Soft Skills For Effective Teaching – Learning: A Review Based Study

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Abstract- The main objective of this study was to explore essential soft skills required not only for effective teaching as well as personality development and professionalism. To achieve the objective, secondary data has been utilized. This paper also depicts that Soft Skills are utmost important in coming new generation teachers to achieve success in their profession. It was found that a majority of the researchers felt that soft skills are considered desirable for moving forward in the career and vocational advancement. Few soft skills were identified mandatory for the teachers to acquire in digital world through secondary data, were: Communication skills, Initiative skills, Technological skills, Leadership skills, Productivity, Team working Skills. The present century is the century of development of skills, therefore teachers require hard and soft both skills to be successful in their professional life. In short, the paper tries to state that soft skills are the basic skills for a teachers developed through rigorous training process. This paper also suggests certain soft skills as Communication skills, Initiativeness skill, Technological skill and Leadership Skills in teachers, necessary to improve their teaching learning scenario.

Index Terms- Soft skills, Teaching-learning

I. INTRODUCTION

In present scenario, the developing countries like India need to adopt educational reforms inevitably. Among the basic factors of educational reforms, the educators, administrators must be trained about new era of curriculum and its transactional strategies because in the modern world, when we are going to the part of the third millennium of information communication technology, there are various skills to be developed and used. When we are discussing regarding "Soft Skill", it is essential to investigate the new constructs of soft skill as foundation of teaching-learning. Because, this construct is not substantiated properly and systematically in previous researches till date. This concept generally is changed time to time, place to place and job to job. Therefore, soft skill can only be understood in wide perspectives. Soft skills are cross-cutting across jobs and sectors and relate to personal competency (confidence, discipline, self-management) and social competencies (team work, communication, emotional intelligence).

I. Studies defining skill and soft skills

The literature review for this article has been derived from latest International Journals. National Journals published by NCERT on topics of relevance viz. Indian Journal of Education, Indian Education Review and Voice of Teacher; Teacher Educator and few other important researches done in the field. To explore the depth of given research topic, the literature of above-mentioned Journals of last ten years has been taken into account. The term "skill" is being used from 13th century (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Skill is considered as the "dexterity or coordination especially in the execution of learned physical tasks", as the "ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution and performance", and as "learned power of doing something competently". According to Ryle (1949) and Polanyi (1962), Skill is constructed as what knowledge sets in action (Know-how and Know-that, respectively), and therefore, the two (Knowledge and Skill) are seen as "reciprocally constitutive" (Orlikowski, 2002). Soft Skills is a term, coined in 1972 and became widespread after 1990. Its genesis can be traced as far back as 1972 in training documents of the US Army (Caudron,1999; Moss and Tilly, 2001). In 1997, the World Health Organization (WHO) outlined a core set of ten soft skill: Self Awareness,

empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, stress –coping techniques, and emotion-focused coping technique. Perrault (2004) defines "soft skills" as personal qualitied, attributes or the level of commitment of a person that set him or her apart from other individuals who may have similar education and experience. James and James (2004) proposed that soft skills are a new way to describe a set of abilities or talents that an individual can bring to the workplace, including career attributes such as team skills, communication skills, leadership skills customer service skills and problem-solving skills. The term "Soft Skills" is used for unspecialized personal qualities, that ensure the success in different professions. Other names are also used for Soft Skills as: professional skills (Enviroics, 2014), generic skills (Badcock et al., 2010), basic skills, core skills, key skills, employability skills (Tran, 2013), functional skills (Brolin & Loyd, 2004), 21st Century skills, life skills, career skills, social-emotional skills (Kamenetz, 2015). The online Encyclopedia "Wikipedia" provides a comprehensive definition of Soft Skills as "Soft Skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces and facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of a job". Sutton (2002) noted that soft skills are so important that employers identify them as the number one differentiator for job applications in all types of industries, which is consistent across research in Canada, the USA, Australia and the European Union. This trend in employer needs has influenced several professional associations in Canada to include soft skills in their competency frameworks, which all members must meet the conditions of (Clapperton, 2015; CCHRA, 2014). Wagner (2008) stressed that students need seven survival skills to be prepared for twenty-first century life: Critical thinking and problem solving; Collaboration and leadership; Agility and adaptability; Initiative and entrepreneurialism; Effective oral and written communication; Accessing and analysing information and Curiosity and imagination. Pachauri and Yadav (2014) identified seven soft skills to be include in all institutions of teacher education institutions as: Communication skills; thinking

