing, learning, and reuse. Knowledge has a high impetus in higher education. Knowledge management is not a new phenomenon in higher education. In the Indian higher education system, knowledge sharing plays a vital role. Knowledge sharing is involved in administrative and academic activities in higher educational institutions like colleges and universities. However, a lacuna still persists ; a gap in knowledge sharing still exists among researchers and academicians in the higher educational institutions. To fill this gap and to motivate stakeholders of higher education to share knowledge to promote their research, the Government of India has introduced several initiatives. These initiatives invigorate the researchers and academicians to add to the knowledge base of higher education and share knowledge among peer groups. This paper emphasized on the importance and benefits of knowledge sharing practices in higher education in the Indian perspective. The paper also threw some light on some of the initiatives taken up by the Government of India in promoting knowledge sharing among higher educational stakeholders.

*Keywords :* knowledge, sharing, higher education, India, initiatives

JEL Classification : M1, M5, R5, Z0

Paper Submission Date : May 9, 2017 ; Paper sent back for Revision : August 14, 2017 ; Paper Acceptance Date : August 23, 2017

Knowledge is the key essence of success of every organization and firm. The inherent knowledge within an organization becomes obsolete if it is not shared among employees and passed on to future generations. Hence, knowledge sharing has become a very crucial element in every organization. Knowledge sharing is the success factor behind knowledge management programs. Knowledge sharing is of three types, that is, individual, group, and organizational. Knowledge is a prime criterion which gives a firm foundation for teaching and research. The education sector, especially the higher education institutes, are centered on the knowledge base. Universities are the epic centers for creating and sharing knowledge. These are the knowledge repositories of the country. They are the research hubs of the country's research output. They create new knowledge and contribute a deluge of new information to the knowledge base. Despite all the pros, when such knowledge is not communicated to people around the globe or not shared among people of the similar visionary institute, there may be knowledge decay. Appropriately, in universities and colleges, knowledge sharing is a very important strand. Knowledge sharing in the perspective of work is pronounced as the exchange of ideas,

* *Postdoctoral Fellow (ICSSR),* Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad - 500 007, Telangana. Email : dr.arunkumar@osmania.ac.in
** *Professor,* Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad - 500 007, Telangana. Email : vedullashekhar@osmania.ac.in

experiences, or technology between individuals or group of employees. It is noticed that the knowledge created in the higher educational institutes is not seized properly. It is also observed that many a times, generated information or knowledge in the academic institutes is not known to anyone  and remains as grey literature, which might be useful if proper recording is maintained in the organization (Husain, 2012). In fact, academic environment is a treasure of knowledge, but it is not organized properly, and hence,  the utility is also lacking. This is a major cause for the repetitions of the research activity.

Knowledge sharing is a newly developed terrain in higher education. Knowledge sharing is the keystone for every educational institution. Dhamdhere (2010) rightly pointed out that knowledge sharing has been gaining increased diligence among researchers and academicians in recent years. Distinctive higher educational institutions are vigorously engaged in knowledge management related activities and doing research. It is now becoming famous in the education arena due to the need to disclose the intellectual power available in institutions for sharing experiences. It has great potential and should have equal and even healthier enumeration for the education sector. The main creation of the cycle of knowledge is human efforts, which are developed through administering delightful educational activities, research activities, and generating pioneering concepts in the arena of interest (Bagga, Bansal, Kumar, & Jain, 2016). All about knowledge generating organizations like industries, R&D centers, and higher education academics from colleges to universities are in search of new concepts in their subject of interest and also contribute to knowledge through various means. The information generated is covered in different forms and sources like books, journals, theses or dissertations, technical reports, case studies. Every visionary institution contributes to knowledge. Jauhari and Prathihar (2010) explained that the generated information and knowledge are to be compiled at prime place and disseminated amongst the consortium for further growth.

India is the birth place of many intellectual minds. It is the centre for knowledge creation. However, knowledge sharing among peer groups and academicians is still lacking in the higher-education  perspective. This may be due to lack of information on knowledge sharing practices. Even today, there often is a fear among researchers that knowledge sharing reduces job security. To bridge the gap, the Government of India is invigorating the researchers and academicians of the higher educational institutes to share knowledge and promote the created knowledge globally. The Government of India has introduced some initiatives to promote research and knowledge sharing in India. The same have been discussed in the present study.

