
Global Employability of Unemployed Youth through Soft Skills

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ABSTRACT:

Human capital of any country is the mainstay of its economic and sustainable development. The intellectual and skillful citizens augment all round development curtailing the high incidence of unemployment and underemployment. India still reels under pressure of severe shortage of quality talent in the job market. Imparting soft skills like managerial training, team leadership, outbound training, executive training and corporate leadership will complement hard skills. Cognitive capacities should match emotional intelligence. The dismal scenario of Indian society wherein the poor and jobless youth have poor competence in the absence of soft skills, needs to be addressed. Ironically, in the age of ICT, the Indian youth lacks proficiency to ensure their global employability. Enhancing their potential through imparting of foundational skills and soft skills will ensure them a competitive edge in an age of cut throat competitive market. The 2011 Census estimates 430 Million people in the age group of 15-34 which constitutes 35% of the population. India has the capacity to create 500 million skilled and certified technicians by the year 2022. By 2020, India is expected to have a surplus of 56 million youth while the rest of the world faces a shortage of 47 million. This situation can be converted into an advantage if the state and society work in tandem to ensure the enhancement and empowerment of youth by endowing them with skills concomitant to career success.

Key words: *Sustainable, Development, Employability, Competitive, Enhancement*

INTRODUCTION:

The economic and sustainable development of a country is judged by its Human capital. The intellectual and skillful citizens augment all round development curtailing the high incidence of unemployment and underemployment. It is ironical that despite the enormous growth of technical and management education system and enhanced capacity of conventional disciplines in emerging fields over the last five and a half decades India continues to reel under the pressure or severe shortage of quality talent in the job market. Indians are very competent with technical skills. Global competitiveness is still unachieved. The wide river of culture, language and environment can be crossed only with proficiency in soft skills. The tough competition posed by MNCs mandates the up-skilling of Indian employees. Globalization has burgeoned freewheeling interaction with people who come from different cultures, states and countries. The compelling need for understanding the potential market necessitates soft skills training like managerial training, team leadership, outbound training, executive training and corporate leadership training. According to the census of 2011, 430 million people in India are in the age group of 15-34 and constitute 35% of the total

population. This age group is projected to increase to 464 million by 2021¹. If the capabilities of the youth are developed, it can result in a demographic dividend. It poses a big challenge considering the present status of workforce in term of educational attainment and skill training. India has the capacity to create 500 million skilled and certified technicians by the year 2022. By 2020, India is expected to have a surplus of 56 million youth while the rest of the world faces a shortage of 47 million². The bottom line is that individual's skills needs to be upgraded continuously if the work force is to remain relevant and employable. There is a continuum of skills that are required in any economic. The poor youth are doubly hit-first because of poverty and second because of poor access to formal education.

MEANING, NEED & IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills are a cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills which are the technical requirement of job³. It is a combination of personal qualities, interpersonal skills and additional skills/knowledge. It gives a 'competitive edge' in today's competitive job market. Employees promote employees with superior soft skills. Those extroverted and good at marketing and socializing are rated superior, good old introvert technician though ace in technical field are not appreciated. Hard skill contributes only 15% of one's skills success while 85%⁴ is made by soft skills. Soft skills are learned behaviour with focused application that teaches the effective use of English (Language of worldwide communication) team building, leadership, time management, group discussion, interpersonal skills, career visioning and planning, effective resume writing and deals with placement consultant and head hunters. It instills the ability to deal with one's feeling and also to empathize with others. It complements academic intelligence or cognitive capacities (IQ) with the humane understanding of issues known as emotional intelligence (EQ) or soft skills. It aims at the holistic development by fine tuning the learners' attitudes, values belief, motivation, desires, feeling, eagerness to learn, willingness to share and embrace new ideas and inculcates futuristic thinking. It empowers learners with adequate ammunition to face corporate battles and challenges.

ACQUIRING SOFT SKILLS

Soft skills training include lectures, projects, role plays, quizzes and other participatory seminar. Its thrust is on learning by doing. Experiential and highly interactive training ingrains skills and attributes in a gradual and subtle way which get internalized over a period of time. Internalization ensures that the skills and attributes become a part of the learner's nature. The learner self-trains himself in socializing with friends and colleagues, improves small talk capabilities like language proficiency in general, listening, discussing, etiquette, self-esteem or body language, reading dedicated books, attending course and joining clubs or societies to their horizon like debating societies. In a world where business is marked by 'hot' buzz words like globalization, decentralization and lean management, collateral leaning has gained currency. Communication skills ranks topmost among the soft skills. Ample proficiency in spoken and written language, body language, adequate discussion skills, good presentation skills in order to able to market one self and one's ideas is ensured by soft skills.

