

**LEVEL OF AWARENESS AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS  
ON THE SOFT SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE GLOBALISED WORLD**

**Edward David\* & Dr. M. Vakkil\*\***

**Abstract**

The challenges of globalisation in the contemporary period make the institutions of higher education to strive hard to create employable graduates as productive human capital. In India the rate of under-employment and unemployment of graduates keeps on increasing because the academic and technical skills provided by such educational institutions are not sufficient to fulfil the demands of the workforce; more, hard-skills alone do not guarantee future job perspectives of undergraduate students. The recent review of literatures vividly reflects that the lack of soft skills is one of the major causes for unemployment and under-employment of the graduates. In this context, a survey was conducted to find out the level of awareness of the undergraduate students on soft skills such as time management, communication, interpersonal teamwork, work ethics, digital literacy, crisis management, emotional intelligence, and human resource management. 450 undergraduate students from three degree colleges in Bangalore were selected as sample, by simple random sampling method. The findings of the study revealed that the awareness of undergraduate students on soft skills was low.

**Keywords:** Soft skills, Employability, Unemployment of graduates, Awareness level.

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\*Research scholar, Department of Education, Periyar University, Salem-636011, Tamilnadu

\*\*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Periyar University, Salem-636011. Tamilnadu  
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**Introduction**

The competitive globalised world poses numerous challenges to the job-seeking undergraduate students passing through the portals of various colleges and universities. The global working environment prefers undergraduates with blended knowledge of technical expertise with soft skills. The soft skills training will develop the relationship level of the leaders at various levels of the organization (Pereira & Costa, 2017). Since the globalisation challenges affect all sectors including education, the employability program should be focused on the soft skills required for the job with a contextual approach (Aida, Norails; Rozaini, 2015). The increasing demands of the globalised economy insist that institutions of higher education must empower the undergraduates with soft skills (Gibb Stephen, 2014). In India quite a few of the undergraduates suffer from unemployment and under-employment mainly due to the absence of soft skills. In the year 2015, the first integrated national policy for skills development and entrepreneurship

was announced in India. This research paper is an attempt to study the awareness of undergraduate students on soft skills.

### **Review of Literature**

The descriptive study of Sunita Mangla (2018) assessed the challenges and reasons for unemployment and it revealed two major reasons, namely, the outdated curriculum with outmoded pedagogy and lack of knowledge of soft skills. Vanitha and Jaganathan (2018) analysed the gap between the employability perceived by the employers and the skills actually possessed by the students. The study of Selvi, Anitha, and Padmini (2018) focused on employability of engineering students and on enhancement of employability opportunities and skills, while the conceptual paper of Santhi (2018) suggested some teaching methods such as lectures, case study in order to enhance the employability skills of the students. Jagdish Prasad (2017) made an exploratory research based on the secondary data related to Make-in-India program of the Government of India announced in 2014. It revealed that the future course of action to reduce the gap between demands of skills required and existing skills. Muralidhar Reddy and Hanuman Kennedy (2017) conducted a survey to find out the perception of the employers on employability skills. The employability program of the graduates must focus on the soft skills needed for the job with a contextual approach since globalised challenges are affecting all the sectors including education (Aida, Norails and Rozaini, 2015). Esa, Ahmad; Padil, Suhaili; Selamat, Asri; Idris, Mohammad Talha Mohamed (2015) revealed that knowledge of soft skills was very relevant in the job market. The technical graduates and polytechnic graduates were expert in technical skills but lack far behind in the soft skills needed for employment (Mahesh Kumar; Santhosh Kumar, 2015).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Every year higher education institutions in India attempt to enhance the quality of graduation study to create productive human capital in the society. The existing graduate education lacks to guarantee employment opportunities, sustainability, and growth in the competitive job market. The literature review of recent years reveals the fact that the awareness level of the undergraduate students regarding soft skills is not high to compete in the job market. In the globalised context, employers demand graduate students with soft skills along with their regular graduate education. This research paper, aims to study the awareness level of undergraduate students on to soft skills needed for employability in the globalised world.

### **Limitations of the study**

1. This study is limited to undergraduate students only.
2. The investigator has selected only 15 soft skills for his study.

3. The sample of the study is restricted to 450 undergraduate students.
4. The area of the study is limited only to the three colleges situated in Bengaluru.

