

**Soft Skills**  
**Dr. Binod Mishra**  
**Department of Humanities & Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee**

**Lecture - 01**  
**Introduction to Soft Skills**

Most welcome to the course entitled Soft Skills. The very first lecture is entitled Introduction to Soft Skills. Soft Skills nowadays is not a new term as you hear it quite often by your friends, relatives, and in various other circles you often attend.

But then, hearing alone is not enough. You often think what actually soft skills are. You might have come across the term skills, but when the word soft is added, it makes you more curious. The other day when your father returned from the bank and said oh! the new manager has very excellent soft skills. You started thinking what are the soft skills. You not only thought to yourself, but then the other morning you asked your father was he so handsome, does he get a very good salary then you decided you should rather go to the bank and see how was the manager that his soft skills are being appreciated every now and then. On your reaching there you saw that the man was short in height and was not attractive also, but then there was something which could have made people appreciate some of his skills.

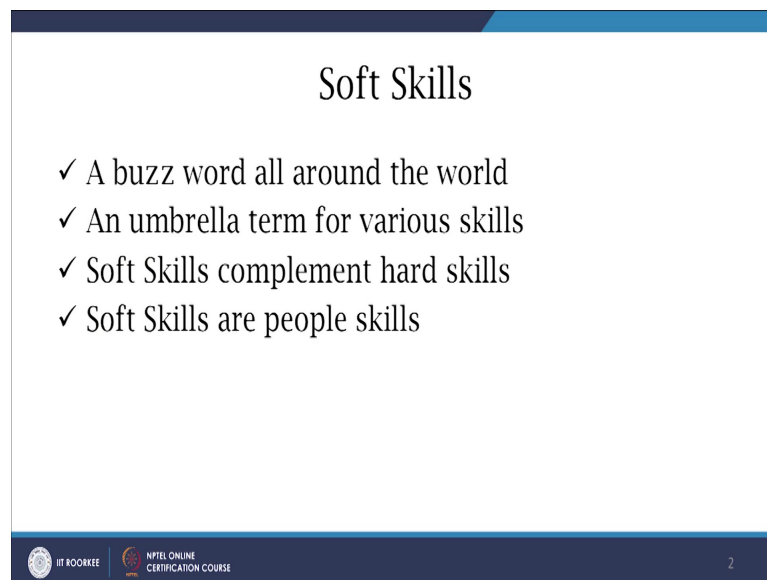
Suddenly the word skills created a sort of sensation in you and you started thinking that people have some skills say for example, a carpenter may have the carpentry skills, a doctor may have the medicinal skills, a teacher may have the teaching abilities and so on and so forth. A driver, a lawyer anyone for that matter in any of the profession will have some skills or the other, but what actually are the soft skills perhaps they are some special skills and you wanted to make some more enquiries about that. Soft skills are actually a buzz word all around the world. It is always better to understand soft skills before we can come to define it and the better way to understand it to know its specifications.

Let me give you an instance so that you will understand the term soft skills better. Once I was invited to a marriage party at a very short notice and attending the party was a must and it was the month end I did not have much money in my pocket. And I was feeling both guilty and ashamed as to how to give a suitable present to the couple. I entered a

nearby shop and was really attracted to see so many valuable items in the form of gifts. I was really upset. I was not in a position to decide as to what should I buy. And then suddenly, the young manager of the shop intervened and said, “May I help you”? The gesture of the young man attracted me too much and then I could see that he showed me so many things and then one after another he also kept on telling me the prices as well as the importance.

According to the need of the function and I finally bought one present from him and was really feeling glad. I was so tempted and fascinated by the behavior of the young man that I asked him how far have you read, and his answer really made me think a lot since he said, “I dropped my final year at the college because of the economic difficulties”. After all what was it in the young man that attracted me and persuaded me to buy the gift from him. Actually, these were some of his personal skills he was so friendly handsome though he was not. But he was always a helper his helping attitude made me think highly of him and the way he started analyzing my needs and made me understand the importance of dealing, really can tell a lot about the skills that he possessed.

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## Soft Skills

- ✓ A buzz word all around the world
- ✓ An umbrella term for various skills
- ✓ Soft Skills complement hard skills
- ✓ Soft Skills are people skills

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This can collectively be called Soft Skills. And here there is a point of caution to note that many of us often think that soft skills are communication skills. But then, was communication skills only the remedy there because the other salesman who was showing me the items also spoke, but he did not have that aura that extra edge which is