and problem-solving skills; team work force; life-long learning and information management; Entrepreneur skill; ethics, moral and professionalism; leadership skills. Engelberg (2015) identifies different types of personal and social skills, such as thinking skills, listening skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, decision making skills, negotiating skills, and others. A cause- effect correlation between Soft Skills and personal and professional achievements of people was studied. (Cinque, 2015). Actually, the term "Soft Skills" is touchy feely stuff. It is a combination of many attributes and this combination varies from time to time, culture to culture and situation to situation. In Indian Context, soft skills are used as 21st century skills nowadays. 21st Century Skills refer to the skills that are required to enable an individual to face the challenges of the 21st century world that is globally-active, digitally transforming, collaboratively moving forward, creatively progressing, seeking competent human-resource and quick in adopting changes.

In the previous researches, it is now a well-established fact that employers are increasingly putting more efforts to develop soft skills, it is equally important that teachers should also adequately appreciate the value of such skills and make deliberate efforts to acquire them. As a result, there is an awareness gap resulting insufficient knowledge of soft skill among teachers those entering in their work place. Consequently, there is now more pressure on academic institutions to enhance soft skills of newly appointed teachers. The literature review suggests that a majority of the studies on this topic have been done from employer's perspective and very less studies have focused on the perception and attitude of teacher towards soft skills. In this paper, attention has been drawn on those soft skills, which is essentially required for teaching community, consequently effective teaching - learning atmosphere will be enhanced for future generation to achieve success in their career. In addition, a higher percentage of such studies were conducted in Western countries with different learning environment and work culture, not in Asian countries. It is therefore, worth exploring conceptual framework of soft skills on the basis of review of previous researches.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to identify the key type of soft skills which are mandatory for making effective teachers and skills needed for further improvement, participation of teachers in skill development programs and the role of academic institutions in developing soft skills.

III. METHOD

In this study, researcher has taken secondary data (corresponding data) to sort out the major outcome regarding soft skills for effective teaching-learning.

IV. FINDINGS

SOFT SKILLS IDENTIFIED FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researchers and authors describe Soft skills from different perspectives. When we go through the literature, a big picture of soft skill comes in front. Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a coalition of business leaders and educators, proposed a Framework for 21st Century Learning, identified essential competencies and skills vital for success in twenty-first century work and life. These included 'The 4Cs'– communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity, which are to be taught within the context of core subject areas and twenty-first century themes. This framework is based on the assertion that twenty-first century challenges will demand a broad skill set emphasizing core subject skills, social and cross-cultural skills, proficiency in languages other than English, and an understanding of the economic and political forces that affect of societies. These days, this term has been expanded to different categories as given below:

(a) Qualities including adaptability, courtesy, integrity, professionalism, and effectiveness, and values such as trustworthiness and work ethics (Wats and Wats, 2009; Touloumakos, 2011; Robles,2012; Ballesteros-Sanchez et al; 2017);

(b) Problem solving, decision making, analytical thinking / thinking skills, creativity/ innovation, manipulation of knowledge, critical judgment (Cimatti, 2016; Succi, 2019; Succi and Canovi, 2019; Thompson, 2019);

(c) Leadership and managing skills (Crosbie,2005; Lazarus, 2013; Ballesteros-Sanchez et al, 2017), as well as self-awareness, managing oneself/coping skills (Cimatti, 2016; Cinque, 2017; Thompson, 2019);

