



VITALITY OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN RECENT TIMES

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ABSTRACT

Transforming an individual into a self-reliant, confident speaker who can be employable and productive in any organization is a master are. And this can happen only when the roots are strong enough to bear the responsibilities in future. Balancing education and soft skills training are a challenging and indispensable task in every sector of any country. However, in this article, discussion has been done about education and current skills development scenario in India.

KEYWORDS: *Communication Skills, Education, Management, Skills Development.*



INTRODUCTION

Today, the world is changing at a rapid pace and the competition amongst children is at an all-time high. We have come to an age when only a degree and a handful of certificates are not enough to outshine the competition. Training on areas like communication skills and world view development has become quintessential.

Although in India, the age-old method of mugging up limited data to pass the examinations has been in fashion for a very long time. This not only hampers the growth of children but also makes learning monotonous and tiresome. Institutions around the world must emphasize on creating a profound world view of students and interactive learning methods should be implemented for the same. Students must be provided training on the often-overlooked areas like public speaking, interpersonal skills, decision making skills, life management skills etc. This way, we will be able to develop content and creativity in students.

Holistic development of a child is vital for the country as each child is going to be an asset for the growth and progress of the nation. But the irony is, majority of Indian students lack the much-needed confidence and social skills. They are nervous to even ask questions in the class and participate in competitions. They are developing major stage fright and other psychological phobias. The main reason behind this, is the absence of personality development training in the school's curriculum. We are expecting children to be confident without providing them confidence building classes. Parents want their children to win debates and other public speaking contests without training them on content

development and presentation skills. It is high time that educationists around the world realize that a gloomy classroom cannot produce an overall developed personality.

Education has lost its essence as a tool for enhancing skill, understanding and knowledge. The education system of India not only lacks a framework or procedures to identify innate skills of a child, but it is also well geared to actually obscure and kill these talents. The system forces students to study subjects they aren't even remotely interested in. And score high marks too.

There are factors in the Indian education system that prevent skill development of students such as:

The curriculum which Indian education system follows, emphasize majorly on academics rather than practical application of that knowledge in real life scenarios. In India there are different boards that follow different systems/curriculum. The option of vocational education is limited to certain boards, which do not cater to the larger target audience.

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT CLASSES IN SCHOOLS

Schools today have become a battlefield in which students are tested in different ways on the basis of their knowledge. Students are only pushed to memorize and write long texts. As a result, a very large number of students find it difficult to produce innovative ideas and lack confidence when exposed to competition. Schools around the country should have regular content development classes to promote creative thinking in students. Students should be taught the art of using the content in different public speaking platforms. It will ensure that they are confident and capable enough to get selected in future drives in college and for further promotions in corporate organizations.

Confidence comes with knowledge and with content development training, students not only get everlasting knowledge but also develop curiosity to explore and research on their own. Tech world offers number of educational applications but most of the scholars spend time on social media and online games, which leads to addiction, health issues, hampers their ability to think clearly and differently. Great outcomes can be seen, when students will develop the curiosity to learn new concepts with the training program.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS TRAINING

Communicating in a crisp and clear way is one of the most important skills in the world today. A person who cannot communicate his thoughts has a bleak chance to achieve great success in life. Effective communication skills are required in every work sector. Students must be trained on communication skills from the primary schooling years as it becomes difficult when they are in higher educational level in future. Training them will help in developing team spirit, innovative ideas, leadership skills, confidence etc. They will also learn to respect the opinions of other people. It leads to a positive and open mind-set.

If children are guided and trained at the right age, the nation will have great leaders who will take India to unprecedented heights. The time has come when we realize the need of communication skills and content development training in schools and colleges. The perfect balance between academic excellence and soft skills is the need of the hour and crucial steps should be taken.

A research has been done, to assess the efficiency of India's education system, connected with 1,680 young professionals, both men and women and graduates and above, aged between 21 and 27.

Those surveyed are employed for three years or less, pursuing new-age careers in digital entertainment and media, retail, e-commerce, social media, digital advertising and media, BPO and start-ups and work in six base metros: Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai.

Only 26% of the respondents feel that their education has contributed highly to their personality development or interpersonal management skills, the two key traits required for interviews and employment.

On the contrary, 74% millennials say their college and university syllabus and courses are not updated regularly. Eighty per cent feel they missed out on opportunities for personality development while studying.

Employees from India’s financial capital Mumbai (89%) and Kolkata (86%) and Hyderabad (84%) feel they lack practical work experience because of inadequate industry-academia linkages. Seventy- nine per cent say colleges and universities do not have counselling services on place.

As per founder of XEED, Ashish Rajpal “Today, we work with over one million children in over 3,000 schools and have visible evidence that foundation for employability skills can be laid early at the elementary schooling stage,”.

A Harvard graduate in education, he feels development of skills to solve real-life problems, communicate and collaborate with others are critical to succeed in 21st century workplaces.

Though the scenario looks bleak, Rajpal, who quit an international corporate career in Paris to pursue his passion to work for the education sector in India, feels there is hope if the system is overhauled at the primary level.

