5-Es of Leadership Essentials

Deepak Laxmanrao Waikar

Ex-Managing Partner, EduEnergy Consultants LLP,

The Republic of Singapore

Email: eduenerypro@gmail.com

Abstract: *Among many leaders and followers, there continues to be the perception that "leaders are born". However, management and behavioural scientists and researchers have, for the past several decades, studied effects of hereditary traits, environment ecosystem, and circumstances and situations on leadership and have observed that such perceptions are mere perceptions. They have also identified key attributes of leadership. In this chapter, five essentials of such leadership attributes are studied, analysed, and recommended. Views of some of the renowned scientists, researchers, and practitioners are captured. It is envisaged that if these five essentials can be used by the practitioners, then it can help them in not only becoming effective leaders but also becoming catalysts in developing future leaders for the organisations, communities, societies, nations, regions, and beyond.*

1. Introduction:

As such leadership is a very complex subject and several articles, case studies, reports, policy papers, white papers, book chapters, and books have been written. However, there continues to be varying interpretations and consequently differing applications and practices in public, private, and other sectors of the industries, communities, and societies.

According to Management Guru Peter Drucker[1]:

> *"The only definition of a leader is someone who has followers."*

It encompasses almost all major sections of the society. There is a comparison drawn between managers and leaders.

I recall mentioning in one of my keynote addresses at the International Management Conferences almost more than a decade back.

> *"Managers perspire, Leaders Inspire".*

Kevin Kruse, CEO of LEADx and author of Great Leaders Have No Rules, in article on "What is Leadership" in Forbes Magazine (9 April 2013)[2] articulated a definition:

> *"Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal".*

In the Harvard Business Review Magazine[3] of January 2024 an article on "Understanding Leadership" started with a quote by W.C.H. Prentice

> *"Effective leaders take a personal interest in the long-term development of their employees, and they use tact and other social skills to encourage employees to achieve their best. It isn't about being "nice" or "understanding"—it's about tapping into individual motivations in the interest of furthering an organization wide goal".*

In an article of August 2022 on "What is Leadership" under Featured Insight Section of McKenzie & Company website[4], the following pragmatic quote provides one of the definitions of the term "Leadership".

> *"Leadership is a set of behaviours used to help people align their collective direction, to execute strategic plans, and to continually renew an organization".*

As such we are in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) Environment. During Covid-19 we have gone through one of the major global disruptions after the second world war. We were stranded, felt almost helpless, and that forced the global community of leaders and followers to find mutually useful solutions and alternatives. Such disruptions usually raise question about the fundamentals of theories and practices at that time horizon. The situation and to some extent autocratic leadership styles became obvious choices. We learned, unlearned, and relearned and pulled together ideas, resources, technological developments, and most importantly deployed essentials of leadership and followership to survive and revive. Globally, humanity paid a heavy toll, physically, emotionally, and economically.

As we are overcoming our nightmarish experiences felt during the pandemic period, we should not forget hard lessons learned. If we do so, it will be a disaster and intellectual bankruptcy. We are also in the midst of another major disruption, the "climate crisis". It is again a global phenomenon and leadership along with followership are stretched to almost extreme to find alternative potential solutions as scientists, researchers, and practitioners have warned about dire consequences of our own existence on this planet.

If we continue business as usual and do not learn from hard lessons, then "get ready to face crisis after crisis".

Do we wish to follow that option?

Is that approach "sustainable"?

While there are several other issues that can be studied, analysed, and presented in the form of articles, book chapters, case studies, and more, the author has decided to focus on 5 Es in this chapter. They are:

1. Encourage

2. Engage

3. Evaluate

4. Empower, and

5. Entrust

These are essential qualities and traits for leaders to learn, practice, internalise, and adapt as per the situation. These attributes have been carefully chosen based on several decades of interactions with experts, academicians, practitioners at various conferences, seminars, forums, and the experience of the author in educational institutions, industries, and government related organisations. We are mindful that these are only attributes and others can interpret and come up with completely different sets of attributes. If that happens after reading this chapter, that would be one of the satisfying outcomes of the efforts of the various authors who have joined together for publishing this book.