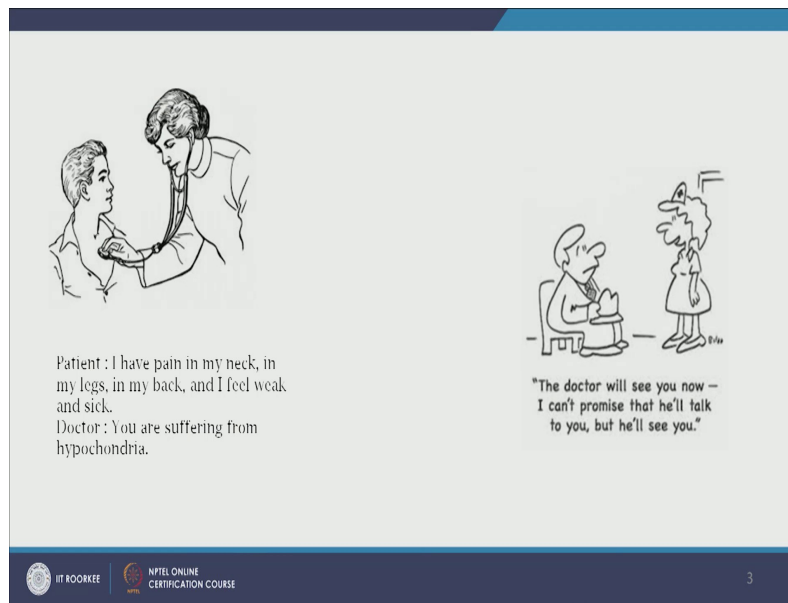
the young manager really had. He had some amount of perseverance, some amount of friendliness, some amount of reassurance, which made me feel that he was the person from whom I should buy. You also come across so many such situations where you also feel that soft skills are very important. Perhaps, you could realize now what your father was talking about the manager's soft skills. Soft skills, thus, is an umbrella term for various skills.

Now, another question that arises in your mind is because when the term soft skills are used you are reminded of hardware and software because you are living in a digital age. So, soft skills and hard skills do they also fall in the same line it is really very important to understand the difference between the two.

Soft skills complement one's hard skills. Now the question is what actually are the hard skills. Let me give you another example. In your town you come across two doctors having their clinics on the same road just a little bit of difference and when you look at their prescriptions, you find that they have very good degrees, very good qualifications. Both of them had a foreign degree in their hands. But then what makes you wonder is that while one doctor's clinic is always crowded, the others is not so. Though both of them had read from the same college, had been the toppers of their batches.

But what actually mattered in their cases that while the second one had a roaring practice, the first one did not have that. Here again, you will find it is a question of soft skills. Because if you look at the dealings of the two doctors you will find there is a vast difference between the way they talk to their clients, they talk to their patients, their staff members behave. Actually, it is always better if you can have a look at the two pictures here.

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In the one picture, you find while the patient is analyzing, while the Patient is describing his case to the Doctor, the Patient says I have pain in my neck in my legs in my back and I feel weak and sick. The doctor, after some moment says you are suffering from hypochondria and the patients to stares the doctor in the face the patient could not understand what this hypochondria was and started thinking that it was perhaps some deadly disease.

Now, here you can find this doctor could not understand the limitation of the patient and used the word which was actually very difficult for him. On the other hand, you see another case where the attendant tells the patient, “The doctor will see you now I cannot promise that he will talk to you, but he will see you now”. Here are the two situations and you will find that you often want to go to a doctor who actually takes a case history of yours. A doctor who actually knows the diagnosis and the doctor who prescribes you less medicine and whose staff are very friendly and they always have a solution for you.

Now this goes on to tell us that soft skills are very important. It is actually not only in case of life, but you will find as you grow up the ladders. Because, all of you are presently if you are following a degree in a college or a university you often are thinking of nothing, but your CGPA or the percentage and then once you get your CGPA and percent, then comes the time when either the campus selections are there or you are

looking for jobs and then one day you come to know that while you had a smaller package your friend had a better package.

Why was it so? What actually mattered here again, dear friends, mattered your soft skills.

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✓ *Soft Skills can help people come out of difficult situations and ensure reassurance and reliability.*

Customer Service Lesson: Helping Versus Selling

The cartoon shows a shop manager in a red shirt and a customer in a green shirt. The manager is pointing to a part on a shelf. The customer is looking at the part and smiling. The manager's speech bubble says, 'You want this part instead. It's better, will last longer and costs less.' The customer's speech bubble says, 'It's better, and it saves me money. This guy is so helpful! I think I've found a new favorite place to shop!' The cartoon is titled 'Customer Service Lesson: Helping Versus Selling'.

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Now, we can say that soft skills can help us come out of difficult situations. You have seen both the situations that I narrated---- the one when I was looking for a gift and was not able to decide without the help of a person who was the Shop manager.