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to assess the knowledge sharing practices in higher education in India, particularly :

**(1)** To throw light on the knowledge sharing initiatives taken up by the Government of India.

**(2)** To understand the knowledge sharing practices in higher education.

**(3)** To address the knowledge sharing problems in higher education in India.

## Methodology

Knowledge and knowledge sharing practices in higher education demonstrate multifaceted phenomena. The aim of this paper is to gain deeper insight of knowledge sharing practices in higher education through different mediums.  This paper is purely based on secondary data. The data were collected from the Internet, websites of institutions, periodicals, articles, and related books.

## Knowledge Sharing Initiatives in Higher Education in India

India is a developing country focusing its key interest on higher education, which leads the nation onto a path of development at par with the other developing and well developed countries. The initiatives taken up by the Government of India are fostering the needs of teaching, research, and knowledge sharing in higher education. Some of the initiatives taken up by Government of India to promote knowledge sharing in higher education are discussed in the present paper.

Rashtriya Ucchatar Shikshan Abhiyan (RUSA) implemented by the Govt. of India is giving importance to the employability of the students. It is a scheme whose prime motto is based on knowledge creation and sharing in higher educational institutions. The new goal for educational institutions today is to develop such a knowledge base of students' knowledge (both tacit and explicit) including their capabilities and skills with the help of latest technologies. It will help students to pick up their capabilities, talents, prior knowledge, and experience and work on that to enlarge and adapt this knowledge more effectively so that it is easier to cope up with the present environment. This knowledge base can be useful to students as self-motivator, self-knowledge manager, team building, innovator, and problem solving agent (Dhamdhere, 2015a, 2015b).

Global Initiatives of Academic Networks (GIAN) is another important scheme introduced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, which is providing opportunities to faculty to learn and share knowledge and teaching skills in cutting-edge  areas. It is giving an academic platform to students to seek knowledge and experience from reputed international faculty and for creating avenues for possible collaborative research with the international faculty. It is providing an opportunity for technical persons from Indian industry to improve understanding and update their knowledge in relevant areas. The scheme motivates the best international experts in the world to work on problems related to India ("2016: UK- India year of education, research and innovation launched," 2015 ; Global Initiative of Academic Initiatives (GIAN), 2017).

Faculty Recharge Programme (FRP) is a great programme launched in 2010 with a big motive. The motive is to augment the universities by recruiting profoundly qualified people as faculty. The main aim of the programme is to promote research in higher education and motivate researchers to contribute to academics as well as research. The faculty recruited under the scheme is appointed in Universities other than their parent institutes, which is also a form of faculty exchange within the country. This scheme improves interaction among faculty from different parts of the country and helps in knowledge sharing among them. The programme highly promotes knowledge sharing. The scheme focuses on the research output also. The faculty should conduct high quality research and publish their research findings in journals of national and international repute (UGC's FRPS, 2017).

Faculty Research Promotion Scheme (FRPS) is a scheme of creating knowledge through research. Research and teaching are the main mottos of the universities. Research is neglected in universities. For the negligence of universities, Government of India and University Grants Commission has taken initiation for strengthening basic research in Indian universities. The faculty research promotion scheme provides support in three levels. The startups, mid career, and faculty fellowship are the three levels in which the FRPS programme is implemented. The startup grant provides financial seed to promote research and encourage faculty at the entry level. The mid-career fellowship provides financial assistance for academicians in the mid of their career. The faculty fellowship scheme is one of the innovative programs for retired professors. This scheme helps in knowledge sharing among experienced faculty and entry level faculty. Through these programs, universities flourish with knowledge of senior faculty (UGC's FRPS, 2017).

Bilateral Programme (BP) is a collaborative program in the field of social science research. The program inspires social science researchers to take up collaborative work with researchers of other countries in their area of research. The programme requires visiting another country by the researcher. This helps in international knowledge sharing practice. The programme facilitates knowledge sharing among researchers and academicians of different countries (ICSSR, 2017).

Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) is a program that has been started for the advantage of Indian social scientists. The programme encourages Indian social scientists to visit other countries. The programme also entertains foreign scholars under the student exchange scheme. The purpose of such visits is to enable social scientists to collect research material, deliver lectures, participate in seminars, consult libraries, and interact with social scientists all over the world (ICSSR, 2017).