The proposed relationship and flow of these 5Es are depicted in Figure 1.
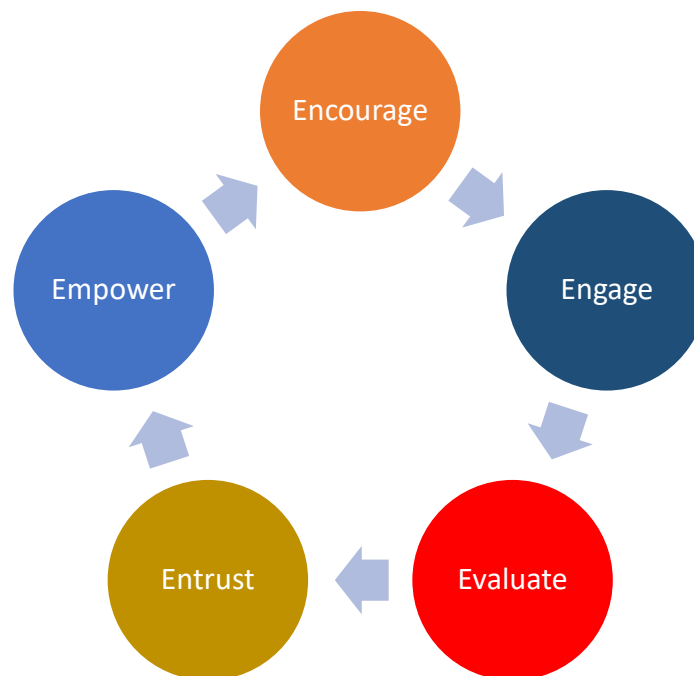
Figure 1: 5Es of Leadership Essentials

While it is desirable that the process be followed cyclically for the new and emerging leaders and managers, experienced ones would also find it very useful in following the proposed process. If these five attributes are treated as five different processes and synergised systematically, it is envisaged that learners can extract essential features of effective leadership.

We will now first attempt to understand these five essential attributes and readers are requested to allow themselves to follow them while reading this chapter. The author has preferred a qualitative approach in presenting these attributes and those interested in quantitative analysis can take them to different research projects.
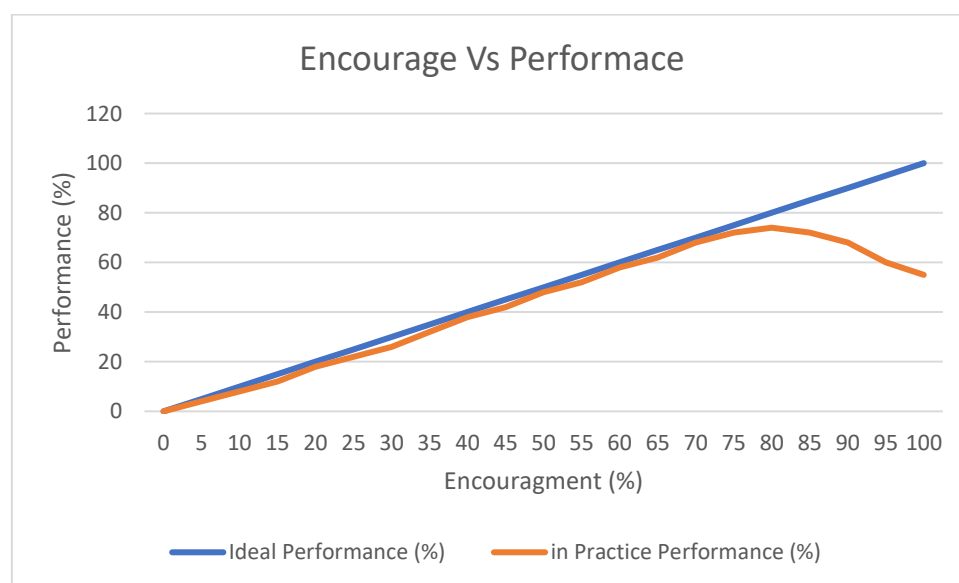
2. **Encourage:**

The first proposed attribute of the leadership essentials is "Encourage". According to Oxford Dictionary, meanings of the word "Encourage" related to the topic of the chapter:

"give support, confidence, or hope to (someone)".

"persuade (someone) to do or continue to do something by giving support and advice".

"stimulate the development of (an activity, state, or belief)".

There are various ways to encourage others as well as self. We need it from time to time to overcome challenges and setbacks we face. However, in practice, we have to be very careful using the attribute "encourage". As can be observed from Figure 2 that over usage of the "encourage" may result in reduction in performance over the period.

