

RESEARCH PAPER

Integrating soft skill training in professional courses for sustainable employment: an overview

Prasanta Kumar Padhi^{1*}, Bidya Singh¹ and Anwasha Nayak²

¹Department of Humanities, Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology, Odisha, India

²Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar, India

***Correspondence:**

Prasanta Kumar Padhi,
zyitu100@gmail.com

Received: 23 February 2022; **Accepted:** 15 March 2022; **Published:** 31 March 2022

There has been a significant shift in the educational and employment scenario in recent years. Employers used to prioritize individuals with a strong academic record and relevant work experience, but today, persons with superior soft skills have surpassed them. It is typical to discover that graduating students lack the necessary abilities to work effectively in a corporate environment. Recruiters believe that new hires lack soft skills such as the capacity to effectively communicate, think creatively, solve problems independently, work well with others, and act professionally. This is one of the main reasons why many students, even those with relevant degrees, find it difficult to find work. This can lead to students questioning the practical worth of the many professional degrees that are offered in contemporary times. To close this gap, the field of training and development has developed a rapidly expanding and specialized sector known as “soft skill training.” Both technical and soft skill development are viewed as essential for an employee's efficacy and success at work. Researchers claim that learning soft skills is more important and critical for professional development than learning technical abilities, and as a result, it is considered one of the most in-demand core talents for organization growth and development. The purpose of this article is to highlight some of the practical implications of soft skill training in bridging the gap between industry needs and curricular gaps. It also tries to look into the influence of soft skill training in terms of its importance, utility, and subsequent competence development.

Keywords: employability, grooming, performance, communication, training

Introduction

The character qualities and interpersonal abilities that affect how well a person can work or interact are sometimes referred to as soft skills. The word “soft skills” refers to a broad variety of abilities including teamwork, time management, empathy, and delegation. The scientific foundation for these abilities is frequently derived from social and applied psychology topics such as personality, attitude, perception, emotions, motivation, group behavior, leadership, and many others. Soft skill training programs grew in popularity in India as the IT industry grew, particularly in the BPO industry, and excellent communication skills became a fundamental

business requirement. Employers now see the value of soft skill development programs in helping people become professionals from several angles. Young graduates are taught interpersonal, behavioral, and communication skills that will improve their effectiveness at work, such as the capacity to speak clearly, the capacity to read body language and communicate effectively, the capacity to lead others, the capacity to be aware of oneself by understanding oneself and others, the capacity to solve problems, the capacity to handle conflicts, and the capacity to interact with others. Because each of the aforementioned abilities is so specialized, specific training areas have emerged under the general heading of soft skill training. Collaboration and coordination are essential abilities for the majority of modern jobs, thus getting soft skill

training is essential if you want to increase your employability and land your ideal job. These trainings are certain to boost one's career productivity, foster professional connections, and help one succeed at work. To succeed in this competitive climate, professionals need to have excellent soft skill competency in addition to their professional qualifications and subject expertise. In a recent study, it is found that in the professional world; only 15% of success is determined by hard skills, whereas the remaining 85% is determined by soft skills (1). It is time to incorporate soft skill training into educational programs for recent graduates to increase their employment potential. The majority of professional schools in India have started a number of initiatives and programs to assist students in enhancing their soft skills in preparation for the future workforce. They do this because they recognize the value of soft skills in today's competitive world by preparing competent and relevant workers for the economic and social growth of our nation. These institutions employ a variety of strategies and techniques to nurture the much sought-after skill sets to produce the right kind of manpower for the demands of the nation's rising knowledge economy.

The youth of India, which is considered to be our strength, could end up being a problem in the coming future. According to a 2010 poll by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for 303 firms nationwide, it is revealed that the majority of graduates lack the required "soft skills" for employment in the job sector (2). Although graduating students in India are aware of the value of soft skills, they have not been able to effectively prepare themselves with these skills. Both the students and the colleges from which they graduate may be responsible for such deficiencies. The majority of students entering the IT profession are engineering graduates. If we take a closer look at engineering education, we will see that there have been significant problems for engineering colleges due to the current increased demand for engineering education. Chairman of NIIT Technologies, Rajendra Pawar, commented that "every year, around 2 million students and 300,000 engineering graduates from colleges across India graduate. However, just 10 to 15 percent of graduates are qualified for jobs in the corporate sectors." To be hired in the IT industry, over two-thirds of the 300,000 engineering graduates need to be reskilled. Unfortunately, IT organizations have faced significant difficulties hiring young people who, despite being technically qualified, lack English language skills, despite the fact that employers see English communication as a prerequisite for employment. To sort out this issue, teaching at our educational institutions has to be prioritized because the standard of instruction in many of them seems to have declined over time. It is high time that we should shift our focus from producing quantity to quality education, as most institutions do not appear to be aware of the most recent market demands. As a result, there appears to be a big gap between the skills enhanced through