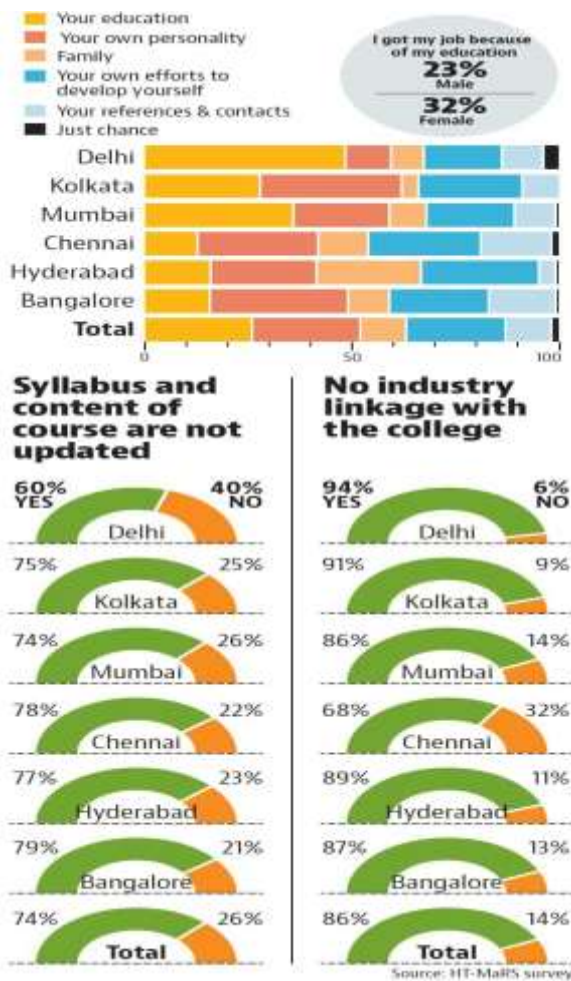
For that, Rajpal says, children will need to understand the world around them by asking questions, experimenting and drawing inferences rather repeating what is there on the textbook. They should be given the opportunity to “make and break” things that solve real-world problems.

However, the current schooling system focuses more on memorizing facts such as historical dates, scientific definitions and mathematical formulas. Consequently, young people leave schools with grades and certificates but are lacking in practical skills and confidence.

Interestingly, 26% of millennials feel they have secured jobs through the sheer power of their personalities.

Thirty per cent of these respondents are from digital entertainment and social media.

Self-development, 24% respondents feel, results in job offers. Personal initiatives to improve their skills pay rich dividends, say 29% from social media.



“Education in tier-2 or 3 cities is very generic, not like what they teach in the IITs...To get a job, I had to work on my communication skills and confidence level. Guidance from friends in IIT also helped,” says Samriti Sharma, professional.

Her disappointment with the highest annual package of just Rs 5 lakh in her college placements spurred on Sharma to do her own research to “crack a high-salaried e-commerce job”. She scours the net to find out from LinkedIn or Naukri.com what hirers were looking for in sectors she was interested in.

Himanshu Pratap, team leader in sales and marketing, Justdial, in Noida, however, agrees with the 21% survey respondents who feel contribution of education to their current jobs has been “high”. A graduate from a B-school in Dehradun says his teachers’ advice that he get digital media and six sigma certifications helped him land a job.

Giving children the freedom to express their own thoughts and feelings without fear is critical too. When children learn how to understand, apply and communicate early in life, they also gain the confidence to take on new and difficult problems in the workplace when they grow up, he adds.

Skill based learning and training is an integral component of increasing efficiency and productivity for sound economic development. In India, it’s still at a nascent stage. However, the demand for skilled manpower is huge and to cover this gap, it is very pertinent to re-engineer the skill ecosystem. Skill based learning in schools and colleges can provide the following benefits:

- Increasing employability through series of inputs to equip students with appropriate hands-on-skills which helps them to be job-ready.
- Raising confidence, improving productivity and competency of individuals through focused outcome-based learning.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL:

There must be options available for skill development courses and these must be provided in the secondary stage of schooling.

Courses in fields such as Hospitality and Tourism, Handicrafts, Healthcare, Textiles, Photography, IT, Retail, Banking, Insurance should be added in the curriculum that would interest students. For instance, if a student opts for healthcare as one of the courses, he could learn to be a blood-collection expert and later can add further courses to become a full-fledged pathology technician or a nurse.

If a student opts for motor repair as a skill development course while in school, at a later stage, he can opt for a diploma or degree in automobile engineering.

The pedagogy has to be practical through enhanced field visits, e-learning, industry driven projects, digital or video inputs.

At which Age should Skilling begin for Students?

Skill development should ideally begin at the age of 13 years, from the eighth standard.

Evolution of Skill Training in Schools and Colleges according to the Learner's Age:

Primary school (classes 1 to 5 - age 6 to 11): Communication skills, attitude, adaptability, IT skills.

Middle school (classes 6 to 8 - age 11 to 14): Above skills plus self-management, teamwork, creativity.

Secondary education (classes 9 to 10 - age 14 to 15): Above skills plus stress management, self-motivation.

Upper secondary (classes 11 to 12 - age 16 to 17): Above skills plus initiative, interpersonal sensitivity.

Higher education (graduation or professional programs): Above skills plus commercial awareness, problem solving and lifelong learning.

Introduction to Skill Training at a Young Age will Fulfil the following Objectives:

- Provide students an opportunity to explore various options and accordingly, narrow down on a vocation of their liking.
- Help them prepare and adapt to real work situations without much effort.
- Ease the transition phase from being a student to being a professional.

CONCLUSION:

In today's scenario there are ample opportunities that one can choose from and excel in. However, the Indian thought process is more glued on to the typical traditional academic streams and careers in the field of engineering, medicine, accounts, management etc. Awareness about skill-based, solution-centric learning can bring in a positive shift in making students aware of the actual job scenario through real work in the industry. If they don't learn early-on about how their formal education is going to help them get their dream jobs or the careers they aspire for, they will never get an opportunity to realize their dreams. And, of course, skills are dynamic. People need to learn, unlearn and re-learn in order to upgrade as technology changes and transforms the workplace requirements.

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