

UKIERI: Catalyst for Growth

Overlapping interest and interdisciplinary research necessitate sharing of knowledge through regular academic interaction. Many key areas of research in the field of applied sciences and engineering have been in need of improvement for some time now. Chip fabrication is one such area of research. Therefore, the demand was for a research-group wherein the required facilities could be made available at the university level and people from different continents would join to work together and contribute, both collectively and individually. I was fortunate enough to be given an opportunity of being a part of such a team when UK India Education & Research Initiative (UKIERI) put me in touch with the team at the Department of Electronic & Electrical Engineering of the University College of London for a year; who were also working on the area of my research interest. While I had the theoretical background, I got the required infrastructural support to put it to practice, through this collaboration. The ambience that such an in-depth involvement with our work created, together with the continuous sharing of ideas and knowledge with other researchers and academicians, was conducive to the primary goal of research-centric growth.

The immediate outcome of this UKIERI funded fellowship was a set of new chips designed by us and a few publications in international journals of repute that boasted of a substantial readership and impact factor. Returning to India a year later, I set up similar facilities in the university where I worked. Gradually a team of researchers was built, to work with me and guide students and junior research scholars. The team soon grew in size and the quality of their technical expertise also improved and grew. The result was not only the production of high quality research publications but also the successful dissemination of knowledge in the domain in question leading to the improvement in the quality of life through technological innovation.

The long term benefit, personally, was a major boost to my professional career thereby providing me with the ability, as a professional, to lead and direct. Today, after 5 years of completing the fellowship, I am placed as the Director of North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology, a centrally funded technical Indian university, to put what I learnt to practice. I am the youngest Director in the history of the Institute!

I genuinely consider the funding and support from UKIERI instrumental in helping me develop my research capabilities and opening up opportunities for working on collaborative projects. My association with UK continues since now I am exploring and identifying potential areas of collaboration towards mutual benefit in research and teaching, with a number of UK universities.