ROLE OF ENGLISH IN DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS:

Communication skills augment professional care and social competence ‘Language proficiency is the ability to speak, read and write standard English in a business like way’⁵. Contextualized task for skill related learning experience is the basic norm. Pragmatic forces of language words like textual, propositional and interpersonal functions are taught. Perfect matching of linguistic form and speaker’s intention decimates confusion, annoyance and misunderstanding. Language goes beyond grammatical, formal and linguistic awareness of learners to ‘New view’⁶. ‘New View’ refers to English and English representing multilingual and cultural diversity of society. A language pedagogy that enables learner to reflect on the kind of English they use effectively to express their own personal voice is the prime focus of soft skills. English is immensely flexible language crammed with idiom and slang unusually hospitable to new words. It is the only language of business and international politics, travel, sports, science, computer software and music industry. In the age of boundless globalization it is gaining particular importance in business context that involves cross cultural aspects. For an Indian marketing officer sent to China by his employer or an Indonesian telecommunication corporate sent to Europe in order to negotiate joining ventures for the emerging markets of Eastern Europe the knowledge about the main difference between British/Canadian/Australian/African/American English would be of great advantage. **English coaching should steer and proceed from linguistic competence to linguistic awareness to cultural competence.** Grammatical accuracy crosses to be the ‘be-all and end-all’. Phrasology lexis and collocation are not of primary importance as the focus is on ‘**Handling English aptly**’ rather than ‘Using English correctly’. The learner discovers that they are not voiceless and passive receivers but, rather they are discoverers, communicators and most significantly, creators of knowledge. It encourages them to set up, implement and realize their learning strategies. They become autonomous learners starting from their vantage strengths.

MAXIMIZING PRODUCTIVITY OF YOUTH

The Youth power has the potential to transform the Indian economy. The skill development programme should be made inclusive to deal with the divides in society such as gender, rural, urban, organized, unorganized employment and traditional/contemporary work place. The focus should be on designing interventions that ensure that the supply of trained manpower adjusts dynamically to the changes in demand for employment. In the skill sector the emphasis traditionally has been on skilling. Soft skills, English and Information technology are crucial for career progression. A target group in the age group or 18-35 should enfold people with disabilities, vulnerable tribal groups, victims of trafficking rehabilitated, bonded labor . Some of the measures could be:-

- Free training programme – Projects with private sector, public sector and civil society organizations to enable rural poor youth to gain access to skilling and placement free of cost should be initiated.
- Proper study of labor markets to assess skill requirements for jobs within the state and in regions outside should be carried from time to time.
- Training course that match the locals, attitude levels and location should be initiated.

- Organizing job fairs in villages and remote areas to bring potential employers and local youth face to face should be a revolutionary step.
- Sensitization workshop and preliminary training session highlighting the dynamics of proposed training programme and the lucrative benefits to accrue – up scaling of their lifestyle and living.
- Monitoring is measurement of progress which involves checking, measuring progress, analyzing the situation and reacting to new events, opportunities and issues, footages of CCTVs in labs and class rooms should be reviewed to ensure that the quality of class room interaction is of a requisite level at training centers.
- Quality of infrastructure determines the quality of training viz. trainers, content, training methods, finishing work readiness inputs, assessments and certificate, furniture, labs, classrooms and IT facilities, training aids, geo tagged time stamped biometric attendance facilities, internet and email access of prescribed speed on all IT equipments using which all trainers can check their email access and browse the internet, power back-ups, a computer lab for IT skills.
- Trainers deployed should have the requisite exposure to the requirement of prospective employees. They should also possess the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to be a good trainer.
- Course content should be in tune with training and should facilitate learning by rural poor youth who may not have exposure to English. There should be mandatory modules on soft skills, communication and IT, mixed media modules, interaction pedagogy which includes games, role plays should be uses. Adequate practical and on the job training/internship must be incorporated into the training module. Course material and exercises should be available online so that trainees who wish to use it to revise and improve themselves are able to do so. Keeping in mind the proliferation of mobile based learning opportunities the development and deployment of mobile phone based content will be a significant step.
- Training methods should be delivered in an innovative and trainee friendly manner with adequate audio visual tools and participatory method. The provision of tablet computer to trainees during the duration of the course will be an interactive medium to absorb the skills that are imparted.

CONCLUSION

Economic liberalization has made Indian market global. The attributes and attitudes of soft skills need to be imbibed by the Indian youth to enhance their global employability. A small segment of proficient class will not serve the purpose of sustainable development. Every youth must consider it a social responsibility to learn and upscale their competence. To this end the state and society should work in tandem to formulate and update policies that will ensure the holistic development of the talented poor youth lying underutilized and unutilized.

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