Figure 2: Encourage versus Performance

Charlie Scott, Director of the Management Training Centre, UK, in her blogpost[5] writes:

> *"Encouraging others is a key leadership skill. Leaders who praise achievements, small and large, and who recognise excellence will inspire people to excel. It shows that as a leader, you care about people as well as results. Encouraging starts with showing that you believe others have the capacity to excel, and then celebrating the progress that is being made".*

Therefore, leaders are encouraged to encourage self and followers on encouragingly regular intervals to observe and notice encouraging signs of desired outcomes emerging from such efforts.

3. Engage:

The second proposed attribute of the leadership essentials is "Engage". According to Oxford Dictionary, meanings of word "Engage" related to the topic of the chapter could be:

"attract (someone's interest or attention)".

"participate or become involved in"

"establish a meaningful contact or connection with"

Leaders have to engage with the followers on a regular basis. Engagement can be formal as well as informal. In an organisation, engaged employees can consistently perform as per the goals and objectives. Such engagement provides an avenue for the employees to clarify actual expectations rather than perceived expectations from the leadership. It has been reported that managers find it time consuming and distracting to engage employees on a regular basis and that could be one of the major reasons for absenteeism and drop in productivity.

As such engagement should be to find out challenges faced by followers/employees and how leaders can guide them and provide appropriate resources if needed. If employees perceive that managers usually engage to give more work rather than finding out how the current allocated work is being carried out, then such engagements could have detrimental effects. In such situations, employees may find ways to avoid engaging managers.

Solomon Markos and co-authors in their research paper "Employee Engagement: The Key to Improving Performance" in International Journal of Business and Management[6] Vol. 5, No. 12; December 2010 observed and concluded that:

> *"The literature indicates that employee engagement is closely linked with organizational performance outcomes".*

> *"Companies with engaged employees have higher employee retention as a result of reduced turnover and reduced intention to leave the company, productivity, profitability, growth and customer satisfaction".*

> *"Engaged employees are emotionally attached to their organization and highly involved in their job with a great enthusiasm for the success of their employer, going extra mile beyond the employment contractual agreement."*

John Storey and co-authors of the book chapter on "Employee Engagement", in book: The Routledge Companion to Strategic Human Resource Management[7] (pp.299-315) highlighted that:

"Employee engagement is attracting a great deal of interest from employers across numerous sectors".

"The aspiration to involve, engage and win commitment from employees has long been high on the agenda of a select portion of enlightened management".

Engagement is expected to be a two-way process and both employees and managers can substantially benefit from it. Sharing problems faced can also strengthen and enhance bonding (Figure 3).
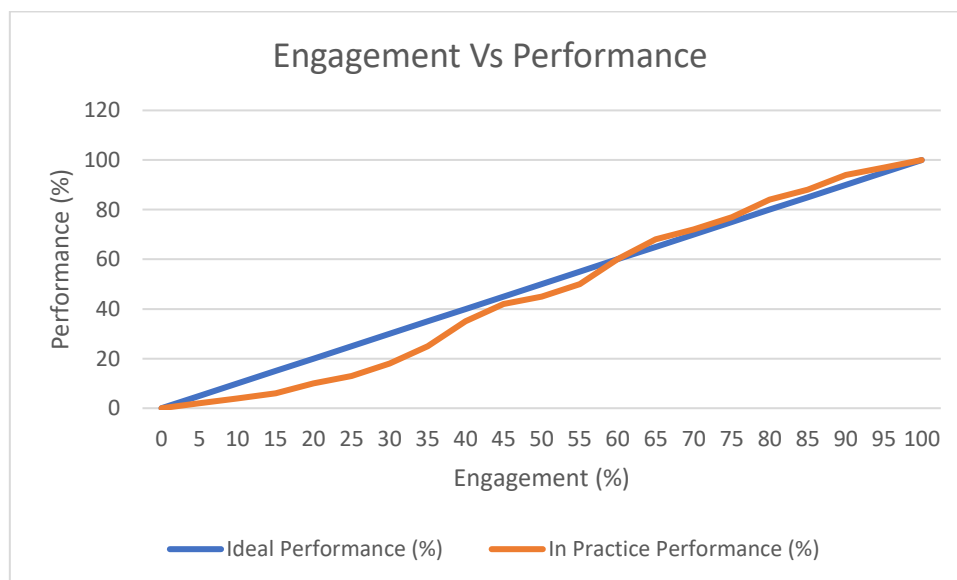
Figure 3: Engage versus Performance

4. Evaluate:

The third proposed attribute of the leadership essentials is "Evaluate". According to Oxford Dictionary, meanings of word "Evaluate" related to the topic of the chapter could be:

"form an idea of the amount, number, or value of; assess".