Now, here also is another example and the way the two are dealing with each other. Here again, the question of soft skills arises. Soft skills can ensure reassurance and reliability. After going through these examples, you will come to realize that soft skills are a set of skills. Now, there are often people who say that either the number of soft skills are so many that it is very difficult or to tell you in brief how many skills are needed, you also often think how many skills are needed in order to be considered a person with excellent soft skills. Some people say that while there are 28 skills, the others say there are 60 skills, yet some others feel that there are only 10 skills. Because many of them some way or the other in their answers to soft skills, they actually overlap.

Now, the question is once we have had an analysis of soft skills, we can also create a sort of working definition for Soft skills; soft skills comprised personality traits, social

graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees.

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Dear friends! There was a time when you were pursuing a course and you when become eligible you got a job, and then you worked alone now we are living in age where you cannot work alone. Nowadays, you cannot work only with machines. Today we are living in an age where we have to deal with people, where we actually have to come across certain situations, where only the machines cannot work. Rather, the machinery of language the etiquette, the manners, the behavioral tricks, and then some other extra edges alone can help.

So, we can say that for skills are behavioral skills. When we talk about behavioral skills, we also have to understand what actually are these behavioral skills. Are these behavioral skills inherent in us? Or should we learn them? Because we are going to survive in a world today where we have to deal with people, who have different natures, different tastes, people from different backgrounds, different cultures, different identities. And then once you get a job what is important in your mind is to climb the ladder of success in a short time. You cannot do that unless and until you have learned certain personal charms. What are those charms?

First is Self-Awareness---- how aware you are of the present day needs of the world.

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If you might be having a look at the newspapers today and especially, if at the instant page of Times of India you will come across different sorts of job requiring different sort of abilities, though in many cases they simply mention the criteria such as B.A., M.A., B.Sc., M.Sc., B.Tech., M.Tech., or having some other additional degrees, but actually they do not mention the other criteria which come under the category of Soft Skills.

Now, it is no wonder **are** to come across people who often say that many of the graduates and post graduates today are not employable. They actually do not have that skills which can make them employable, this is actually a very grim picture and you most often come across newspaper captions and headings also. Now at that time you have to make yourself aware of what are those skills that can make you go an extra mile, an extra edge.

Then comes flexibility and then comes persistence and perseverance. As I said earlier that soft skills are actually life skills, people skills, behavioral skills, and we can keep them under an umbrella term.

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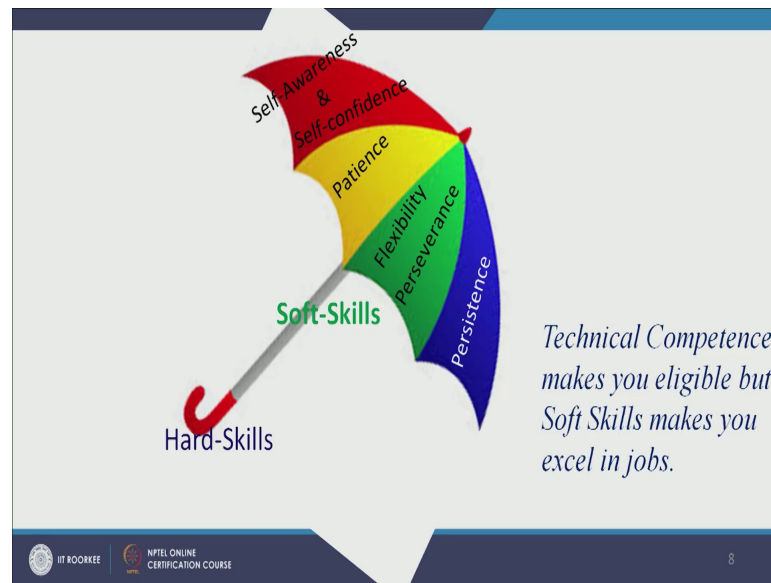


But then as I said earlier many people are under the impression, that soft skills are communication skills. Of course, they are there, but communication skills are simply a part of the Soft skills. What actually are needed are some other additional skills, such as Interpersonal Skills, Management Skills, Leadership Skills, and Team Dynamics. All these skills cannot be learned just in one day. It is actually a lifelong learning process. The more you are acquainted with people, the more you are exposed to people, the more you most of the time encounter people in dealing with certain intricate problems you are to be aware that you are going to learn something or the other so that your soft skills will prompt you to have an extra edge against others.

Now, Soft Skills, though, it cannot provide you a job instantly because whenever the question of job comes, it is actually the hard skills. Now, let us differentiate between Hard skills and Soft skills. What actually are hard skills? Hard skills are the subject knowledge the technical expertise that you garner during your college in university days, but then when you come out of the college or the university what actually you need are the soft skills you of course, have a technical competence, but then because of your nature either sometimes you become very introvert and you are not in a position to talk to so many people. Naturally such people go an extra mile, they cannot go in it they cannot have an extra edge over others because your technical competence is well, but what will make you excellent and shine in your job is your soft skills.