the curriculum and those needed for workplace effectiveness, and this industry-academia gap needs to be bridged.

Discussion

The educational and job market environments are rapidly changing in recent times. Those with a strong academic background and relevant professional experience were highly sought after by most business entities a decade ago. Hard skills and experience, however, are no longer adequate for entry and advancement in the corporate world. Employers want to hire and promote people who are resourceful, ethical, and self-directed, as well as have excellent communication and soft skills. Corporate recruiting has been limited due to a scarcity of soft skills among candidates. As a result, soft skill training is now widely recognized as a vital performance monitoring intervention that enables the presentation of proper behavior that is critical in achieving optimum performance from each of its members. Soft skills teaching should, without a doubt, begin at a young age, at the primary level of education. Even before a child is admitted to a school, the development of soft skills begins at home. The job market in the twenty-first century is uncertain. As a result, it is critical to educate, enlighten, and advise the younger generation on the relevance of these abilities during job hunting, interviewing, and in the workplace too. Soft skills learning would be extremely beneficial and supportive in leading a tranquil and joyful existence. As a result, educational institutions and training centers should begin focusing on various methodologies and techniques in order to improve the soft skills of students.

A rising number of businesses around the country are emphasizing student education in soft skills as part of their overall business strategy. Many recruiters now days pay greater attention to soft skill training than technical training, as just hard skills are not sufficient enough to survive in the corporate world. This argument is well-founded, as there are several examples of corporate executives who, although having domain knowledge, are unable to advance their careers due to their failure to display interpersonal skills and appropriate workplace behavior, sometimes referred to as soft skills. According to research, personnel of an Indian blue-chip company spent 63 percent of their communication time listening to one another, whereas just 4 percent read, 11 percent wrote, and 22 percent spoke (3). There are differing views on the significance, applicability, and impact of soft skill training in changing certain behavioral and performance-related impacts, as well as the prospect that trainers might become the most influential people in the organization. The numerous managerial frameworks created in recent years by notable scholars on this subject have greatly contributed to our understanding of the value of soft skills for job competence as well as the best methods for teaching soft skills and transferring soft skill training. Numerous

motivational gurus have argued for the significance of behavior and attitude in successful organizations, including Dale Carnegie and Zig Ziglar.

The development of soft skills includes learning language as a component of communication skills, as well as more refined aspects of lifestyle learning and practical life skills such as business etiquette and corporate grooming. The goal of soft skill development is to create a final product in the form of a person who has the greatest percentage of the desirable traits identified by organizational behavior research. It aspires to exterior refinement, polish, perfection, and sophistication, as well as longterm and consistent changes in an individual's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral qualities. Soft skill training and learning is seen as a laboratory activity or workout since it necessitates regular practice and drilling. Soft skills labs are typically used to refer to soft skill training courses. Experiential methods such as role-playing, to aid professionals in developing these skills, simulations, outward and inbound training programs, team games, and other activities are used. Teachers at educational institutions prepare their pupils to thrive in hard skills such as the technical abilities needed to carry out certain jobs, writing, reporting, and other job-specific abilities. These skills are thought to have an immediate influence at work, but mastering soft skills is comparatively difficult as they are mostly personality-based. Gaining proficiency in these skills will enable students or employees to advance at a faster rate and become more self-sufficient. As English is widely utilized around the world in business, technology, education, and other fields, English classrooms have evolved into soft-skilling training facilities. Here, the role of English teachers to shoulder the extra responsibility of soft skill trainers is quite pertinent. With their exceptional command of the English language and social skills, they can interact with pupils and instruct students in communication techniques in an efficient manner.