CV Raman Post Doctoral Fellowship (CVR-PDF) is a collaboration program. It has been initiated to promote human capacity building through scientific and technological cooperation between two countries. In this program, there is collaborative work engaged. The programme provides financial assistance to permanent faculty of Indian universities to enhance their career prospects. The programme requires the Indian faculty to pursue high standard research in foreign countries. It is a fully funded scheme which promotes knowledge sharing on an international platform (University Grants Commission, 2017).

The above are some schemes being implemented successfully by the Government of India, which are based on the principle of knowledge management, giving more preference to knowledge sharing practices. The Government of India contributes financially for funding these schemes in a larger perspective, giving more importance to knowledge sharing practices. This shows the importance of knowledge sharing in a global perspective. The present work has been taken up to throw light on the importance of knowledge sharing in higher educational institutions. The present study focuses and explains the existing knowledge sharing practices being followed by various organizations. The work also explains the current scenario of knowledge sharing in higher education in India.

## Benefits of Knowledge Sharing

The need for knowledge sharing in higher-education institutes has risen drastically. We are today living in a world of fast growing knowledge (Nassuora, 2011). People around the world are working continuously to create new knowledge. However, creating new knowledge may not be an achievement in today's scenario. Sharing the created knowledge with the peer groups and researchers all around the world will help people working in the area know about the current research trends. This may help in reducing repetitive research. Knowledge sharing can help save time, resources, and efforts of researchers who may be working on the same topic or area of interest (see Figure 1).

**(1) Breakdown of Barriers :** Knowledge sharing is about breaking down barriers within the organization. The higher-education institutes which are having several branches usually shy away from sharing knowledge among each other. The faculty of higher education finds it difficult to share ideas with the other stake holders. However, if knowledge sharing is implemented effectively, the barriers created in an organization can be broken down (Laal, 2011).

**(2) Increased Competitiveness for Research Grants :** The faculty of higher education institutes tends to back up from applying for research grants due to the lack of proper knowledge of how to apply for research grants. The main reasons for the drawbacks are lack of proper information and knowledge about a program and insufficient knowledge for moving ahead for applying for a research grant. To overcome these barriers, knowledge sharing is a key factor. With knowledge sharing, there is increased competitiveness and responsiveness of academicians and researchers for research grants, contracts, and commercial opportunities (Nawaz & Gomes, 2012).

**(3) Improves the Decision Making Process :** Knowledge sharing decreases the time required for researching a topic. The created knowledge is globally available in a network which can be accessed by scholars from all over the world. This reduces the time researchers spend on knowledge recognition. Knowledge sharing is possible

