



Significance of Soft Skills Development in Teacher Education

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Abstract

Soft skills are personal traits that enhance a person's interactions, job performance, and career viewpoints. Soft skills are considered to boost competency and to consequently upsurge one's ability in subsidizing communal progression and transformation. Soft skills are essential for all graduates to acquire, irrespective of their field of study. The understanding of soft skills itself is vital for lecturers to vary their teaching approaches for the students. As teaching becomes a two-way process, it will convert to being organized and operative with soft skills. This article discusses the same along with the role of teachers in enhancing students' soft skills and models for implementing soft skills in higher education.

Keywords: soft skills, effective teaching, communication, higher education

Introduction:

The people are living in multi complex society. They face several problems and burdens in their day to day life. These problems can be solved and burdens can be wiped out with the personal skills. The human beings should have soft nature to intermingle with the others. Anger, contempt, hastiness, selfishness and greediness are the qualities which push the man on the back foot. These qualities may hamper the personality developments. A person without personality can be treated as animal. Human beings are superior to animals with their wisdom and sense. The people fulfill their desires only with the help of others. To seek such cooperation, kindness, adjustment, cool thinking, suppression of agony, mutual assistance etc., would be helpful for a person to develop his personality.

These soft skills would assist the person for a creative thinking to develop

knowledge and proper decision making. The decision making is sensible and make a person to reach his goal and to mold his behavior. The proper decision makers would easily achieve their tasks and reach to the peak of their life. Considering the fact that during the last decades in society the perceived importance of soft skills has increased significantly. It is of high importance for everyone to acquire adequate skills beyond academic or technical knowledge. This is not particularly difficult. Once a shortcoming in a certain area of soft skills has been identified at oneself, there are numerous ways of rectifying such a deficiency. Educators have a special responsibility regarding soft skills, because during students' stay at College and University time they have major impact on the development of their students' soft skills, besides raising awareness regarding the importance of soft skills and encouraging students and human beings to improve their skills.



To live to the challenges of globalization which is in line with the era of information economy, the strength of nation is strongly dependent on the ability of its citizen to be highly intellectual and skillful. The development of human capital is thus important and necessary since it drives the nation to the envision vision and mission. Without a quality human capital, a nation will be weak as there is no human factor that is capable to embark on new initiatives and perspectives. A quality human capital comes from a quality education process. A carefully designed and well planned education system is critical to developing

relationships with other people. It plays a vital role in professional success of the individuals. They help the person to excel in his/her workplace. It is also called human skill and people skill, complementing the hard skill. They are the interpersonal and human relation skill. It refers to the cluster of personality traits such as social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism. An English Dictionary defines the term "soft skills" as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude." A classroom situation demands an effective use of soft skills. Teaching-learning, being a process of interaction and interpretation becomes meaningful and successful only in the presence and application of soft skills. The teacher helps the students acquire not only the right knowledge but also values, attitudes, habits and skills that are necessary to cope with the world of tomorrow.

TAXONOMY OF SOFT SKILLS

| Personal | Social | Content reliant/ Methodological |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning skills • Commitment • Professional ethics • Tolerance to stress • Self-awareness • Life balance • Cultural adaptability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Customer/user orientation • Teamwork • Leadership • Negotiation • Conflict management • Contact network | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creativity/innovation • Decision making • Analysis skills • Management skills • Adaptability to changes • Continuous improvement • Research & information management skills |

such human capital. Thus, institution of higher learning plays a very important role to produce a human capital that is highly knowledgeable and skillful to meet the demand and expectations of many people.

Soft Skills Definitions: Soft skills are personality traits and behaviours. Soft skills are technical or 'hard' skills, soft skills are not about the knowledge you possess but the behaviours you display in different situations. The soft skills are interpersonal skills which are used to describe your approach to life, work, and

In the same way, a pupil enhances his or her personality in relation with the experienced teacher. As the teachers are the torchbearers in creating social cohesion, national integration and a learning society, the colleges of education should provide formal professional training in soft skills to the prospective teacher-students on a continuous basic. They are necessary to become a good teacher as they cater to the development of one's personality and sharpening of communication skills and commitment to a code of ethics.



Soft skills are “the skills, abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude and behavior rather than to formal or technical knowledge” (Fleischer & Dressner, 2002). Soft skills are also called human skill and people skill, complement the hard skill. They are the interpersonal and human relation skill. The teachers’ soft skills and teaching competency plays a vital role in the 21st-century teaching learning process. Therefore the research problem is great significant in the modern context.

