

**SOFT SKILLS – THE LEADING PATH TO THE GENERATIONS OF THE DAY**Tummala Sai Mamata¹, Lanke Subha²¹ (Lecturer in English, Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada-8)² (Lecturer in English, Andhra Loyola College, Vijayawada-8)**ABSTRACT**

In the globalised and competitive world every company looks for the candidates who would dab hand at something. The aim of multinational companies is to search for people who would leave no stone unturned. They need people who would move heaven and earth to hit a home run. It's the duty of an individual to make himself ready to compete in the cutthroat competitive world. A part from the basic skills like communication skills, hard skills and so on, a student needs to groom himself with Soft skills, which include the overall personality development and makes him ready to face the challenges in the working atmosphere. In spite of the high Intelligent Quotient many job seekers are lacking Emotional quotients, which is a vital part for them to succeed in their working arena. They have to know how to tackle their position in a team, adapt to the surroundings, assert themselves to the situations and solve problems by balancing their emotions.

Keywords: *Stress, Emotional Disturbances, Adaptability Skills, Assertive Skills, Team Work.*

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Human beings are the only species on this earth, who have the ability to think, reason and make informed judgments about observations and facts. Thoughts and thinking are natural, sometimes automatic mental processes that include reasoning, remembering imagining and reflecting. Man's

achievement in life is decided by his skills- hard skills and soft skills. These skills helps him to develop determine one's strengths as a leader, listener, negotiator, and conflict mediator. Hard skills help a person to get knowledge through education, experience and level of expertise. Soft skills help to



develop one's personality traits, social graces, and facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism which are needed for one's profession and personal achievement in life. For the students Soft skills help to develop positive attributes and competencies needed to maintain good relationships in the work place as well as in career success.

Soft Skills like communication skills, critical thinking, problem solving skills, creativity, team work, negotiating skills, emotional skills, and interpersonal skills are the needed traits for any individual to survive in this new era. A student needs to have a strong conceptual framework inbuilt within him for enhancing career prospects. So, he has to be trained in the skills of communication in English, correspondence, team-building, leadership, time management, group discussions, interviews and interpersonal skills. These skills empower them to understand "Who they are" "Where they are" and "What they are", so that they come to know how competent they are to face and solve any situation.

Soft Skills have two parts. One part involves developing attitudes and attributes, and the other part involves fine-tuning communication skills to express attitudes, ideas and thoughts well. Crucial to successful work is the perfect integration of ideas and attitudes, with appropriate communication skills in oral, written and non-verbal areas. Attitudes and skills are integral to soft skills. Soft Skills training has become a must for the students who want to go for job or higher studies. Soft skill is not a visible skill like the domain subject content in a student but it helps in improving the personality of the person. It gives finishing touch to the personality.

Hard skills are academic skills, experience and level of expertise while soft skills are self-developed, interactive, communicative, human and transferable skills. Literature suggests that hard skills contribute to only 15% of one's skills success while remaining 85% is made by soft skills. Soft skills are the skills of learning, how to be nice, how to play together, when and where to use our manners, the development of social graces, how to resolve conflict, how to express appreciation by learning to say 'please' and 'thank you,' developing attitudes of friendliness and optimism, learning how to use language in a way that persuades others. Soft skills

can lead students to grow up better, prepared for the world that awaits them.

Soft skills help in improving human potential. Soft skills for students increase their comfort level. It is the acronym for situational awareness, presence, authenticity, clarity and empathy. Team debates, team presentations and self-reflections are essential for developing soft skills. Soft skills training include lectures, projects, role plays, quizzes and various other participatory sessions. The emphasis will be on learning by doing. As the training should be experiential and highly interactive, the students will imbibe the skills and attributes in a gradual and subtle way and also internalize them over a period of time. Internalization ensures that the skills and attributes become a part of the students' nature, making them more self-assured and confident.

Soft skills include concepts such as problem solving, team work and adaptability to change. These skills are not necessarily graded in a traditional sense but might be assessed with analytical rubrics. The workforce profile defines 'Soft skills' as personal traits and skills that employers seek in employees for jobs of any type. Soft skills are intangible qualities required for full development of an individual. Grooming of the students with soft skills will enable them to successfully take part effectively in various selection procedures, and very many situations they are likely to come across in their professional careers and make them ready to get a head start in the corporate world.

The other vital skills are people skills which are helpful for the youth in seeking as well as maintaining good relations is the working environment. Among the people skills, the most important are Communication skills, Team work skills, Interpersonal relationship skills, Presentation skills, facilitating skills, Mentoring skills, Assertive skills, Adaptability skills and Problem solving skills. It is very important for individuals to develop these skills as they have to deal with different attitudes of people making their work peaceful. Though these skills are not new to the people as we have been inserted in our life right from our birth, it is only that we need to recognize the inherent characters and put them into practice. In this context it is apt to remember what Maya Angelou has said, "I have



learned people will forget what you said. People will forget what you did, but will never forget how you make them feel". It is true it is our feelings and emotions which make us to build good relations with people.