Companies are sending an increasing number of executives for overseas assignments and projects owing to the increase in global competitiveness, opportunities for global marketing, new market access possibilities, as well as a number of international mergers and acquisitions. Developing competencies to interact well with co-workers from other cultures is necessary for professionals who travel or are assigned job responsibilities overseas. For companies trying to remain competitive globally, the rise in cross-cultural interactions and overseas postings has produced a new issue. International and global managers must overcome several obstacles, including those related to cross-cultural leadership, personality issues, lifestyle concerns, language hurdles, and difficulties with written, verbal, and non-verbal communication. These obstacles can make expatriates fail. Over the past 10 years, cross-cultural training programs have become wildly popular in India and other nations due to the significance of these issues for both international competitiveness and corporate success.

The goal of cross-cultural training modules is to teach non-natives soft skills that enable them to better understand the subtleties of various cultures. To this end, they inform non-natives about important cultural differences, as well as about the health, safety, and environmental concerns specific to other cultures. Additionally, they teach non-natives coping skills and teach them about common reactions and emotions.

Many believe that kids may develop their attitudes, behaviors, and personalities from an early age and that educating their soft skills will accelerate their development as executives. Numerous organizations and independent training professionals also provide soft training programs for kids and teenagers to help people improve their social skills. There is also a rise in the extent of soft skill training for working executives in outbound locations in order to enhance team-working abilities and resolve interpersonal conflict in order to execute the job effectively. Outbound training programs, which are frequently referred to as adventure sports such as treasure hunting, trekking, camping, and raft racing are used to teach teams how to survive and escape from dangerous situations. Such trainings aid in the mending of divisions as well as the identification of leadership abilities in the most unexpected people.

The market for soft skill training programs has grown significantly as a result of the high emphasis put on employing the proper soft skills for performance by business and academia. The utility and impact of the training programs are also hot topics of debate. Soft talents may be learned in school via parental upbringing, cultural environment, or even through DNA, according to certain theories. The significance of this education, however, cannot be overstated, and businesses must do their part to assist staff members who have not had the opportunity to learn these skills. Programs for soft skill training may need to be customized to address the special talents of people in particular and important jobs. The most significant soft skill qualities that may be developed through soft skill training programs are the following.

The English language cannot be simply ignored or disregarded when discussing communication. According to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, English serves as India's window to the contemporary world and is used in nearly every aspect of human effort. The only language that allows us to see the advancements being made in the field of economics, science, and technology is English. Learning English may be quite difficult for students whose mother tongue is not English and who have received their education from a regional language-medium school. To succeed in the academic and professional sectors, students must acquire sufficient English language skills. The studies carried out on the importance of oral communication skills show industry professionals give utmost importance to communication skills. Out of the four fundamental skills to be acquired during language learning, communication skills are ranked as the most important. Speaking and presentation skills are actually thought to

be some of the finest career enhancers for determining whether a student's career would advance or collapse (Patil, 2013). A successful professional career requires effective interpersonal skills. Employers across all technical fields search for a variety of intangible skills, regardless of the role in which an employee is working. Strong interpersonal skills are required because an engineer's job involves more than simply technical work; they routinely communicate with clients and collaborate with other professionals.

The ability to effectively communicate verbally fosters leadership and self-confidence. Students will flourish intellectually and socially when they have self-confidence in their skills. It is crucial that they should develop original ideas by consulting sources outside of the community (4). One needs to develop strong oral communication skills in order to succeed academically and professionally. A poorly executed interview, sales presentation, or legal argument may have effects that go far beyond the speaker. One who has strong communication skills will be able to act with confidence in a variety of personal, professional, and academic settings. Verbal communication has transformed into digital in recent years thanks to video conferencing and other hi-tech tools and software. Training for verbal communication skills involves improving vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, pronunciation, and voice modulation. Voice and inflection might be included in verbal and non-verbal communication training courses because they are related to non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication is the process of exchanging messages non-verbally in order to communicate without using words. Gestures, postures, facial expressions, eye contact, dressing sense, hairstyles, and even signs and symbols are all examples of non-verbal signals. Since it may enhance a person's capacity to relate, engage, and create meaningful encounters in daily life, non-verbal communication is important in our lives. A deeper understanding of this mode of communication could help individuals form closer connections with others. Body language is commonly used interchangeably with non-verbal communication, despite the fact that body language is only one aspect of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal components such as paralanguage and speech training include crucial components such as rhythm, intonation, and emphasis, as well as voice quality and speaking style. Non-verbal components of written texts also include things such as word spacing, symbol and emoticon use, and the sort of writing medium or media utilized to convey the written information.

