

The Value of Employability Skills in Sustainable Education

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Abstract: *Employability skills are necessary for an individual to be successful in the workplace as well as in sustainable education. The list of skills essential at different phases of life may differ, but all the skills that one should possess to make them marketable can be called as employability or employable skills. Though the origin of “employability” could not be dated exactly, the concern for “employability” has started since the previous century. Employability skills are those which need to be a part of a man or a woman throughout his or her lifetime. My chapter entitled “The Value of Employability Skills in Sustainable Education” throws light on the different types of skill which are expected by the employers from the candidates they recruit or from the employees who work in their organization. The ways of developing employability skills and the role of the government in elevating the status of the unemployable graduates is also presented here. The sustainable education should be skill based rather than knowledge based so that it will be easy for all students to study faster and appreciate better. Staying ever happy is a state of mind and requires lots of experience, skills and knowledge. Being a multi skilled person, one needs a lot of investment in self and ability to convert problems into opportunities and thus into happiness.*

Key Words: *Sustainable, employable, skills, knowledge, investment, opportunities.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Mahatma Gandhi has quoted “Live as if you were to die tomorrow/Learn as if you were to live forever.” An intelligent student, who is comfortable just in reading books, can also study virtually. But a student, who learns better practically, will not be able to study appropriately just by reading. The reorientation of education which is one conviction of education for sustainability also relates the importance of the so-called skills. The term ‘skills’ is being used to describe the art and mechanism of human being that are subjective in nature, such as creative thinking, dealing with people issues, coaching for performance, and so on. The inculcation of skills among the students will be two-pronged: to produce quality human capital and to develop their knowledge, understanding, values and skills as well.

Employability skills are capability of individuals as per the requirement of the employers and the ability to perform the tasks thereby achieving organizational goals and objectives. Employability skills refer to specific skills essential for employment. They are composite skills (technical and non-technical). These are the critical tools and qualities required to perform tasks at workplace. These skills are much required after these days by employers. The needs of employability skills are different in different industries. As IT industry needs different skill and hotel industry needs different skill. However, certain skills qualities such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, and truthfulness, right attitude, analytical skill, decision-making and team building skills are a few which are common and basic skills for every sector. Employability skills in sustainable education help individual to identify, articulate and develop the skills they need to gain employment, remain employed and be successful in employment at any stage in their working life. The Basic Employability Skills in my paper have been acknowledged through U.S. department of Labour’s secretary’s commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) in partnership with educators, business, and industry representatives. The employer agreement about employability skills Diverse workplace requires different employability skills hence it is very difficult to define employability skills. Surprisingly applicant’s academic capability in education may get less value that of non-academic skills like keenness and obedience .

Cotton reported that many of employers would prefer that secondary and higher secondary schools take a step beyond fundamental academics and include the teaching of higher level affective skills their curricula. Schug and Western stated that schools are always focusing simply on academic goals. It is extremely difficult to establish a harmony as to which specific employability skills are commonly considered the most essential by today's employers.

However, in reviewing surveys conducted by others as well as business and government-based studies, a general list is constructed. For example, Poole Identified "critical employability skills" listed within nine categories and those skills focused solely upon one attribute - human relations. Schwartz categorizes list of "job readiness skills" under three headings:

- a) Academic Skills;
- b) Vocational Skills;
- c) Work-Related Habits and Attitudes

Our countries economic strength, vitality, productivity and international competitiveness depend upon our ability to build and maintain a quality workforce. The establishment of quality workforce rests with ability of our countries schools system to supply basic reading, writing and mathematical skills as well as appreciation for work ethics. The objectives of present work were framed based on above background to study the attainment level of basic employability skills among secondary students. Also, the present paper intended to study the outcome of socio-economical factors such as Gender, Area of Schools, Type of Schools and Medium of Schools on attainment level of basic employability skills .