**Figure.1 Benefits of Knowledge Sharing**
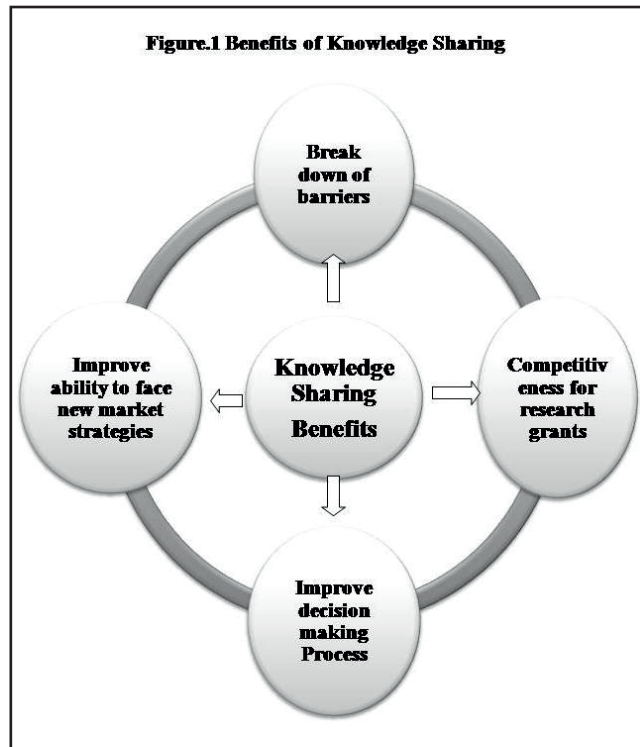
through interdisciplinary syllabus design. The more knowledge and information an individual possesses, the more quickly and efficiently he/she will take a decision. Knowledge sharing helps in improving the decision making process.
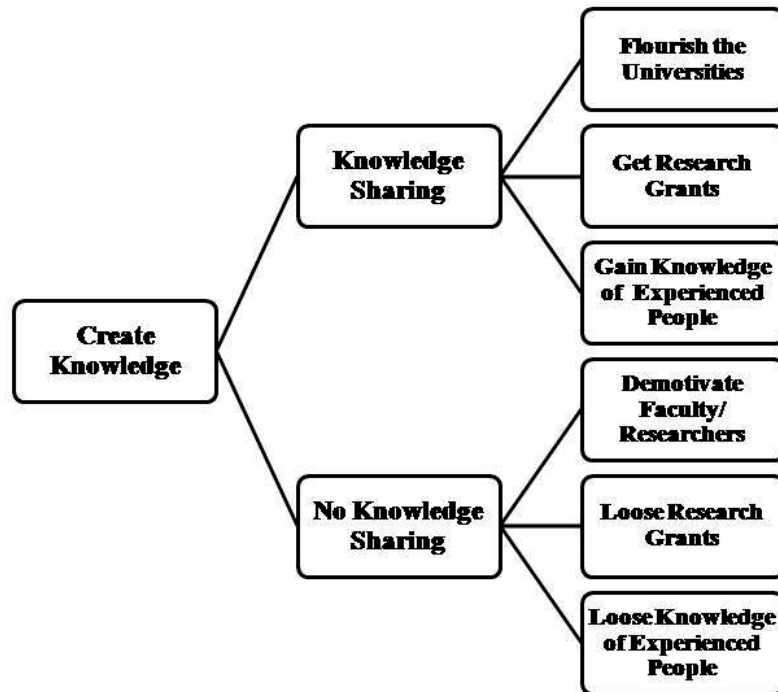
**(4) Improves Ability to Face New Market Strategies :** Sharing of external and internal information can reduce superfluous efforts and lessen the reporting load plaguing many institutions today. Knowledge sharing can improve the ability to develop new and market-focused strategic plans.

## Discussion

Higher education institutes are creating knowledge and sharing knowledge while doing academic and administrative works. Many higher educational institutions are facing problem of knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is involved in distinctive levels like administrative work and academic work like teaching, research, evaluation, training, and examination process. Knowledge sharing helps to improve the operational quality and effective decision making. This will lead to enhancing employees and student skills and performance. Knowledge sharing is creating awareness about future changing scenario. Experienced employees calculate the risks and are ready to face risks as well as they are emotionally intelligent people. Knowledge workers share their knowledge, skills, and ideas with others, and at the same time, they learn from others. Knowledge sharing is a highly motivating factor and produces best performance for the organizational development through productivity (knowledge oriented students), quality (in terms of education), innovations, and intellectual property. Knowledge workers facilitate good services to the students, alumni, staff, and faculty members (See Figure 2).

The present study explains the importance of knowledge sharing in the Indian scenario and the initiatives taken up by the Indian government to promote knowledge sharing. Despite several schemes available to researchers and academicians, knowledge sharing is not able to reach every sector of higher education. The initiatives introduced

Fig 2. Merits of Knowledge Sharing and Demerits of lack of Knowledge Sharing

```
                                                   ┌──────────────┐
                                                   │ Flourish the │
                                                   │ Universities │
                                                   └──────────────┘
                              ┌────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐
                              │ Knowledge  │────────│ Get Research │
                              │  Sharing   │        │    Grants    │
                              └────────────┘        └──────────────┘
                                                    ┌──────────────┐
                                                    │ Gain Knowledge│
                                                    │ of Experienced│
                                                    │    People     │
              ┌────────────┐                        └──────────────┘
              │   Create   │                        ┌──────────────┐
              │ Knowledge  │                        │  Demotivate  │
              └────────────┘                        │   Faculty/   │
                                                    │  Researchers │
                              ┌────────────┐        └──────────────┘
                              │No Knowledge│        ┌──────────────┐
                              │  Sharing   │────────│ Loose Research│
                              └────────────┘        │    Grants     │
                                                    └──────────────┘
                                                    ┌──────────────┐
                                                    │Loose Knowledge│
                                                    │ of Experienced│
                                                    │    People     │
                                                    └──────────────┘
```

are not able to reach the higher education institutes as expected. Many academicians and researchers have very little or no knowledge about the initiatives, which is hindering the knowledge sharing process. To overcome these drawbacks, the initiatives have to be publicized and circulated among researchers of the higher education institutes.