Having the capacity to write clearly and successfully for a variety of audiences is the major objective of business writing skills. Any writer who writes for business must write succinctly, logically, simply, accurately, with politeness, and with confidence in order to accomplish the assignment with the reader's goodwill and to send a clear and unmistakable message. Writing skills are one of the most important

qualities that employers look for in entry-level and junior management executives. Learning and developing business writing skills can help someone grow in their career. An organization runs smoothly when there is effective communication. Effective writing boosts productivity and enhances cross-functional collaboration, especially in today's expanding globalized workplace where teamwork is highly valued. Your ability to write effectively for business purposes will develop as you become more aware of its significance. Writing persuasively is an effective strategy for both internal and external communications. Professionals in sales and marketing are found to be successful in persuading people to buy the company's goods and services, or at least to pay attention to its promotions, through the tactful use of written words. Written communication skill training teaches participants how to write business letters, memoranda, claim letters, business and research proposals, reports, note-taking, minutes and agenda, developing reading skills, employment communication, and notices, among other essential business writing styles and rules. Technology has broadened the definition of written communication skill training to cover social networking site communication, the etiquette of sending fast messages, and the etiquette of writing successful emails. Business writing training approaches put a lot of focus on following a formal framework to communicate mastery of many sorts of writing, including conceptual comprehension and rigorous practice via written tasks. Although writing styles do alter throughout time, they tend to loosen up as a result of social networking sites and technology.

Leadership skills are essential for young creative minds. This facilitates productive and effective staff interaction. It contains the capacity to influence others to work in a specific direction, a safe environment, and general optimism. The act of influencing people to achieve a goal and directing an organization in a way that strengthens its coherence and cohesiveness is known as leadership. Drive, a desire to lead, honesty and integrity, self-assurance, intellect, grasp of the subject matter of the job, and extroversion are the seven characteristics that make a person a strong leader. Robbins and Coulter have rightly observed that leaders have a strong desire to succeed and work persistently to attain their goals. They establish relationships with their followers based on trust and show a willingness to accept responsibility. With their knowledge and self-assurance, they gather, analyze, and interpret vast volumes of information while persuading followers that their objectives and choices are the right ones (5). Leader like attributes leadership training is often given to top executives who are measured against business achievement through organized management programs, which is a different field of training in soft skills. Leadership training covers a wide range of subjects, including theories and models of leadership, the essential characteristics and behaviors of successful leaders, leadership communication skills, techniques for mentoring and counseling, training in motivation and social responsibility, and many more. It

also focuses on helping prospective leaders develop their own personal purpose and vision statements and come up with their own special management techniques that are inherent in people.

Self-awareness is the knowledge of one's feelings, sentiments, inner ideas, and individual rights. "Emotional intelligence refers to one's ability to be aware of one's own feelings, be aware of others' feelings, to differentiate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and behavior" (Salovey and Mayer, 1993). It also entails comprehending the feelings and thoughts of others. It teaches people to be aware of their own actions and how they influence others. Emotional competence, according to Daniel Goleman, is an "acquired talent based on emotional intelligence that culminates in great work performance." The five components of emotional intelligence are self-awareness, drive, self-control, empathy, and relational competence. People likely to have failures in their work if they do not develop emotional intelligence (EI). They either struggle to overcome unpleasant workplace situations or are unable to find possible solutions, which puts their family and career in jeopardy. These people never respond favorably to their counterparts nor do anything productive. Even unintentional actions may be taken personally by them. They are generally deprived of success at work by these kinds of circumstances. Numerous studies have demonstrated that those leaders who have greater levels of EI are the most effective in businesses. Because employers value EQ as important as IQ, it is unquestionably a crucial component of the soft skills that professional students should learn.

Emotional intelligence is viewed as a great way to improve an organization's environment, culture, leadership, and team dynamics. As a result, it is viewed as a valuable tool for improving an organization's environment, culture, leadership, and team dynamics. Through the use of validated EQ instruments, self-awareness training programs seek to provide participants with the skills to increase their emotional intelligence (EQ), allowing them to work together and share their own learning experiences. Participants can better understand their own behavioral patterns by observing how they are feeling and how they react to underlying emotions.