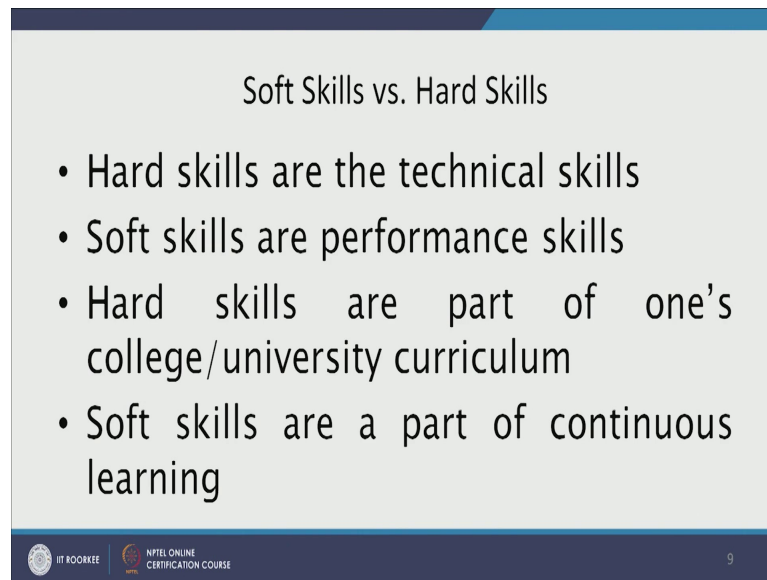
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Here, you can find the self awareness and self confidence they are actually the tools to enable you to face other people and then when you are in a job what you will find is there are certain situations, where some decision needs to be taken; there are times when you will have to participate in meeting. There are times when you will have to write certain technical documents, there are also times when you will have to take certain decisions when you are either the CEO or the in- charge of a company. Whatever profession you are in, you certainly require some amount of soft skills. Without soft skills your hard skills are hardly known.

What actually you need is---- you actually need to drive your hard skills through the engine of soft skills. In order to differentiate, we can also say that these soft skills are performance skills just you go back and look at certain examples and you will find the young manager who did not have that much of qualification as compared to an MBA, but had an edge because the way he performed, the way he behaved, the way he dealt with a situation proved better. We can say that Soft skills are performance skills; hard skills as I narrated earlier are part of once college curriculum. Soft skills are not taught in any college and universities.

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Soft Skills vs. Hard Skills

- Hard skills are the technical skills
- Soft skills are performance skills
- Hard skills are part of one's college/university curriculum
- Soft skills are a part of continuous learning

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Nowadays you find civil workshops are organized. There are several in service training programs all these are there just to make employees more effective in order to carry out the desired results.

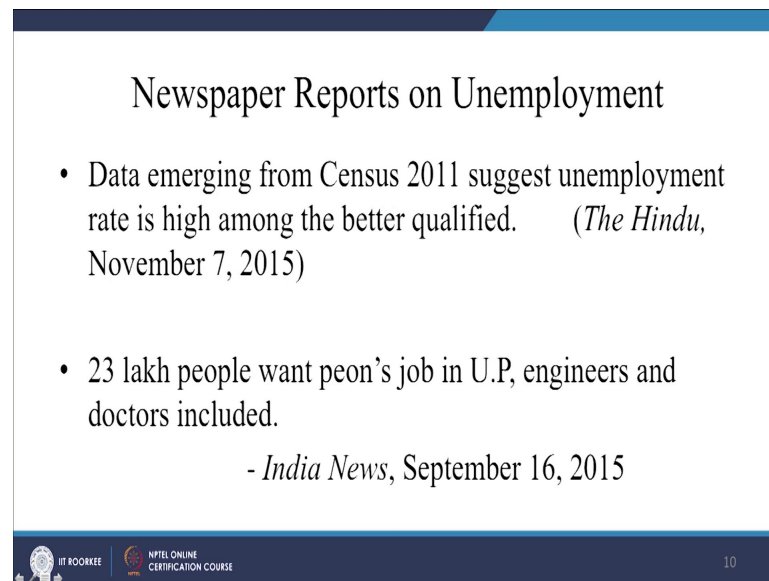
Soft skills, thus, can be said to be a part of continuous learning. It is a process of continuous learning. Every now and then you are in search of new knowledge, new skills and how is that possible. That is possible only when you are self-aware. And once you become self aware and you start learning, confidence will start coming to you. You would start bubbling with confidence after a certain amount of time. Many youngsters--- they often once they appear at interviews and sometimes or the other, they cannot meet the requirement of the recruiters then they perhaps get very frustrated.

Some of them also become so disappointed that they often say nothing can be done. But no dear friends, it this is not only the end of the road you actually need to learn, you need to go within, you need to make some personal enquiries, you need to have a sort of analysis of your own achievements, analysis of the answers that you provided to the recruiters.

