

Soft skills are crucial to learning

Knowledge along with receptivity is the need of the day

■ GIRIJA K.

"A right mix of technical and soft skills is important to see you through to the top", says career counsellor, V. Pradeep Kumar in a chat with THE HINDU.

Of what use are your engineering skills if you are rigid and not approachable for people needing a solution? Or you may be an efficient surgeon but if you cannot speak a word of hope with your patient even as his health is deteriorating, would your services be sought after? Right that machines have taken over but what good are the machines without a human touch?

Indian States today are producing a great number of engineers, doctors, advocates, chartered accountants, Management Graduates, artists in varied fields and professionals in innumerable other scholarly terrains. Innovative and technical skills have reached the summit today. But can we thump our chest with aplomb when it comes to an undocked employability?

A dusky picture

V. Pradeep Kumar, a Senior Management Professional from Bangalore, a Career Counsellor and a

prominent writer on leadership, Management, Economy and Education shares with THE HINDU, "A recent ASSCOM-McKinsey study showed that only one out of four engineering graduates is employable. NASSCOM in 2011 highlighted in its report, saying only 25 per cent of graduates working in IT firms are readily employable. Aspiring Minds, a consulting firm conducted an employability study last year and found that merely 4.22 per cent of engineering graduates are employable in product companies and only 17 per cent in IT services". He further adds, "as per report by Ernst and Young, job landscape in 2022, is in transition with a slowdown in employment in core sectors and the concurrent emergence of new engines of job creation. As per this, 9% would be employed in jobs that don't exist today and 37 per cent would be deployed in jobs that will have radically changed skill sets. And then there are reports that 20 per cent of teachers do not measure up to the standards of the National Council for Teachers' Education [NCTE], which presents another dimension for the rising disparity". We are stuck in the midst of a

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skill gap necessitating a switch in academic approach in Educational Institutes, Colleges and Universities both in technical and non-technical streams.

What are Soft Skills?

"Your customer does not care how much you know until he knows how much you care," quoted Damon Richards, an expert on customer care. An engineer or a medico today is valued more only when he gives a patient hearing, identifies himself with each problem and offers a solution and takes proactive decisions that envelope the benefit of a major section of the society. A management graduate is able to make an inroad into success only if he stabilises himself as a people's man rather than being inflexible. An advocate could win a loyal set of

clients with his ethical approach rather than a manipulative avenue.

A receptive attitude, a pleasant demeanour, an ability to positively convey and convince, to seamlessly connect to people in work space and be upbeat and helpful in lean situations are just a few personal attributes that are crucial for career success.

Training- the need of the hour

In a joint family set up of the earlier days, soft skills were acquired by youngsters in the family as a matter of course. Right from the childhood, there was a need to share, communicate, convince and adapt. Help was sought and offered in tough situations in the family and happy seasons were celebrated in a sharing and caring assemblage. However, as human lives drifted into a nuclear family set up, with each member, young and old alike fighting to reach the finish line each day, the warmth among members started to dim down. A practical approach and a logical brain replaced the human bond and emotional intelligence deeming it significantly important to train individuals to add a humane door to the robotic life. That's when a tutelage in

soft skills stepped in.

There is Good News

Good news is that more and more colleges in Karnataka are identifying the need to arm technical training with a coaching in soft skills. A host of programmes are being devised in colleges and students are being assessed appropriately. "Most of the Management Schools in the city are imparting soft skills as a part of their curriculum, technical institutions need to pick up though with suitable faculty development programs and a graded assessment of each student will do the job", opines Mr. Kumar.

Teaching time management techniques and leadership qualities while working in teams through Group Discussions, enhancing leadership qualities through frequent debates and power point presentations and imparting inter-personal skills and positive attitude through qualitative assessment techniques will go a long way in making our children industry-ready in the present scenario.

Praveen concludes by saying, "In today's globalised world, to be in a job, you need hard skills but to be effective in a job, soft skills are a must".