Need and Significance of the Study:

The soft skills are useful to every individual to mold his character. Co-operation, co-existence and co-ordination are the means of soft skills, because the soft skills can be achieved through the means mentioned above. The soft skills would be useful to the human being to solve the problems and decision making. Soft skills are identified to be the most critical skills in the current global job market and rapid development of education. Especially in a fast moved era of technology, the re-orientation of education which is one trust of education for sustainability also related the importance of these so called soft skills. The decision making is the pivotal steps in the human life. So the soft skills are useful to human being to lead a happy life on the basis of coordination, cooperation and decision making. The bundle of skills which help a person to perform a task better in a more satisfying way for both performer and spectator (in personal, professional and social life) To make a person to perform a task with better understanding of who, where, when, what, how, and with whom a job can be executed to deliver the best expected

results in perfect timing. If a person is not soft skilled what can happen?

Teaching is the noblest profession among all professions. It is a career that shapes the minds of tomorrow. It provides the students with the skills for survival. Teaching is a complex set of a task which demands the ability to understand, to communicate, to inspire and to motivate the students, to create patience, values, intelligence, enthusiasm, friendliness, personality, sense of humor and empathy. The concept of teaching has changed from the teacher-centered to learner-centered. They have become a facilitator than the instructor and the source of all knowledge. The teacher helps the students to acquire not only the right knowledge but also values, attitudes, habits and skills that are necessary to cope up with the world of tomorrow. Teaching-learning, being a process of interaction and interpretation becomes meaningful and successful only in the presence and application of soft skills and teaching competency in the classroom. Hence the teacher’s soft skills play a vital role in order to teach effectively in their classroom. Therefore the problem of the study is to investigate the Soft Skills of Prospective Teachers.

Review of Related Literature:

1. Bernd Schulz and *Polytechnic of Namibia (2008)* noted that importance of soft skills in students’ lives both at college and after college. It discusses how soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job the student is trained to do educators to take special responsibility regarding soft skills, because during students, university time, educators have major



influence on the development of their students' soft skills. Embedding the training of soft skills into hard skills courses is a very effective and efficient method of achieving both an attractive way of teaching a particular content and an enhancement of soft skills. Soft skills fulfill an important role in shaping an individual's personality. It is of high importance for every student to acquire adequate skills beyond academic or technical knowledge.

2. Li-Tze Lee and Tien-Tse Lee (2011) indicated that the Teachers are facing multi-dimensional changes in their roles constantly especially in a competitive society in Taiwan. Effective teachers should possess not only hard skills but soft skills. Compared with higher education focusing on knowledge delivery, elementary school education focuses not only knowledge but life education. How do teachers perceive their roles as teachers with respect with soft skills in the workforce? The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' perceptions of soft skills and participants were elementary school teachers in central Taiwan while Factor analysis, ANOVA, and t-test were used for data analysis. Six soft skills factors were identified as: positive attitudes, open-mindedness, interpersonal relationships, teamwork, communication skills, and creativity. In addition, teachers with different teaching experiences or educational levels hold different opinions with regard to interpersonal relationships and communication skills, respectively.

3. Vijaya Kumari S.N (2014) Teachers are the catalytic agents of change and focus in any society should be to provide Teacher Education of the highest quality. Quality Teacher

Education leads into Quality school Education. 'Soft Skills' are 'Personal Skills' comprising of personal attributes and inter personal abilities that drive one's potential for sustained growth, enhances an individual's social interactions, job performances and career prospects. High lighting the need of providing Soft Skills training for teachers the paper presents the findings of the study conducted on Secondary School Teachers. The study reveals that Soft Skills and Accountability are associated to each other and suggests to having the Quality School Education Soft Skills training should become an integral part of all Pre-services and In-service Teacher Education Programme to strengthen and sustain Soft Skills of the teachers directly and Accountability indirectly.

Objectives of the Study:

To assess the levels of soft skills of prospective teachers with respect to the following soft skills i.e., Critical thinking,

To find out the variables in critical thinking among B.Ed. Student Teachers concerning

- (a) Gender
- (b) Locality

Hypotheses of the Study:

The level of Soft Skills among B.Ed. Student teachers is moderate in nature.

1. There is no significant difference in Soft Skills of B.Ed. Student teachers concerning.

- (a) Gender
- (b) Locality

The Methodology of the Study Method: The researchers adopt the survey method to collect relevant data from desired areas. Population: A population is any group of individuals that have one or



more characteristics in common. The sample for the present study includes, the Student-teachers those who are studying in Private Colleges of Education in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh..

Sample size: In the present study one hundred B.Ed. Student Teachers were randomly selected by the random criteria.

Sampling Technique: The researcher used random sampling technique for selecting the sample.

Research Tools Used: The following research tool used for collection of data.

1. Soft Skill Inventory developed by Sasi Priya and Annaraja (2009).

Statistical Techniques Used: The following statistical techniques used to analyze the data:

Mean and Standard Deviation and t- test

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Showing Important Statistical Constants based on the scores of Soft Skills for the Total Sample.