It is very pertinent to say what a famous recruiter one said and that will give you a lot of clue about the need of the recruiters as well as the need of the organizations what the recruiter said was: “I would love to hire a girl with pleasant smile and better communication skills than one having a very good CGPA and doing nothing”.

Now, here is a clear-cut statement that tells that your CGPA alone is not the one that can make you get a job rather there are other skills and these other skills are soft skills. You may sometimes come across certain captions which actually reveal startling facts. What are these startling facts? Now look at these data which have been culled from some newspapers.

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The slide is titled "Newspaper Reports on Unemployment". It contains two bullet points: "Data emerging from Census 2011 suggest unemployment rate is high among the better qualified. (The Hindu, November 7, 2015)" and "23 lakh people want peon's job in U.P, engineers and doctors included." Below the bullet points, it says "- India News, September 16, 2015". The slide has a blue header and footer. The footer contains the IIT ROORKEE logo, the NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE logo, and the number 10.

### Newspaper Reports on Unemployment

- Data emerging from Census 2011 suggest unemployment rate is high among the better qualified. (*The Hindu*, November 7, 2015)
- 23 lakh people want peon's job in U.P, engineers and doctors included.

- *India News*, September 16, 2015

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Data emerging from census 2011 suggest unemployment rate is high among the better qualified. This is actually a report by one of the famous newspapers named *Hindu*. What it suggests is the unemployment rate is high among the better qualified.

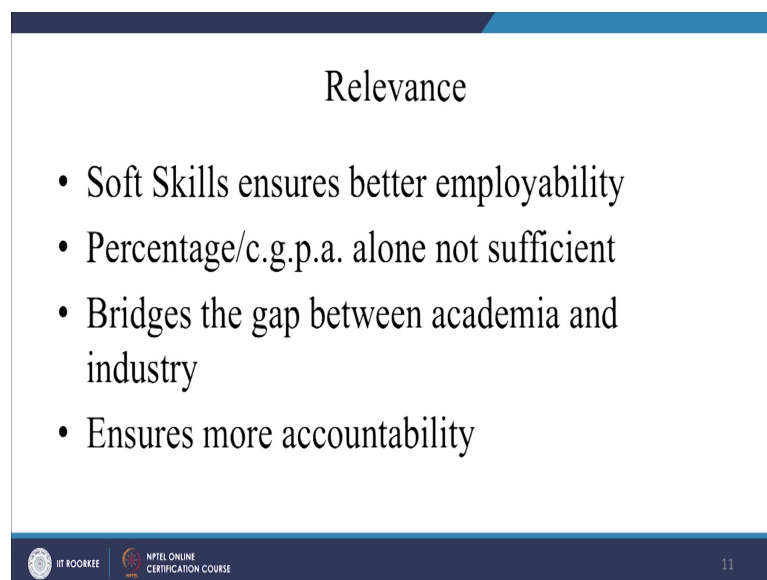
Now, the question is; you go to the college you get a good degree you also have a very good CGPA, but then you are not employable. You are not employable and what actually are lacking in you. Perhaps you require some of those key skills which are actually very important from the recruiters' point of view. How do you know what the recruiter wants as I told you the newspaper advertisements will give you a picture of the recruitment trends now there is another caption which will make you more painful to understand: **23 lakh people want peon's job in U.P, engineers and doctors also included.**

Now, this is really a very tragic figure, when we provide a lot of facilities to the budding engineers and doctors and other professionals. At the end of the day they are not employable, this is really a very gloomy picture and we need to analyze these pictures from the point of view of the recruiters. What actually do the recruiters need. They do

not need only the people with degrees people may have degrees, but they may not have the requisite skills.

Another survey in *Aspiring Mind* says that a good percentage of professionals today are not employable because of their poor communication skills. Of course, as I told you earlier that you may have a good CGPA, but in order to prove yourself suitable for the job market today what you need are the communication skills which can help you negotiate, which can help you understand the requirements, which can help you analyze, which can help you evaluate, which can help you estimate, which can help you go through a particular problem with a solution that you have.

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- Soft Skills ensures better employability
- Percentage/c.g.p.a. alone not sufficient
- Bridges the gap between academia and industry
- Ensures more accountability

And for that you need to go an extra mile as I said you need to be more intelligent which you really are, but you are not utilizing your intelligence in the right manner. How to do that? There nowadays have several measures being taken even by the government, there are several ways that employability is going to be generated, but then you need to learn certain skills.