Many personality development specialists and psychotherapists teach assertiveness, and it is the subject of many popular self-help books. It is associated with self-esteem and is seen as a crucial behavioral ability. You can explain yourself clearly and defend your viewpoint by being assertive. It can also support you in doing this while respecting the rights and opinions of others. Additionally, being assertive can help you increase your notion of self and gain respect from others. This can aid with stress reduction. If you hesitate to say no and find yourself taking on too many responsibilities, it might be extremely helpful to you in reducing stress. Assertive people can freely communicate their feelings, thoughts, and desires, postulate their rights,

and regulate their anger. This doesn't mean they can repress their emotions; rather, it means they can control them for the time being. Programs that teach assertiveness cover topics including managing sensitive criticism, expressing oneself, and resolving conflicts amicably in circumstances that call for assertive behavior and sound judgment.

The process of organizing and planning how to spend your time between different activities is known as "time management." When you have to accomplish more in lesser time, effective time management allows you to operate more efficiently and deliver more in less time. Failure to manage time reduces effectiveness and increases stress. Furthermore, it is the ability to effectively organize and arrange one's work in order to complete tasks as quickly as possible while using the least amount of time, energy, money, and personnel. In today's world, time is regarded as a highly perishable notion. Time is irreversible, which is why it is critical to invest in training in this area. Identification of time wasters, goal-setting, priority-setting, getting organized, and using organizers and other gadgets to help manage time are all concepts covered in time management training. Stress management and problem-solving training are intimately linked to time management training.

Presentation skills refer to the ability to provide excellent presentations in small or big groups by describing and demonstrating the content of a topic to an audience. "Speaking to or addressing a group of people in a structured, smart, and intentional manner with the goal of informing, influencing, or amusing a listening audience" is what public speaking is all about. In order to deliver an effective presentation, one must have a solid grasp of the subject matter, strategic planning, awareness of the audience, a command of voice modulation, sufficient understanding of non-verbal cues, time management, communication mastery, active listening, and good reading habits. Delivering presentations differs from giving public speeches in that the former is typically done for a business purpose to influence the audience to do a specific action, such as responding or reacting in a certain way. The three steps of preparation, audience analysis, delivery, and question management are all included in today's presenting skills training, as well as oratory and non-verbal communication elements including gestures, expressions, voice control, intonation, vocabulary, and posture. The core of presentation skills training is verbal and non-verbal communication abilities.

Problem-solving techniques are defined as "The self-directed cognitive behavioral process through which a person seeks to uncover or develop effective or adaptable ways of coping with troublesome situations encountered in everyday life" (6). Social issue-solving training aims to build a functional understanding of coping and to view problem-solving as a deliberate, logical, laborious, and intentional action in order to avoid becoming stuck by difficulties. As a result of a mental process, decision-making is the capacity to select an appropriate and timely plan of action

from the available possibilities (cognitive process). Some of the subjects covered in problem-solving training modules include selecting the best approach to achieve a conclusion, developing a SWOT analysis, making decisions, planning and organizing, and finally executing and addressing issues. One of the most well-known problem solving models created around the idea of issue resolution based on management books and research models is six thinking hats, which is based on Edward de Bono's book "Six Thinking Hats," which advances the notion of lateral thinking. Problem-solving is a fresh method for learning how to use the left and right hemispheres of the brain to their maximum capacity to find original and understandable solutions to a variety of problems. The disaster simulation exercise, also known as the desert survival exercise, is another problem-solving training module that challenges participants to find creative solutions and make the best use of available resources in challenging circumstances in order to escape dangerous scenarios.

A team is a group of people who have complementary and equivalent talents that work together to execute a task, job, or project. Team members share leadership and accountability for self-management within the group, and they are very interdependent. The performance of a team is up to its members, who are also anticipated to cooperate toward a shared objective and gain from the team's triumphs. A team is considered effective when there is a strong feeling of shared commitment, when synergy happens, and when the team produces results that are superior to the sum of the individual efforts. The organizational structure places a significant focus on teamwork, and individuals who prefer to work in a group are given preference over those who prefer to work individually. Through the fusion of ideas and constructive effort from all team members, the attitude of working in teams, together with knowledge on how to develop and manage teams successfully, helps provide the greatest performance. Among the topics covered in teamwork training programs are how teams are created, cross-team and intra-team cooperation, diversity, productivity, goal-setting, and team performance management. The purpose of team-building training interventions is to enhance each employee's comprehension of team dynamics, increase accountability in teamwork, increase individuals' flexibility by teaching them how to work in teams, and assist people in putting their attention on group goals rather than organizational performance and productivity. The identification and development of participants' leadership potential as well as their advantages and drawbacks as team leaders are the main goals of higher-level team management training. Participants in teamwork training can set specific team goals, maintain a productive and cooperative teamwork environment, communicate with skilled team members, and exercise value-based team leadership.