The scope of the programmes also should be extended to involve highly talented and research oriented individuals who may not be withholding any permanent position in the higher education institutions but have the zeal to contribute to the knowledge base and help in knowledge sharing. The higher authorities of the higher education institutions should instill and invigorate their faculty to take up these schemes and contribute to knowledge sharing. The schemes now available are subject specific. Certain schemes are only open to social scientists whereas others are open to researchers of the science stream.

As research and knowledge know no boundaries, restrictions upon the subject and area of research should not be encouraged. All the schemes should be available to individuals of different disciplines. This will further encourage researchers of various streams to share their knowledge. The selection process for these schemes is quite rigorous. However, the process of selection is very slow, which is a discouraging and disheartening factor for researchers who are interested to contribute through these schemes. Hence, the process of selection for the schemes has to be done at a faster pace. The schemes should also facilitate a continuous check during the tenure of the researcher under the scheme. This check can be very useful for the researcher. In this check, the authorities should try to provide a comfortable working environment to the researchers.

They should also try to act as problem solving agents during the tenure to help the researcher carry out his/her work effectively. Though these schemes are granted by the Government, most Universities are not supportive to the individuals who enter the institute with a lot of hope and aspirations to contribute their part to research. This attitude of the universities is due to lack of proper knowledge about the schemes provided. Though the schemes

assist researchers financially, the higher education institutes may not be always supportive and encouraging. A mere financial grant may not be a useful criterion for a researcher to promote his/her research. The researchers may also require basic infrastructural facilities, cooperation from the inmates of the institute, and support from the authorities of the institute to move ahead in their most sought after goal, that is, knowledge sharing.

The Government of India may have to still make these schemes more reachable to the faculty and researchers of higher education. The Government may educate the higher education institutes on the importance of these programmes. They should also see to it that the information they communicate reaches each and every individual of an institution. A faster selection process and giving a comfortable working environment can help promote the main motto of these programmes, that is, knowledge sharing. India being a country of knowledge enriched minds needs to improve its knowledge sharing practices to stand at par with countries worldwide.

## Implications of the Study

The present study focuses on the importance of knowledge sharing in higher educational institutes and universities. Despite the availability of several knowledge sharing initiatives being implemented by the Govt. of India, due to lack of knowledge about the schemes available, many universities and their stakeholders are not able to obtain the maximum benefits out of these programmes. This is hindering the process of knowledge sharing in Indian universities. The present study shows that breaking the barriers and increased competitiveness can be very beneficial to the researchers to promote knowledge sharing. We, through the present study, made an attempt to portray the present day problems the researchers and academicians of higher education sector are facing despite the availability of financial schemes implemented by the Govt. of India. This study will trigger a curiosity among the stakeholders for availing the schemes to share knowledge and promote our country at par with the developed countries on a global level.

Journals which publish research and review articles can also be a good means of knowledge sharing, which is encouraged through these schemes. Journals act as a medium of promoting knowledge sharing among researchers in a particular area of study. The schemes mentioned in the present study also encourage researchers to publish their research in journals of international and national repute to encourage knowledge sharing.

## Conclusion

This paper concludes that Indian higher education institutions are knowledge repositories. Though the knowledge sharing scenario has improved in comparison to the yester years, the existing knowledge sharing initiatives are still not being effectively utilized. The paper outlines the importance of different schemes introduced by the Government of India. Despite the good initiatives, knowledge sharing is still not moving ahead as expected. There are certain drawbacks which need to be sorted out to make these schemes really useful to the stakeholders of higher education. Indian universities are temples of learning, which need to encourage their academicians and researchers to focus on knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is an important practice which, if encouraged and invigorated, can project India on a global level at par with the developed countries.