Why after all soft skills are relevant. You see nowadays the nature of jobs is changing whether it is in your country or in some other country. People actually require them who can take initiatives, who can take who can have innovative ideas, and these innovative ideas will come not only from books, but from other sources also. The way you become aware, the way you try to understand, you know there is a debate going on between the

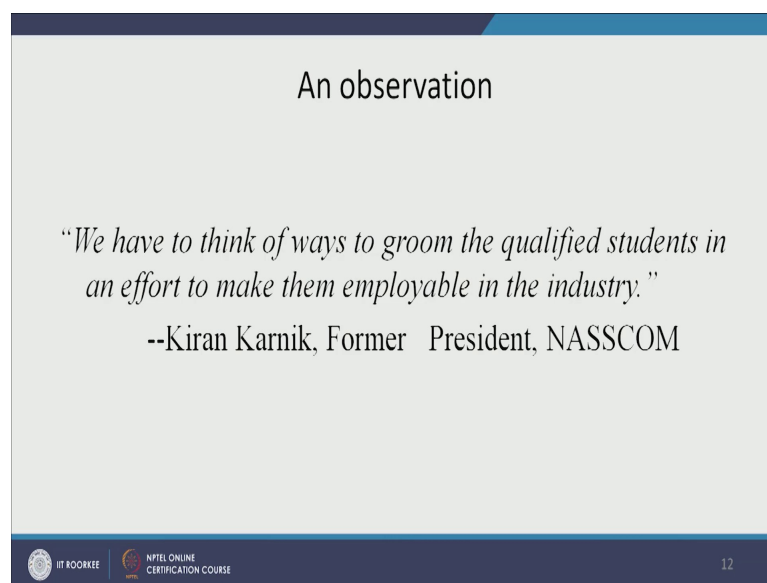
policymakers, and then the job agencies, the organizations that there seems to be something amiss, there is certainly a gap between academia and industry. That is why most of the organizations even though they recruit you they take you, but after some time they actually try to provide you with the training that can have better results. You know in order to be successful from the point of view of individual or from the point of view of organizations.

In order to be successful what you require is a better employee and a better employee is one who is aware, who is confident, who is communicative, who actually can take decisions, who actually can negotiate, who actually can pull the organization from the critical conditions and from the critical situations. Otherwise, what will happen the way nowadays there is actually a mushrooming a business of colleges coming up and that is perhaps the reason that the number of graduates and post- graduates is increasing like anything, but perhaps some way or the other, we are failing to instill in these graduates and post graduates the requisite skills which are actually required by the industry.

In order to cater to the needs of industry, soft skills play a major role. Soft skills can make an employee more cordial, it can make him more accountable, it can make him understand his responsibilities, and it can also allow him at certain situations to take decisions. Because you know there are certain situations where some amount of risk is also involved, there are certain situations where most of the time, your boss is not sitting to give you direction during that time your real initiative will have to be tested and the way you take decision or the way you come out of that crisis makes you a better informed, makes you a better equipped employee.

Now looking at the trends of the newspapers and the gap that exists between the industry and the academia, the former president of NASSCOM Mr. Kiran Karnik had said, “we have to think of ways to groom the qualified students in an effort to make them employable in the industry”.

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The employability is the keyword. Now what actually can make you employable certain soft skills though your personal charms may not work always because you have to mingle your personal charm with the sort of the felicity of your expression----- the way you use words the way you use words while writing a document.

Nowadays, it is not a world where the written word alone is important. There are other things which are also important are the unwritten codes and it is very difficult to understand those unwritten codes, how to understand them we shall be in the course of these lectures we shall be discussing how certain situations require certain key skills and then in certain situations not only your words, but your non- words will also prove to be more beneficial.

Today you have to write messages not with a pen and paper, not always with the written document being sent and received, but you have to deal electronically also. Now, electronic writings they have certain limitations which we shall discuss when you go to the writing section. Likewise you also have to deal with certain communication technologies which have some other requirements and limitations depending upon the situations. At times we also have to talk to people for certain deals over telephones and all the way you talk and the way you discuss the business deals that actually are very important and for that what actually you need is some amount of expertise-- amount of expertise in terms of language. In terms of the organizational structure of the document

that you are going to draft in terms of the way you are putting a problem and then finally, thinking about a solution. All these are very important.

Nowadays, because of new challenges that are being faced by us every now and then we need to be extra conscious. You cannot write anything and everything. You have to have a proper selection of words while you are actually drafting a business document. So is the case when you are participating in a business meeting. Most of the time you come across certain statements, that nowadays there is actually meeting after meeting. Sometimes or the other you think that these meetings are simply a waste of time, but if you think in the real spirit of the meeting, you will find that certain business transactions can be discussed and we can reach a solution after a meeting.

You will sometimes find the way meetings are organized. Actually it is organized to know the view points of other people also, because you know, you alone cannot take a better decision a better decision should have a sort of coherence, should have a sort of mingling of the ideas. Because you never know whose ideas can be more effective whose ideas can be more saleable.