The ability to recognize conflicts and to deal with them wisely and successfully in order to fulfill tasks is referred to as conflict management. Conflicting parties

frequently downplay an issue's significance or deny its existence to avoid dealing with it (7). In a corporate setting, it usually entails efficiently addressing problems, communicating, and negotiating to achieve organizational objectives. A key component of the conflict management process is identifying the strategies for coping and managing workplace conflict, such as accommodating, where opposing parties minimize their differences and focus on areas of commonality to achieve organizational goals, and competing by prioritizing self-interest and disregarding the interests of others. Other skills learned as part of conflict management training include verbal and non-verbal communication, as well as written communication to some extent, assertive skills, problem-solving skills, negotiating skills, self-awareness, corporate etiquette, and teamwork abilities. Lecture discussion, brainstorming, roleplaying, and simulation games are all used in conflict management training. A program for conflict management can be judged to be effective if there is a reduction in workplace disputes, an increase in collaboration, and evidence of a positive and productive work environment.

Business etiquettes are the set of rules that explain how to behave properly in a corporate environment. We can communicate more effectively and establish mutual trust between us if we make others feel at ease and help them feel the same way. In order to achieve this comfort zone, we must successfully convey ourselves. Therefore, it is crucial for everyone to practice and become proficient in corporate manners and etiquette to establish cordial relationships with clients, customers, employers, or co-workers. This is especially true for young aspirants who dream of entering the corporate world as professionals (8). Learning about business etiquette encompasses all aspects of corporate social interaction, such as self-presentation, communication, courtesy, and hospitality, as well as norms of expectation in interactions between co-workers, employees, and clients. The benefits of corporate etiquette training are projected to include improved personal branding, better customer service, a wiser and more presentable workforce, and a smarter workplace. In terms of workplace performance, improved etiquette is supposed to help workers be more productive in job scenarios that necessitate meeting people and engaging in face-to-face conversations through formal training.

Business etiquette establishes the standards of behavior that allow for successful social interactions. Interaction with external contacts such as vendors, clients, and suppliers is included in office etiquette. The notion of image management, which focuses on image construction through deliberate and methodical self-presentation at work, at business and social meetings, and on social networking platforms, including online platforms, has recently been added to the scope of business etiquette training. The usage of formal and informal dress, accessories, and personal grooming are all recommended methods for

image management. The etiquette of fine dining and wine etiquette, social skills for business-related socializing, diversity training, cross-cultural communication, personal grooming, business clothing, and gender sensitivity are all topics covered in business etiquette training. Grooming, too, is equally important, which is defined as taking care of one's appearance, and it is the most significant aspect of soft skills since how well one takes care of oneself reveals a lot about one's personality. Even before we have a chance to demonstrate our abilities, we are appraised based on our appearance and attire during an interview. During an interview, for example, wearing clean, ironed clothes and proper shoes demonstrates a student's desire to work for the organization. If a student is not dressed appropriately, they are typically regarded as careless and irresponsible.

Today, all recruiters expect their employees to be quite proficient in English communication skills. Since both language and soft skills are crucial for the graduates' future jobs, it is imperative to improve both while teaching English in professional colleges. The goal of teaching English in the twenty-first century is to build intra- and interpersonal skills, or, in other words, the so-called soft skills that are essential for social participation, professional success, and personal growth. Our capacity to efficiently and effectively navigate through life can also be influenced by these attributes. If soft skills are included in the curricula and syllabi, students would find it easier to work effectively in their workplace. In this regard, it is quite pertinent to prepare teachers to provide soft skill training to students in professional colleges. They must provide a good example for their students in terms of the numerous soft skills attributes they demonstrate during the teaching hours. Teachers must employ a suitable tone, pitch, body language, and readability when using language. Various training programs are to be organized for the teachers to make themselves aware of the requisite soft skills needed for employees for workplace effectiveness. To nurture the skill sets of the students as per the industry needs, teachers must switch the classroom from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. There must be major changes in the way academic curricula are structured and teaching methods are adopted, and most importantly to motivate the teachers to accept and implement changes. The current situation serves as a wake-up call for the entire teaching community, pushing them to adjust themselves to the shifting demands and expectations of the employment sector.