## Limitations of the Study and Scope for Further Research

The study is based only on secondary data. The present study is confined to Indian education scenario and schemes funded by the Indian government. Even though knowledge management practices are global in nature, this study is confined to Indian higher education only. Similar kinds of studies can be conducted across the

developed, developing, and under developed countries. The study can also be conducted subject wise, that is, social sciences, engineering, science & technology, respectively.

## Acknowledgement

## References

2016: UK- India year of education, research and innovation launched. (2015, December 10). *Paramount.* Retrieved from https://paramount.toprankers.com/general-knowledge/current-af fairs/2016-uk-india-year-of-education-research-and-innovation-launched#English

Bagga, T., Bansal, S., Kumar, P., & Jain, S. (2016). New wave of accreditation in Indian higher education: Comparison of accreditation bodies for management programmes. *Prabhandhan : Indian Journal of Management, 9* (8), 26 - 40. DOI: 10.17010/pijom/2016/v9i8/99778

Dhamdhere, N. S. (2010). Knowledge management models for higher educational institutes. *Journal of Commerce & Management Thought, 6* (1), 130 - 161.

Dhamdhere, N. S. (2015a). Importance of knowledge management in higher educational institutes. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education, 16* (1), 162 - 183.

Dhamdhere, N. S. (2015b). Knowledge management practices in education : Indian scenario. *Elixir: Education Technology, 80, 30824 - 30834.* Retrieved from http://www.elixirpublishers.com/articles/1425104779_80%20%282015%29%2030824-30834.pdf

Global Initiative of Academic Initiatives (GIAN). (2017). *The proposed gian is envisaged to achieve the following objectives*. Retrieved from http://www.iith.ac.in/~gian/objectives.html

Husain, M. (2012). A significant role of knowledge management to improve the service sector industry. *Prabhandhan : Indian Journal of Management, 5* (5), 20 - 28.

Indian Council of Social Science Research. (2017, April 17). *Visit of scholars under cultural exchange programmes*. Retrieved from http://icssr.org/ic_visit_scholars.html

Jauhari, A., & Pratihar, A. S. (2010). Knowledge management : For new times with new technologies. *Prabhandhan : Indian Journal of Management, 3* (3), 3 - 11. DOI: 10.17010/pijom/2010/v3i3/61112

Laal, M. (2011). Knowledge management in higher education . *Procedia Computer Science, 3,* 544 - 549.

Nassuora, A. B. (2011). Knowledge sharing in institutions of higher learning. *International Journal of Economics and Management Science, 1* (3), 29 - 36.

Nawaz, M. N., & Gomes, A. M. (2012). Review of knowledge management in higher education institutions. *European Journal of Business Management, 6* (7), 71 - 79.

OECD. (2017, May 17). *Sharing knowledge and creation*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/g20/summits/tornto/G20-skills-strategy.pdf

UGC's FRPS. (2017, April 17). *Faculty research promotion schemes*. Retrieved from http://www.ugcfrps.ac.in/uohyd/

University Grants Commission. (2017). *Preamble: Genesis of the programme.* Retrieved from http://www.ugcfrp.ac.in/index.asp?links=ugc1

## About the Authors

**Dr. A. Arun Kumar** is a Post Doctoral Fellow in the Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad. He finished his doctoral studies from Osmania University, Hyderabad. His area of interest is Knowledge Management. He has several research papers and review articles published in reputed international and national journals to his credit. He has presented research papers in various international and national conferences organized in India, Nepal, Bangkok, and Sri Lanka. He is a member of various research foundations.

**Prof. Vedulla Shekhar** is an Eminent Professor in the Department of Business Management, Osmania University, Hyderabad. He has a teaching experience of 35 years. His core subjects are Marketing Management and Organizational Behavior. He is Visiting Professor at AIT Bangkok and Al Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt. He has several research papers and paper presentations to his credit. He has received the "Best Teacher Award" from Government of Andhra Pradesh. He has guided 27 students who have completed PhDs successfully. Presently, he is guiding 10 scholars for Ph.D. and 2 Post Doctoral Fellows. He has several years of administrative experience and has worked in several capacities such as Dean, Head, and Principal of the University College of Commerce & Business Management. He is a member of several research and government bodies.