TABLE 1 Whole Sample Data Analysis

| Whole | Mean | SD | Median | Mode | variance | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|-------|--------|------|--------|------|----------|----------|----------|
| 100 | 100.57 | 2.21 | 101 | 101 | 4.914 | -0.705 | 0.026 |

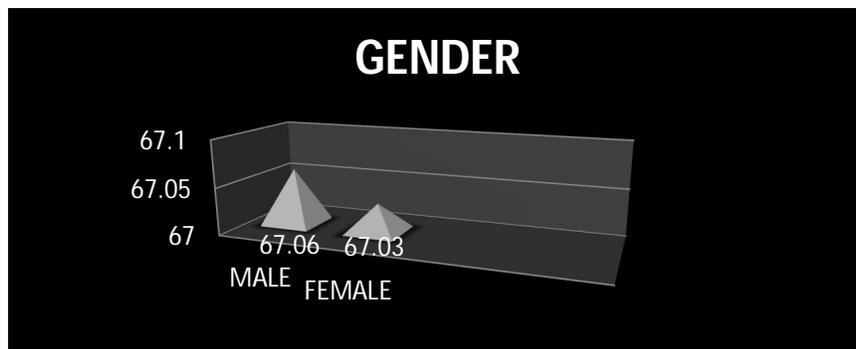
Discussion:

The Mean value of the professional ethics of secondary school teachers is 100.57. The Standard Deviation is 2.21, and variance is 4.91. The values obtained for Mean, Standard Deviation, and shows that the distribution is almost normal. The prospective teachers are having soft skills is more than above average.

Table 2 Critical thinking among B.Ed. Student teachers based on Gender

| Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | % of Mean | t-value |
|--------|----|--------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 40 | 100.60 | 2.11 | 67.06 | 0.10 |
| Female | 60 | 100.55 | 2.30 | 67.03 | |

GRAPH-1 Critical thinking among B.Ed. Student teachers based on Gender

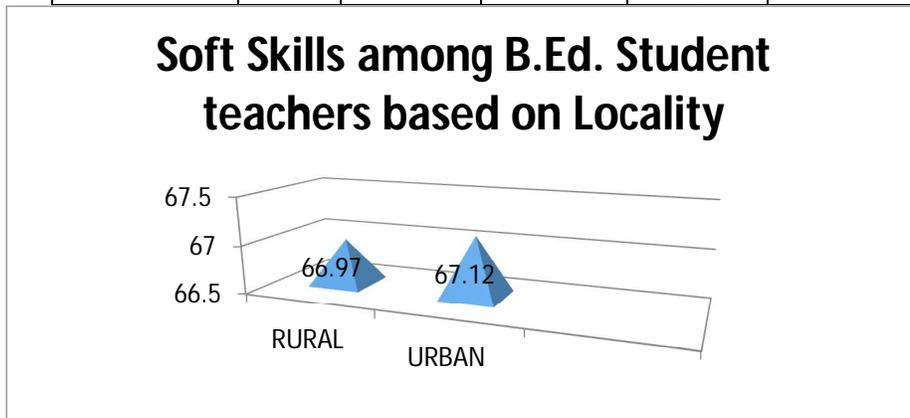




From the above table, the calculated 't' value is 0.10 lesser than the table value (1.96). It is found that there is no significant difference between the male and female B.Ed. Student teachers concerning their Soft Skills. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 2: Soft Skills among B.Ed. Student teachers based on Locality

| Locality | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | % of Mean | t-value |
|----------|----|--------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Rural | 50 | 100.46 | 2.37 | 66.97 | 0.49 |
| Urban | 50 | 100.68 | 2.07 | 67.12 | |



From the above table, the calculated 't' value is 0.49 lesser than the table value (1.96). It is found that there is no significant difference between the Rural and Urban B.Ed. Student teachers concerning their Soft skills. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

Major Findings of the Study:

1. The study result reveals that there is no significant difference between the male and female B.Ed. Student teachers concerning their Soft Skills.
2. It was found that there is no significant difference between the rural and urban B.Ed. Student teachers concerning their Soft Skills

Educational Implications

The present study is an attempt to find out the prospective teachers soft skills. The researcher has furnished some of the implications which will be highly useful for the educational institutions to improve soft skills. The educational institutions must conduct certain programmes to enhance prospective teacher's soft skills. Apart from these, management should create a conducive environment to create interest among the prospective teachers which in turn develop soft skills.

Conclusion:

Teachers need a wide range of competencies to face the complex challenges of today's world. Each teacher has different levels of skills, abilities and competencies due to their different levels



of teaching experiences and different educational background. Based on these differences, they will display different sets of motivation, commitment and engagement. In the area of educational research, the importance of affective skills in the teaching-learning process has been studied. A step further, a more holistic term 'Soft skills' has been gaining importance in the field of education also. But very little has been done in concrete terms to plan Soft Skills training in Teacher Education. Teacher possessing all these skills to a reasonable extent can be a competent teacher.

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