Education plays an important role in achieving both rapid and sustainable economic development, as also in sustainable human development. Sustainable development requires sustainable educational development. Only a strong and vivacious education system can contribute to employability skills in sustainable society. Recognizing this, India has made during the post independence period constant efforts to develop education. As a result India has one of the largest education networks in the world. It has helped in achieving self-sufficiency in manpower. All this has contributed to social, economic and technological development. Education is a vital tool for achieving a sustainable future. This has been well recognized by independent India. As a result, during the post independence period, there has been an educational blast in terms of number of schools, colleges, universities, number of "students, teachers and public expenditures on education. The overall literacy rate has jumped fourfold during the post-independence period from 16.7 per cent in 1951 to 65.4 percent in 2001. The number of students is above 200 million in 2000-01, compared to about 25 million in 1951. India has one of the major networks of education institutions in the world, with more than 250 universities, 12,000 colleges and nearly a million schools (126 thousand secondary schools, 206 thousand upper primary schools and 640 thousand primary schools). More than three-fourths of the children of the suitable age-group are enrolled in primary and upper primary schools. Higher education has also extended, and in the recent years and it has been able to produce the third largest reservoir of scientific and technical manpower in, the world. However, much remains to be achieved. One third of the population is still Illiterate; elementary education is still far from being universal, vocationalization of secondary education has not progressed at the pace the country wanted and needed; and hardly ten percent of the youth (of the eligible age group for higher education) are in higher education institutions. Dropout rates are towering in school education. Quality of secondary and higher education needs substantial perfection. Efforts are needed to reach the unreached. As cited by De Ridder, the school reform most needed to support student learning and retention is curricular reform which emphasizes the addition of academic concepts with real world problems and job related tasks, using flexible teaching methods. All instruction should emphasize those learning processes and values which sustain life and work skills: cooperation, team problem solving, communication, decision making, commitment, and confidence in abilities sufficient to express one's own ideas and approaches. Educational reform is taking place. Efforts have been made to reduce truancy and dropout rates, introduce computer literacy and foreign languages in the early years, establish after school programs, require more basic academic courses for a high school diploma, extend the school year, and enhance job-readiness programs with joint partnerships between business and industry. Today's schools must determine new standards, curricula, teaching methods, and materials. Teachers and schools must begin early to help students see the relationships between what they study and its applications in real-world contexts. It is not true that everything we need to know in life we learned in kindergarten; it is true, however, that we can begin very early to learn what life requires. If they are taught employability skills, students in the schools of tomorrow will find the content more relevant and challenging. Teachers will find their classes to be more helpful and interested. Employers and college officials will be delighted with the results because the curriculum will be tied to real things in the real world. By teaching employability skills, our schools will soon become schools of tomorrow. The objectives of my present paper are to study the attainment level of basic employability skills among secondary students. To study the effect of socio-economical factors such as Gender, Area of Schools, Type of Schools and Medium of Schools on attainment level of basic employability skills, an emphasis is given on sustainable education. For the purpose of study the role of school teachers is to teach basic employability skills.

The presentation of the skills reflects the employability of an individual. The expression of skills should be at its best while preparing one's curriculum vitae and during interview. There are certain key words and terms which attract the employers if present in the C.V such as enthusiasm, flexibility, willingness to learn, and cooperation. At the same

time, it is compulsory that these skills or traits are reflected through the answers in the interview. It becomes clear that only proper demonstration of skills will bring in the transition from “employability” to “employment.”