(d) Communication skills (Wats and Wats, 2009; Mitchell et al., 2010; Stevenson and Starkweather, 2010; Robles, 2012; Cinque, 2017) including elements of negotiation, conflict resolution, persuasion skills, and diversity (Bancino and Zevalkink,2007; Majid et al.,2012; Cinque, 2017; Succi and Canovi, 2019) as well as articulation work – that is orchestrating simultaneous interaction with people, information, and technology (see Hampson and Junor, 2009).

(e) Other areas covered included cognitive ability or processes (Cimatti, 2016; Ballesteros- Sanchez et al., 2017; Thompson, 2019), ability to plan and achieve goals (Cimatti, 2016). The skills in using technology, in particular digital skills, will be fundamental in most jobs to perform many tasks (Cinque, 2015). Furthermore, digital resources can help students to develop and train their Soft Skills, then they can be considered at the same time aims to be reached and tools to train, to develop and increase competences and capabilities. Ramesh and Ramesh (2018) believe that soft skills essentially consist of three dimensions as Attitude, Communication and Etiquette. Attitude is about having the right mental make-up and a desire to interact with the people and environment. This also requires willingness and ability to fine-tune and blend oneself with the environment. Communication is the ability to express that attitude, conviction and technical skills in a form that can effectively reach the intended audience and persuade them to take the actions that one desires them to take. Etiquette are those commonly accepted protocols, norms and conventions that are needed to be followed to achieve effective communication. Based on literature review, a list of 6 skills were identified for training of teachers. By this way, various dimensions were identified in soft skills. Few important were taken here:

i. Communication Skill:

Communication process requires three things: Sender, receiver and the message. The basic skill for teaching learning is communication skill. Saunders and Mills (1999) defined

Communication skills as the transmission of a message that involves the shared understanding between the contexts in which the communication takes place. Communication skills are important for a teacher in delivery of education to students (McCarthy and Carter, 2001). Communication skills involve listening and speaking as well as reading and writing. For effective teaching, a teacher needs to be highly skilled in all these areas. Effective communication skills are really important for a teacher in transmitting of education, classroom management and interaction with students in the class. To teach in accordance with the ability and capability of the students, a teacher needs to adopt such skills of communication which motivate the students towards their learning process (Sng Bee, 2012). Good communication skills of teacher are the basic need of academics, success of students, and professional success of life. Teacher with poor communication skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics. Students need to understand that what is right, and what is wrong while it totally depends upon the communication skills of teachers which he adopts in class-room (Sherwyn P. Morreale, Michael M. Osborn Judy c. Pearson, 2000). Communication process is successful when we deliver the massage in clear and understandable way. A study conducted by Ehindero and Ajibade (2000) indicates that for effective teaching, teacher requires good communication skills such as good communication, good classroom management, updating knowledge and maintaining personality. No one can teach effectively until having these basic skills of teaching. Different researches evolve that there is significant co-relation between communication skills and supervisor perception of job performance (Maes, Weldy, & Icenogle, 1997). Teachers need good communication skills for facilitating the students and achieving professional goals. Effectiveness of teaching is not dependent on technicality but on the method adopted by the teacher while teaching to the students. Teachers need clear communication for the good understanding of students and avoiding the problems for students while learning from their lecture. It is also needed by the teachers to understand first himself before teaching to students (Loss, J. 2000). Performance of teachers in classroom totally depends upon the communication skills. if the teacher has good communication skills, then he can easily convey his /her massage or deliver the lecture in an understandable manner (Maes, Weldy & Icenogle, 1997).