Conclusion

Soft skills have existed from the beginning of human contact. People either learn it on their own or by seeing others succeed. Soft skills were not much talked about even a decade ago. With time, individuals have begun to recognize the value of soft talents and have begun to consider them. Regardless of industry, soft skills are just as

crucial as traditional hard skills. Soft skills are important since they complement hard skills and must be nurtured in a balanced way. In both personal and professional life, soft skills are extremely important. Because soft skills and personality development go hand in hand. Employment sectors have begun to recognize the value of soft skills and are investing in soft skill training for their employees. They want to see more people with diverse soft skill attributes at work. Identifying and improving one's soft skills, as well as upgrading them from time to time will help one grow in life. We might conclude that students' struggles in acquiring the necessary soft skills are mostly due to their poor academic experience. From Kindergarten to Class X, a student spends roughly 12 years in school. We all know that instead of promoting life skills, schools place a strong emphasis on disciplines such as math, physics, chemistry, and biology. Promoting effective life skills instruction in schools would be a way to support them at crucial life phases and assist them in realizing their full potential. Since recruiters put a lot of emphasis on soft skills, our educational institutions must encourage students in developing them. To fulfill the needs of the future workforce in employment sectors, soft skill training programs should be specifically designed. To promote stronger industry institute collaboration, industry partners should be encouraged to take part in curriculum and course development. This will definitely help to narrow down the gap between what is being taught and promoted at the institution's level and what the employment sectors need in their future workforce. This article also highlights the importance of modifying the curriculum as per the industry standards to better meet the requirements of a rapidly changing society.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

References

1. Watts M, Watts R. *Developing soft skills in students*. (2008). Available online at: <http://108.cgpublisher.com/proposals/64/index.html> (accessed January, 2022).
2. Kavita. *Young India lacks soft skills: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Survey*. (2011). Available online at: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/a-survey-finds-a-majority-of-graduates-lack-adequate-soft-skills-to-be-employed/1/134857.html>
3. Raman M, Prakash S. *Business Communication*. New Delhi: OUP (2006).
4. Joseph PB, Efron S. Seven Worlds of Moral Education. In: Sadker DM, Zittleman KR editors. *Teachers, Schools, and Society A Brief Introduction to Education*. New York: McGraw-Hill (2009). p. 5–6.
5. Robbins S, Coulter M. *Management*. New Jersey: Pearson Education (2012).

6. D'Zurilla TJ. *Problem-Solving Therapy: A Social Competence Approach to Clinical Intervention*. New York, NY: Springer (1986).
7. Brown LD. *Managing Conflicts in Organizational Interfaces*. Boston, MA: Addison-Wesley Longman Publishing Company (1983).
8. Raman M. *Soft Skills: Cornerstone of Professional Success*. New Delhi: Jain Brothers (2009).
9. Anju A. A holistic approach to soft skills training. *IUP J Soft Skills*. (2009) 3:7–11.
10. Antony O. The role of the English teachers: an overview. *Int J Soc Sci Interdiscipl Res*. (2012) 1:227.
11. Choudhury K. *Young India lacks soft skills: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Survey*. (2011). Available online at: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/a-survey-finds-a-majorityof-graduates-lack-adequate-soft-skills-to-be-employed/1/134857.html> (accessed May, 2022).
12. De Bono E. *Six Thinking Hats*. Cambridge, MA: Little, Brown and Company (1956).
13. Goleman D. *Why It Can Matter More than*. Bloomsbury: Bloomsbury Publishing (1995).
14. McPheat S. *Emotional Intelligence*. Mysore: MTD Training (2010).
15. Pawar, Rajendra S. *India: From an outsourcing hub to a global repository of talent*. London: The Economist Issue (2006).
16. Peggy K. *Dimensions of Soft Skills; Soft Skills Get Little respect, but Will Make or Break Year Career Chapter*. Italy: G20 Summit (2016).