Employability is not shooting up science and cannot be developed overnight. Employability can be acquired by an individual through continual learning. Simple learning helps an individual in acquiring knowledge, but skills could be developed only through “experiential learning.” In other words, we can say that skills get developed only when it is put in practice. Researchers have acknowledged that one of the ways of enhancing skills is through participating in extracurricular activities in schools and colleges and through work experience. This has become one of the reasons for the competent schools in the current time to include “personality development” sessions and “activity-oriented learning” as a part of their curriculum. When an individual’s behaviour get moulded right from the young age, the candidate becomes career ready at a later stage. The other way of structure employability is through work experience. Irrespective of the size and type of the organization as well as the nature of work, experience in a workplace will surely help an individual to gain certain skills that are essential for getting employed. This fact has paved way for including “internships” as a part of the curriculum in some of the courses. “Apprenticeship” offered by some of the organizations for fresh graduates are also to train people and make them employable to the next level. Apart from this, individuals can register themselves for courses on employability or take part in workshops and conferences that could enhance skills. But, beyond the mode of equipping skills, involvement, enthusiasm, and commitment of the person plays a vital role in enhancing the employability. Employers wish to recruit not a set of skills but a human being with the necessary set of skills. Hence, attitude and interest level of a person matters a lot. A belief very common in the corporate world is that if an individual has the right attitude, he or she can be trained for skill.

“India is not facing the problem of unemployment but unemployability,” said our former President Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam. The reason behind this account is that though there is a hectic demand for the employees, employers could not meet the demand due to the lack of skills in the individuals. The reports also reflect the same, stating that only 25% of engineering graduates and 15–20% of arts and science graduates possess employability. This small percentage of employability forces the state to report that educational institutions are churning out only degree holders and not employable graduates. To overcome this situation, a number of measures have been taken by a variety of bodies. The universities struggle to include employability training in regular curriculum and many of them have brought it into force. Universities have also stimulated the affiliated institutions to carry out training programs and workshops to improve the skills of students. Moreover, the government has taken efforts to increase the employability by introducing National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC).

Effective Communication is the gift to express both verbally and non-verbally, in ways that are culturally acceptable. It also includes successful listening, speaking reading, writing, acting and gestures etc. Facial expressions and body language convey more than what is expressed through words. Critical Thinking is the ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner and perceive the total situation with logic and reasons. Without being swayed by mis-information or false information, if one tries to seek reasons and tries to determine the correctness and authenticity of each issue many a problems can be done away with. Creative thinking enables us to explore available alternatives and various consequences of our actions and non-actions. The intuitive urge influences one to do things in a novel way with adequate originality, elaboration, fluency as well as flexibility. Decision making is the ability to estimate information and take informed decision by assessing the advantages and disadvantages of different options. It helps us to deal constructively with decisions about our lives. It involves goal setting, future planning, exploring new options and changing decision to adapt to new situations. Problem solving is the ability to identify the problems, their causes and assessing the impact of different solutions as well. This skill enables us to deal constructively with problems that arise in our lives, because significant problems that are left unattained can caused mental stress and physical strain. The social milieu is also important factors which develop these skills. Home environment, quality family life and parent’s education are some important major social factors which contribute a major role to acquire these skills. For urban background, all these factors are present substantially than that rural and semi-urban background. Hence secondary students from urban schools are more prominent in the reading and listening skills. Secondary students from rural area scores high level of attainment of writing, high order thinking skills and personal qualities and skills. Major students from rural area are belonging to lower middle and socially and economically backward area. Most of Parents are working in small scale industries. Situation is changing. Parents from rural area are keen on the educating their wards to the level possible to provide a better future for them. Due to measures taken by government they are being brought into the main stream of life. Also teachers from rural schools are functioning hard to make the students learn better. The general criticism is that students from rural schools are poor in academic skills. When compared to the students in urban and semi-urban areas naturally, one may presuppose the presence of positive attitude towards basic employability skills in urban and semi-urban students. The present study shows that students in rural areas are better in writing skills, higher order thinking skills and personal skills. It may be because of the pull of certain other intellectual, social, emotional and linguistic factors found in them. Though the most of parents of rural students are either uneducated or lower educated, the attainment level of basic employability skills is not influenced by parental education.

2. SUMMARY:

So, life skills through the employable eligibility are considered an empowerment tool in developing skills, values and attitudes among the adolescent students. The value of life skills in developing study skills was not studied holistically. Many researchers attempt to understand the impact of life skills and also the inter linkage of life skills, study skills and academic performance through sustainable education.

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