### **Objectives of the study**

To find out the level of awareness on soft skills of undergraduate students.

### **Hypothesis**

The level of awareness of the under graduate students on soft skills is moderate.

### **The research question of the study**

Do the undergraduate students have the awareness of soft skills for employability in the globalised world?

### **Methodology**

The researcher has used survey method to find out the awareness level of undergraduate students on soft skills needed for employability in the globalised world. The total sample of 450 undergraduate students were selected from three degree colleges situated in Bengaluru using simple random sampling technique.

### **Tools of data collection**

The awareness of soft skills of the undergraduate students was measured by a questionnaire with three options. The questionnaire comprises questions on 15 soft skills: Leadership skill, Time management skill, Decision making skill, Communication skill, Digital literacy skill, Employability skill, Crisis management skill, Work ethics skill, Goal setting skill, Teamwork skill, Presentation skill, Human resource management skill, Creativity skill, Inter-personal and Emotional intelligence skills. The content validity was affirmed in consultation with experts. The suggestions given by the experts were carried out by modifying a few items in the questionnaire. The final tool had 75 questions and it was administered conveniently to 450 undergraduate students from three degree colleges in Bengaluru. The reliability was established using split half reliability test and the reliability coefficient was found to be 72.63. The secondary data includes journals and internet materials, related to soft skills and employability in globalisation.

### **Analysis of the Data**

#### **Level of soft skills among the undergraduate students**

**Table:** Level of Awareness on soft skills among the undergraduate students

Soft Skills	Low		Moderate		High	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Leadership skills / Qualities	325	72	117	26	8	2
Time Management Skill	302	67	138	31	10	2
Decision Making Skill	347	77	98	22	5	1
Communication Skill	338	75	106	24	6	1
Digital Literacy Skill	308	68	132	29	10	2
Employability Skill	305	68	136	30	9	2
Crisis / Disaster Management Skill	369	82	78	17	3	1
Work Ethics Skills	367	82	81	18	2	0
Goal Setting Skill	323	72	104	23	23	5
Team Work Skill	360	80	79	18	11	2
Presentation Skill	339	75	108	24	3	1
Human Resource Management Skill	352	78	94	21	4	1
Creativity Skill	344	76	101	22	5	1
Inter-Personal Skill	308	68	135	30	7	2
Emotional Intelligence Skill	331	74	116	26	3	1

The Table above shows that 72% have low level Leadership skill, 67% have low level Time Management Skill, 77% have low level Decision Making Skill, 75% have low level Communication Skill, 68% have low level Digital Literacy Skill, 68% have low level Employability Skill, 82% have low level Crisis / Disaster Management Skill, 82% have low level Work Ethics Skill, 72% have low level Goal Setting Skill, 80% have low level Team Work Skill, 75% have low level Presentation Skill, 78% have low level Human Resource Management Skill, 76% have low level Creativity Skill, 68% have low level Inter-Personal Skill, and 74 %have low level Emotional Intelligence Skill. Hence it is concluded that the majority of the undergraduate students have a low level awareness on soft skills.

### **Discussion**

The review of literature, such as the studies of Sunita Mangla (2018), Vanitha and Jaganathan (2018), Jagdish Prasad (2017), Anbuthambi, Chandrashekaram (2017) revealed that the soft skills for employability under globalisation clearly point out the lack of awareness on soft skills. The present survey also proves that the majority students have low level awareness on soft skills. The lack of awareness of soft skills is one of the major reasons for unemployment and under-employment that affect their future life skills and thus fail to contribute to the national economy.

## **Suggestions and educational implications**

1. The awareness level of the undergraduates requires to be increased through a revised curriculum or adding a paper on soft skills as one of the electives.
2. Soft skills training program must be implemented blending with academic and technical education of the undergraduates.
3. Organizing and arranging seminars, conferences, workshops related to soft skills may help the undergraduate students to update their awareness level on soft skills which would pave a smooth way for their employability.

## **Conclusion**

In the present context, the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) are recommended to involve and interact with employers in the preparation and implementation of soft skills development training to make it more effective and productive. Moreover, HEIs as effective agents of national development are expected to enhance the undergraduate students' soft skills so as to make them contributors to Indian economy. The impact of soft skills is immense and further research in this regard will make the soft skills training even more vast and practical.

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