Regular evaluation provides objective ways to assess the performance and take corrective steps to adjust the workflow. Focus of the evaluation should be to find out gaps and remedial measures to bridge them. The 360-degree evaluation has been recommended by several authors and practitioners. Professional development programmes, coaching, and mentorship are useful tools for preparing followers and employees in line with the vision, mission, and organisational goals and objectives.

The Centre of Creative Leadership in an article[8] identified 4 benefits of Evaluation.

- *Evaluation clarifies outcomes.*

- *Evaluation focuses attention.*

- *Evaluation supports ongoing learning.*

- *Evaluation influences future actions and decisions.*

"Evaluation separates real outcomes from wishful thinking, slogans, or vague program aspirations[8]".

It is a natural progression of the "encourage" and "engage" attributes. The processes and approaches of the first two proposed attributes need to be evaluated and appropriate adjustment in the processes must be made before embarking on the next phase of the action plan.

5. Entrust

The fourth proposed attribute of the leadership essentials is "Entrust". According to Oxford Dictionary, meanings of word "Entrust" related to the topic of the chapter could be

"assign the responsibility for doing something to (someone)".

"put (something) into someone's care or protection"

Once the follower and employees achieve performance consistent with the set targets reasonably consistently for a certain period, the stage is set for entrusting them to take up those assignments almost independently.

C. Cvitonic and co-authors in their research article[9] made very pertinent observations:

"Through analysis have highlighted the importance and fragility of trust at the interface of environmental science and policy and identified 14 strategies with key actions to establish and nurture trust between trustor and trustee. Despite the best intentions, however, there are circumstances where trust can be lost or eroded, therefore, authors have also provided five key steps for trust repair.

It has been said time and again that it requires considerable efforts to entrust others. It is also said that "trust has to be earned".

The process gets time tested with every situation we encounter. It also requires development of mutual understanding at mindset and behavioural level.

As advocated by many practitioners, leaders and followers have to

"talk the walk" and

"walk the talk"

6. **Empower:**

The fifth proposed attribute of the leadership essentials is "Empower". According to Oxford Dictionary, meanings of word "Empower" related to the topic of the chapter could be:

"give (someone) the authority or power to do something".

"make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights".

Once the followers/employees rigorously go through evaluation and entrusting mode, empowering them becomes critical to maintain and enhance their performance.

Vanessa Boris, senior manager, Learning Design and Media, at Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning[10] highlighted that:

"*The best leaders make the purposeful choice to empower everyone they lead, whoever they are, wherever they are. When they do, individuals flourish, and the group works like a well-oiled machine. Let's look at what it takes to truly empower others and bring your team together around a shared purpose*".

In an article of August 2022 on "What is Leadership" under Featured Insight Section of McKenzie & Company website[11] highlights importance of Empowerment".

"*Organizations whose leaders successfully empower others through coaching are nearly four times more likely to make swift, good decisions and outperform other companies*".

In their Meta Analysis[12] on Leader Styles and Psychological Empowerment, Carsten C. Schermuly & co-authors have found that:

"Relationships between psychological empowerment and empowering leadership style was, on average, moderately positive and significant".

"Psychological empowerment has a variety of positive effects for employers and employees".

According to Bill Gates

"As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others."

Once four proposed attribute processes start showing tangible and intangible results, evoking the "Empower" process would become apparent. Once the organisation and nation enter into the innovation phase of economy, empowered followers/employees are expected to perform considerably at the higher level than traditional hierarchical mode.

7. Comments and Observations:

Figure 4 shows how the performance can be different under different leaderships for the proposed 5Es. During the initial stages when leadership skills are being learned, acquired, and practiced, the performance of the leaders could be similar to Leader-A. It is expected that such leaders need to undergo systematic training, coaching, and mentorship programmes to develop themselves.

