THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN SOFT-SKILLS

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ABSTRACT
The competition for Jobs in multinational companies and various technical positions have made soft-skills a pre-requisite. The Engineering and Management students aspiring to become Professionals not only need academic and technical skills but also Soft-skills to meet the goals of the organization. In this paper the importance of training engineering students in soft-skills is the focal point. In most of the engineering colleges, more attention is on technical education related particular discipline. Even though there is need for equipping the students with technical knowledge yet the jobs in multi-national companies around the globe are looking for more. The Engineering students in various disciplines such as Information Technology, chemical Engineering, Automobile Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering etc are required to broaden their hard skills to enslave soft-skills.

Keywords: Soft-Skills; Engineering Students; Multinational Companies; Technical Skills

INTRODUCTION
With the entry of multi-national companies in India, there many employment opportunities at each level of entry. Even the recruitment process underwent revolutionary change. In our country it was first thought that academic-technical knowledge and certification are the only prerequisites for well paid jobs in MNC’s. But this is not right anymore, as there is unquestionable paradigm shift (a great and important change in the way it is done or thought about) in the needs of the multi-national companies. Organizations around the globe recognize that, in order to gain a competitive advantage. Their Employees need to know how to handle themselves at work and how to relate with their customer base, in order acquire this resourceful talent, soft-skills are needed.

Demand for Soft-Skills in Multi-National Companies
Even though India is a major provider of IT to the world. But most of the Engineering and Management Graduates in India are known for glaring lack of soft-skills, particularly in communication skills. Organizations expect not just hard skills which include academic and technical knowledge but also Thinking skills, Presentation skills, Negotiation skills and Time management skills etc.

Recruitment Scene in India
The Global economy has seen heavy growth especially in ITES -Information Technology Enabled services, Financial, Tourism and Production sectors. However this development is
slow because the effectiveness and growth of India's soft-skills has been constrained due soft skill crisis. As the employee base gets expanded year by year, the number of new hires need to sustain this growth rate have increased along with this situation.

The manpower recruiting agencies always report that the number of “employable engineering, technology, science and management graduates in India continues to be very low, this is truly a Paradoxical circumstance. There is excellent growth in well paying job opportunities, a large number of Engineering graduates are produced every year but majority of them do not have soft-skills.

**Hard Skills**

The Technical skills are called as Hard skills, Job aspirants must have proficiency in Hard skills comprising academic knowledge, expertise and practical exposure. Hard-skills are as important as Soft-skills which cannot be undermined.

**Soft-Skills**

The word soft skill is a sociological term referring EQ- the Emotional intelligence quotient of a person. Soft skills are also called as Interpersonal skills, Life skills, People skills, Employable skills, Personal habits, Friendliness, Optimism, Social graces, Personality development skills, Behavioral competencies. Soft skills are the abilities and skills that help to become a complete professional especially in corporate sectors around the globe. Human beings cannot manage life until they can manage emotions. Soft skills are necessary for all Employees. Soft skill is an Inter-disciplinary subject flavored with English language teaching, Psychology, Human Resource Management and sociology. When Human beings want to live a desired happy and successful life, then they must have good soft-skills along with hard skills. Academic and technical qualifications are easier to acquire but acquiring soft-skills is difficult. The soft-skills are divided into three major divisions

- English language communication skills (including both verbal and Non-verbal)
- Emotional skills (including both Personal and Inter personal)
- Thinking skills (including both Critical and creative)

The sub areas of soft-skills are

- Communication skills (English language communication skills)
- Presentation skills (English language communication skills)
- Selling skills (English language communication skills)
- Proactive skills (Thinking skills)
- Planning skills (Thinking skills)
- Self-understanding skills (Thinking skills)
- Time management skills(Thinking skills)
- Problem solving skills (Thinking skills)
- Stress management skills (Thinking skills)
- Personal effectiveness skills (Emotional skills)
Corporate culture skills (Emotional skills)

Professional effectiveness skills (Emotional skills)

What Organizations around the globe are looking in for?
The Multi-national companies always prefer to employ candidates who are productive from the early stages; those having good soft skills are promoted to higher level as they are considered as wealth producers. A skill is a perfect balance between Practice, knowledge and behavior. Soft skills equip us for, how to do, what to do and what not to do, in order to become a complete professional fit for corporate sector. In Job market in order to survive, candidates aspiring for good profile jobs must have to bring competitive edge that distinguishes from other competitors with similar qualifications, only then, they can get this competitive advantage by having soft skills. If the Engineering students master Soft-skills, then good companies will surely consider it an asset.

Training Students in Soft-Skills for Global Sector
The first step of soft-skills training is to raise the awareness about the importance of soft skills and the consequences of shortcomings in this regard. Students should be motivated to be trained in soft skills in latest training methods using Information Technology and advising to read dedicated books, attending courses, joining groups to broaden their horizon, like debating societies, who offer presentations and discussions. The best way is to incorporate soft skills training along with other subjects in the academics. On lower levels a training that requires students to undertake survey or research and present their results afterwards is an excellent idea that is quite effective. However, very often the syllabus is already overloaded with Technical syllabus, making hard to add on. Furthermore, other faculties may not be aware of the importance of soft skills and hence, may not extend their cooperation in imparting the soft-skills to the students in this regard.

OBJECTIVE
To stress the need of training engineering students in soft-skills

DATA ANALYSIS
A Survey conducted for purpose of this research in Andhra Pradesh showed that 70 % of the students who underwent soft-skills training while studying engineering have found better employment opportunities; 96% of survey respondents admitted that communication skills and interpersonal skills are the gate ways to achieve career success and the Hard-skills contributed to only 30 % success in getting employment in multi-national companies.

CONCLUSION
Considering the fact that the global demand for soft skills has increased globally, it now necessary for engineering students to acquire adequate Soft-skills beyond academic and technical knowledge. This is not particularly difficult. Once a shortcoming in specific area of soft skills is detected at oneself, there are numerous ways of filling up shortcomings. The Management and Faculties of Engineering Institutions have a special responsibility in imparting the Soft-skills training, which in turn has good effect on the Placements, Campus recruitment and Career of the students. Besides raising awareness regarding the importance of soft skills and encouraging students to improve their skills, It is more advisable that even all the Teaching and Non-teaching faculties in Engineering colleges should also actively get trained in soft skills. A very effective and efficient way of doing this is to include and
impart soft skills training along with hard skills right from the beginning of the academic course. As a positive side, effect the academic qualification will become very resourceful, which in turn can increase employability of the Engineering students.

REFERENCES