ii. Initiativeness Skill

Initiative skill means that a person is ready to take action before another person. A teacher needs this skill for better performance in today's life when daily changes are going on and teacher is supposed to take initiatives in school/college for different curricular, co-curricular and community-based activities. When teacher uses intiativeness in his work, he obviously communicates this ability to his students in the form of many activities in the class. He starts with himself and then encourage students to take initiative in all the activities in school. Today in the age of development, if a teacher is equipped with initiativeness skill, he will develop initiativeness in students and they will develop the ability to ask questions, plan easily for any work, present anywhere. Taking initiative by student in the class is first step for learning actually. If a student does not show this behaviour, role of teacher becomes more important. Teachers' initiativeness is an important skill. Recently during COVID-19 outbreak, universities and other educational institutions around the world are able to continue the teaching activities only because of teachers' initiativeness skill. Teachers were not trained for any type of online teaching learning but they took initiatives for online teaching and whole time-table was followed from home in favour of students. This step of teachers made teaching-learning process that can be accessed anyplace anytime (Nedeva & Dimova, 2010). Online teaching learning made learning convenient accessible and customized. (Kimiloglu et al., 2017). When NEP 2020 is declared in July 2020, teachers are taking initiatives to attend webinars, conferences and faculty development programs to conceptualize it and implement it.

iii. Technological Skills

Technology is the powerful tool in the hands of teacher. If technology is used properly and effectively, students' achievement is enhanced. Teachers require ICT competencies to strengthen their own professional capacities and to effectively use ICTs in their teaching-learning. In present context, teachers should be expert in using technology as a tool to research,

organize and communication the information. Digital technology and social networking usage makes his/her teaching effective and accessible. Therefore, the teachers require technological skills as well digital skills to engage students in critical thinking and problem solving. Technology can be used to restructure and redesign the classroom to produce an environment that promotes the development of higher-order thinking skills (Kurt, 2010). Technology also increases student collaboration. Collaboration is a highly effective tool for learning. Students cooperatively works together to either create projects or they can learn from each other by reading the work of their peers (Keser, Huseyin, & Ozdamli, 2011). Researchers described technological skills in form of using internet, operating computer, e-mail writing, creating video and audio, using the software's, making presentations etc.

iv. Leadership Skills

Teacher organizes the students in class, receives their attention, inspire them for engagement in the class, confirm again and again that they are learning and performing well. Motivating and inspiring the students and providing the vision for the future is really an important job of a teacher. He acts as a mentor and implement a vision. But no program is conducted to develop leadership in teachers. There is lack of literature and empirical evidences about importance of leadership activities of teachers. Teachers are regularly engaged in activities of leadership as decision making, inspiring others to learn, solving the students' problems, organizing curricular activities and co-curricular activities in class. A teaFcher may perceive herself as a leader when he/she is given responsibility to organize cultural activities, NCC activities, school-community interaction activities, different competitions and other administrative responsibilities in school. Devlin and Samara Wickrema (2010) identified that criteria of effective teaching in a higher educational context are similar to dimensions of effective leadership. Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) in their study concluded that leadership had been a complex and emergent process and that was distributed and shared in organizations. They advocated for mixed methods and the context of the study was related to business establishments. It was hardly possible to draw any inference about how far their

findings could help us to understand the relationship between leadership behaviour of teachers in schools and their possible outcomes. Barling, Slater, and Kelloway (2000) revealed that the individuals with higher emotional intelligence displayed more transformational leadership behaviors leading to better learning of the students. If so, the findings may be taken as imperatives to bring qualitative changes in the teachers' recruitment policies or strategies by schools. It may indicate that perhaps emotional intelligence is more important than formal educational qualification and subject knowledge to qualify someone as a teacher in a school. There are no similar studies available to provide any lead in that regard. Given the role of teachers as leaders of learning, there is logic in considering them as role models to their students. By acting as role models, teachers influence the morality, work ethic, citizenship, and character of their students (Lumpkin, 2008). Given that leadership is the process of influencing others, and that teaching is the process of influencing students; desire and engagement in learning, teachers are in positions of role models.