Once the leaders become experienced and with appropriate coaching and mentorship, they can perform better as depicted in Figure 4. However, achieving idealistic performance like Leader-D would be exceptional. Such leaders enjoy celebrity status and fan following. It is very crucial that such charismatic leaders mentor and nurture future leaders in organisations for resiliency and sustainability.
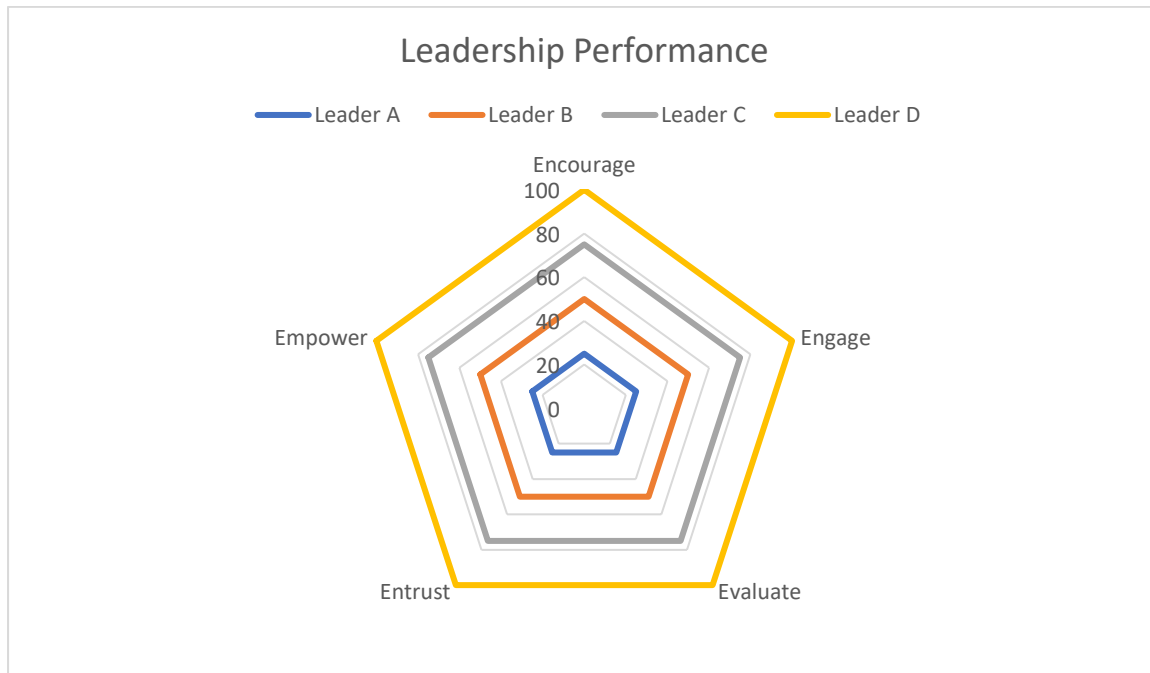

Figure 4: Potential profile of 5Es of Leadership Essentials

8. Summary and Conclusions:

In this chapter five essential attributes of effective leadership have been proposed and described. These attributes should be treated as independent as well as integrated processes. Once the shared vision, mission, goals and objectives of the organisation are articulated and set, the first process prosed is "Encourage". Leaders have to encourage themselves and followers on a regular basis to take actions and stay on the path in spite of challenges and setbacks. To encourage, we have to engage them at appropriate intervals. The process of engagement has to be bi-directional to understand root causes of challenges faced and

remedial steps need to overcome them. The processes of encouragement and engagement have to be evaluated to assess the performance of all the stakeholders. It also sets the stage for entrusting followers/employees to a higher level of commitment. Once that happens then empowering followers/employees becomes much easier.