On other occasions, you also come across group discussions when a company is facing a critical problem, there are times when a discussion is being made. There are times when some people are being called to discuss both the pros and cons of situation and then in order to take a conclusion. While you are going to discuss you sometimes find yourself very incapable, why? Sometimes, it is either because of the fear factor of your boss, sometimes also because of some of your ego problems with some of your colleagues that you try to hide your expressions.

But then this is not the right spirit. Actually, in a GD or in a meeting, all you need to do is you need to look at others viewpoints also and you also need to present your own viewpoints. As you grow up the ladder in the organization your responsibilities will increase and you will find the way you have to deal with people is not one but different. Because different people may have different nature, they have different behaviors. Since you are at the helms of affair, you are at the tops slot and you want that the job has to be done you also will have to understand the needs, you also will have to understand the gaps wherever it may be and for that the way you interact with your senior, junior,

superior, peer level people and others, there you need to be very particular about the sort of language that you are going to use.

On another occasions, you will also come across some other situations where you need to represent your own organization you need to represent your own institute and there also you have to prove a mark. However, sometimes it so happens that you may not have a very good term with your boss, but then when you are going to represent your own organization you have to build a positive image of your organization. And for that you sometimes have to suppress your anger you have to suppress some of the facts, but then you have to represent in the right spirit that will actually provide a better image of your organization.

Dear friends, life is full of challenges, it is full of opportunities. At times, you may feel a bit low because of some other impediments, but feeling low alone is not the solution you need to come out and for that you need to have a sort of optimism which is also an ingredient of soft skills you need to be optimistic you need to look ahead you always should try to learn lessons from past mistakes.

You will also find that nowadays the world is in a condition where the geographical boundaries are shrinking. Many multinational organizations are also opening their offices in India and then there are jobs that also require foreign posting. Now, in such situations what you need to do is: you need to be culturally sensitive; you need to be aware in the present day world the organization is composed of people from different states, different countries, different cultures, different faiths, and different traditions. But when you are in a particular organization you need to respect the sentiments of others as well.

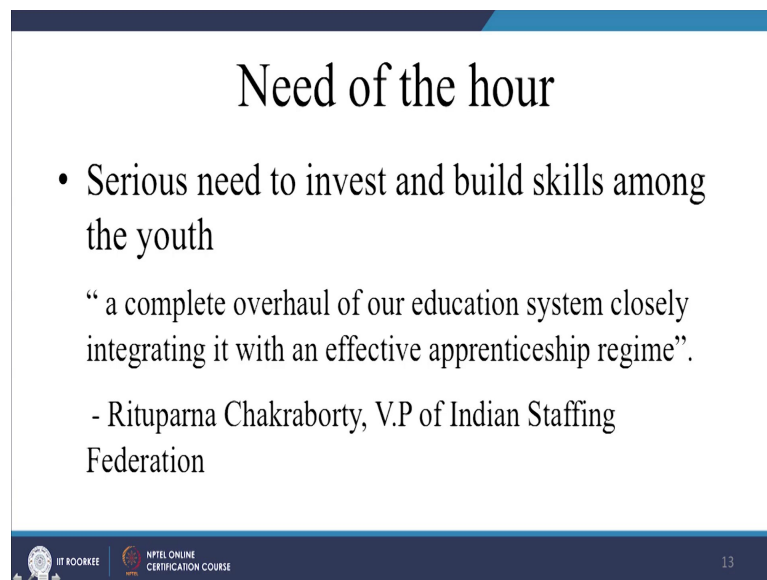
And for this, what you need to do is you need all this to be more accommodative, you need to be more accommodating, you need to listen from others, you will find when we go to the section on communication, we will talk on how you can become a good listener and then how you can become a good speaker as well.

Because, as I said, the world is going to become one platform. Somebody has rightly said that the world is a global village, because of the spreading wings of globalization these cultural biases will have to be eliminated. You will have to think that you are working in an organization and you are to respect the aims and objectives of the organization and for that you need to respect, you need to respect the cultural faith of other people also.



Sometimes or the other you will find. You know as I was going through a report of the ILO Indian Labor Organization, where it was said that India is facing a sort of jobless growth, jobless growth now the question is how to combat how to tackle this jobless growth.

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**Need of the hour**

- Serious need to invest and build skills among the youth

“ a complete overhaul of our education system closely integrating it with an effective apprenticeship regime”.