Though Communication skills stand first in today's world, they cannot work if a person fails to use them without the amalgamation of the other skills. However skills alone will never work on. It should be a series of practices of a set of values and attitudes. When people are compared to warm people, warm people are the better of the two. Warmth is a set of mind as a skill that develops the concept of being honest to themselves and being open to others. Genuineness is another vital point in interpersonal relationship. Among the people skills mentioned above Inter personal occupies a privileged status as they incorporate a number of vital skills necessary for the individual growth. Counseling skills help a person who is suffering from a temporary emotional crisis. The term counseling has different connotations to different people in different contexts. In ordinary terms it seems to mean advising, helping and giving guidance. In a broader professional sense, it focuses on the helping relationship which tends to eschew advice giving in favour of helping the other person to make a decision on his own.

Assertiveness is another key element and many people are ambiguous about the usage of the term as they take the meaning as 'being aggressive'. It was observed in a workshop that one man referred to assertiveness workshops as 'Courses for learning how to be rude to other people!'. But in general assertive person is the one who can clearly and calmly state what they want to say, doesn't like to look back and stands firm on their point. Heron (1986) has argued that when we have to confront another person, we tend to feel anxiety at the prospect and the anxiety tends to either 'pussyfoot' or 'sledgehammer'. In developing assertiveness it is very important that the person who needs to assert himself should be a role model for the others.

Team Work, group facilitation is another type of interpersonal skills. This process enables the groups to run effectively. Together people can achieve more things than individually. There is an

interesting story written by Pedro Pablo Sacristan which clearly shows the team works efficiency in achieving success. There was a great acrobatic balloon competition. The insects and the ants were preparing to win in the prestigious competition. Every insect in the garden had been training hard. There was only a short window of opportunity. Each time, the flying insects were favourable to win, because they could grab the balloon strings and fly off in all directions, creating all sorts of patterns in the air. However, on this occasion there were some rather unusual insects taking part: a group of ants. Of course, no one expected that they would do anything special. Ants were not so serious about their participation, but it was quite impressive to see all the ants perfectly organized and prepared.

The competition began and the insects took their turns performing beautiful maneuvers with the balloons. As naturally talented the butterfly and the firefly left everyone amazed with their twists and turns and wonderful colours. When it was the turn of the ants it seemed that there was no need for the ants to perform and the winner was almost decided. For the first time in living memory, the ants shared just one balloon between them, and one by one they climbed up the balloon string; forming a thin black thread of ants. When all the string was covered, the last ant climbed over his teammates to reach the balloon and climbed to the top of the balloon. This strange spectacle attracted everyone's curiosity to witness the amusing performance. The ant opened its jaws as wide as it could and then stabbed the balloon with all its might. Pssshhhhhhhhh! The result was amazing. The balloon began to blow out of its air, flying madly about here and there, doing a thousand pirouettes, while the perfectly synchronized ants made all kinds of beautiful shapes out of the string.

Though the acrobatic flight ended with quite a hard landing, it didn't matter. The originality of the team work of the ant performance was so exciting that the crowd didn't even have to vote for there to be a winner. Everyone in the garden could understand the team spirit that could make wonders. In the years to come, the balloon competitions were full of displays carried out by teams and they put on some wonderful routines; something those individual insects could never have achieved on their own.



Though the story seems to be simple, it gives an intense message of how a team can achieve success. In the globalized economy where one has no time to spend on his fellow beings, and continues his life as a sole individual, team work is a pipe dream. To fulfill the dreams it is must that every individual should learn to be a part of the group not as an individual member.

Aristotle rightly said about the emotions 'Anyone can become angry-that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way –this is not easy". The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines emotion as 'any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion; any vehement or excited mental state'. Whoever they are or in whatever condition they are it is very important to see that the emotional feelings are not going to creep into the minds as they may destroy our personal charm. It is very important that one needs to have emotional self-awareness by improving their recognition and naming their own emotions, able to understand the causes of feelings and recognizing the difference between feelings and actions.

The methods and techniques to handle emotions are simple and easy. The only thing is one need to be conscious while maintaining the emotions. The following points are the key elements for controlling the emotions successfully.

- Better frustration tolerance and anger management
- Fewer verbal put-downs, fights and classroom disruptions
- Better able to express anger appropriately, without fighting
- Less aggressive or self-destructive behavior
- More positive feelings about self, school and family.

After the above mentioned skills, adaptability skills also play a vital role as they are very important for a person to adjust and work in the surroundings which are entirely new to them. Today in the globalised world it is quite natural that people need to adjust and work crossing oceans where entirely the cultures and traditions differ from their

motherland. The other key point they have to get used to is the problem solving skills. In order to solve a problem, the first thing that should be known is to identify the problem and see it through different perceptions, think of various solutions to come to a solution. It is very important to notice that all these skills are crucial and carry the same weight. As all the organs are equally important for the sustenance of life all these are important for the younger generation to be successful in the competitive world.

To put the above skills into practice it is very important that a person should first identify what he or she is. The famous Greek philosopher Socrates has used the term 'Know Thyself' which means 'know yourself'. Knowing about one's own is a lifelong process. It is very critical as there are multiple personalities put around the person at different times. In the present days, corporate life has become complex. When one knows about himself or herself it is easy to control their emotions, helps to take better decisions, helps to improve relationship, realize and improve potentials, experience happiness and joy and finally helps to reach the goal. William Shakespeare words should be reminded in this context, "We know what we are, but know not what we may become."

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