Integrating these processes is an art as well as science. The scientific aspects have been deliberated and discussed in the chapter. In the modern era of analytics and artificial intelligence, data provides insight into what is working and what is not. As such, prediction of behaviour is very complex and therefore the artistic aspect becomes critical. The leaders ability to adapt and adopt as per the experiences is considered as an art that has to be acquired by learning, unlearning, relearning and practicing. There is hardly any substitute for that in the VUCA world. It is aptly illustrated in the diagram shown in Figure 5. Let me conclude the chapter with that in mind.
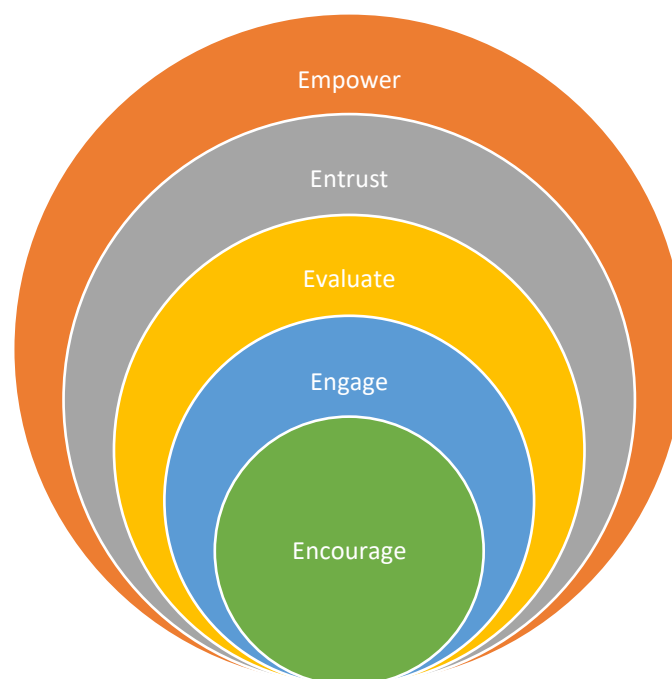
Figure 5: Integrating 5Es of Leadership Essentials

References

1. Peter F. Drucker, A Book on Management Tasks, Responsibilities, and Practices, Harper & Row Publisher, New York, USA, 1973 & 1974 (ISBN 0-06-011092-9)

2. https://www.forbes.com/sites/kevinkruse/2013/04/09/what-is-leadership/?sh=3aca6f715b90

3. https://hbr.org/2004/01/understanding-leadership

4. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-leadership

5. https://www.managementcentre.co.uk/blog/motivating-others-how-to-be-an-encouraging-leader/

6. www.ccsenet.org/ijbm

7. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300917033_Employee_engagement

8. *https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/the-value-of-evaluation/#:~:text=Evaluation%20helps%20us%20better%20understand,seeks%20to%20systematize%20large%20concepts*

9. Strategies for building and managing 'trust' to enable knowledge exchange at the interface of environmental science and policy - ScienceDirect

10. How to Empower Everyone You Lead | Harvard Business Publishing

11. https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-leadership

12. Leadership Styles and Psychological Empowerment: A Meta-Analysis - Carsten C. Schermuly, Laura Creon, Philipp Gerlach, Carolin Graßmann, Jan Koch, 2022 (sagepub.com)

Brief Biography of the Author:

Dr. Deepak L. Waikar (Ex-Managing Partner of EduEnergy Consultants LLP and Ex-Chair of IEEE Education Society Singapore Chapter) started his professional career as an Assistant Director at the National Power Engineers' Training Institute in India after his post-graduation from the Institute of Technology, Banaras Hindu University, India. Since then, he has been involved in education, training, research, and management fields for almost three decades in India, Canada, and Singapore. He has been Associate and Adjunct Faculty for the local and overseas Institutes, Academies, Polytechnics, Colleges, and Universities. He has authored/co-authored book chapters, research articles, and policy papers on power, energy, management, education, and training related topics. He has served on various committees in professional bodies. He is a recipient of IEEE Power Engineering Society Outstanding Power Engineers' Award 2003 and SP-Green Buddy Award 2004. He has delivered invited presentations at international conferences, seminars, and forums. He has conducted several students, faculty, and management development programmes such as "Nurture Researcher Mindset", "Smart, Clean & Green Energy Future", "Synergising Project-based Learning & Design Thinking", "Trainopreneurship", and "Smart Career Portfolio". Dr. Waikar is a Senior Member of IEEE, Member of All Hands Advisory Committee of the IUCEE Foundation, India, and a life member of the Institution of Engineers, India. He completed his Ph.D. from the National University of Singapore, M.S. from the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, and PD Advanced Cert in University Teaching from the University of Newcastle, Australia. He obtained PG-DBM from the Nagpur University, M.Tech. from the Banaras Hindu University, and B.E. from the Government Engineering College, Aurangabad in India, respectively. His interests include

Sustainable, Clean, and Green Energy Leadership, Re-thinking Teaching, Learning, and Academic Leadership, Re-inventing & Transforming Education, Innovative Project Design & Management, SMART Education Model, Sustainable Development, cricket & chess.

https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-deepak-waikar-640a6521/

 video: https://youtu.be/4jdmseqGCNY

Sustainable, Clean, and Green Energy Leadership, Re-thinking Teaching, Learning, and