- Rituparna Chakraborty, V.P of Indian Staffing Federation

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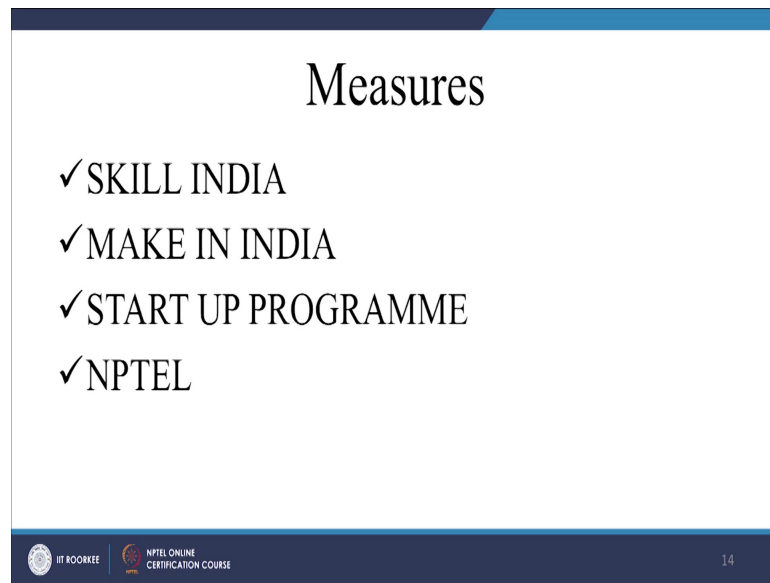
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In this connection, the views of a V.P; Vice President of Indian Staffing Federation, Mr. Rituparna Chakraborty, is very important and it actually needs serious attention because what he stated was; “We need to invest in and build skills among the youth” you know as we have been listening from various quarters.

Hence, we have to look at the need of the hour what is actually mandatory today is building skills. That is why the Vice President of Indian Staffing Federation says that we need to invest and build inner skills especially among the youth. Our Prime Minister also reiterates in one talk after another that youth is the great capital and we need to invest in that and how can we do that.

Of course, according to Chakraborty, there has to be a complete overhaul of our education system closely integrating it with an effective apprentice regime. Now, if the youth of the country are skilled naturally the country will shine.

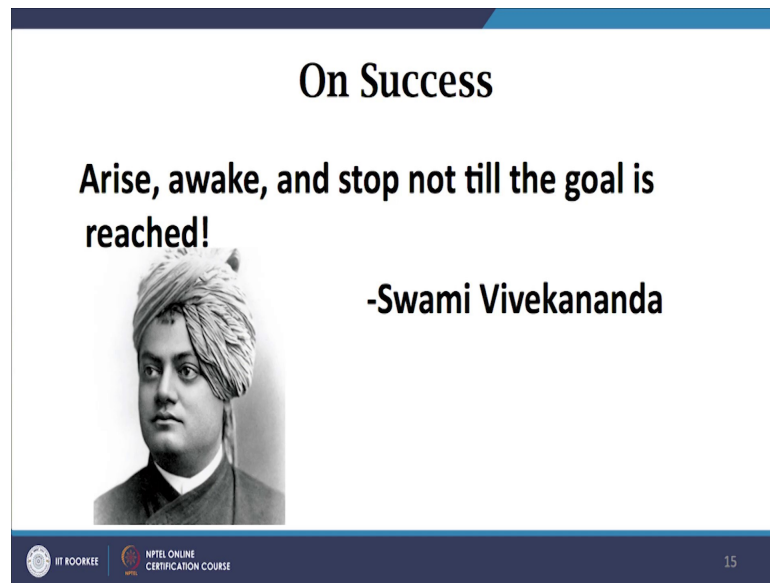
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Because what we need today is a skilled India that is why there are certain majors like Skill India. For many of those who simply think that the jobs are the only end, they should realize that there are other majors also being started like **Start up India, Make in India** and then one of the most important through which I am delivering this lecture that is NPTEL fine. Now the motive behind this program is to empower the youth to bridge the gap to create a sort of consciousness among the youth so that they may come forward and make India shine like anything.

Practice, my dear friends, always makes a man perfect. One should try to keep practicing always apart from ones hard skills or core skills. Once you try to enhance one soft skills and once you are holding soft skills you will find life will have a variety of flowers, life will have variety of opportunities, and success will always wait for you at the front door. You need not feel disappointed because you did not get one job you should always feel optimistic that if one job you did not get, another job is waiting for you.

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But for all that what you need to tell yourself, as Swami Vivekananda, had taken a Mantra and the Mantra is and all of you should go with the mantra “Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached”. Dear friends, in your case when you arise, you become self-aware, when you awake you become self confident and when you do not stop you become dynamic and dynamic through soft skills so that you are going to attain the goal that you started once with. I hope the very first lecture and soft skills will generate a new a thought of consciousness we have to go a long way. Life is a journey and we have to prepare ourselves for the journey both for the rainy days and for the sunny days. Thank you very much. We shall discuss further in our next lecture which will be on the various aspects of soft skills.

Thank you.