v. Productivity

Productivity is the ability to manage different projects and give results. Productivity and accountability are interconnected. The skills as setting and meeting goals, prioritizing, managing work to achieve the intended result. The teachers practice values, ethics and skills of professionalism, time management, punctuality, discipline, collaboration and receptiveness to give proper results. (CBSE, Delhi, 2020). In addition to the basic responsibilities, there are several accountabilities on the part of a teacher. Teacher is considered accountable for subject mastery in the specific subject. It is also expected that teachers should be well aware of the average required mental ability of their students. A teacher should develop good rapport with students, colleagues, parents and other community partners. He/she is accountable for effective teaching with help of various teaching methods and innovative approaches, technology usage, interactive environment. He/she is expected to be resourceful and professional in the sense of updating skills according to the present context. A teacher is role model for students and develops ethics and values in students. When a teacher is held accountable for above said works, obviously her productivity is

reflected in developing skills, values, personality abilities in students; maintaining the relationship with staff, parents and community members and producing quality education. Productivity of teacher has an essential and strategic role in realizing quality education. Sultana Mahbuba (2013) concluded that work productivity dramatically determines the success or failure of an organization. In Sutikno (2011), Gilmore states that work productivity is the power or ability of an individual to produce more creative, generative output that generates benefits. It means, accountability and productivity of teachers increase school productivity in terms of students' performance.

vi. Team working skills

Working in teams is essential for a teacher. can be an effective method for professional development. According to Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon (2001), teachers collaborating with each other has several advantages: working together opens up opportunities to discuss problems, skills, and concepts; teachers can share common materials; teachers who share the same students can discuss student needs across classes or grade levels. Therefore, it can be said that working in groups creates a shared professional culture. In the literature review, areas such as the definition of soft skills, taxonomy of soft skills, importance of soft skills in latest scenario in education sector is discussed.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Moreover, the essential soft skills required for a teacher in the modern era are also discussed widely. Using soft skills, teachers can make the class interesting, informative, and thought-provoking. To attract the students with innovative techniques, teachers should utilize all the soft skills like modulating the tone or pitch wherever needed, make charts spontaneously, and so on. By doing this teacher set the best example of genius. Many students can change their lives if a teacher can nurture the students to be successful in their life. It would also be easy for the teachers to interact with their students in an understanding level. Besides, the expertise of soft skills enables them to be good motivating and inspiring leaders. Teacher professional behaviour means mixture of knowledge, skill, attitudes, and personal characteristics. Today in 21st century, teacher requires a

skill set of behaviour for all round development of the students and maximum development of students.

Soft Skills are important for a teacher because a teacher is the person who is responsible for developing students' abilities to optimum level. As a teacher, she has to deal with students, her colleagues, administrator, other non-teaching staff, parents and other community members. Therefore, soft skills are the basic pre – requisite of the teachers. Soft Skills for teachers include communication both oral and written, for receiving and distributing information effectively. For effective teaching learning environment, a teacher performs different tasks in class to captive students during the lesson, to stimulate them intellectually and move them emotionally to install in them a love for the subject and a desire to learn more about it, to motivate them to work on their own, to see them satisfaction of assisting them to grow into a self-actualized individual. It is necessary to select and use appropriate teaching strategies because they play significant role in increasing the effectiveness and quality in teaching. Teaching Strategies helps the teacher to establish interaction between him and her students and the curriculum or subject matter. Soft skills, for a teacher will make a difference in quality of teaching and effective learning. The quality of teaching is a crucial factor in promoting effective learning in schools (Tang, 2013). Teaching is a complex act, requiring a wide range of knowledge and skills including hard and soft skills to successfully manage the demands of the classroom (Tang, Hashimah & Hashimah, 2015).

From the research study, the following outcomes can be driven effortlessly: The purpose of this study was to explore the soft skills which are required for making effective teachers. However, many studies reflect the fact that their actual soft skills were less than the desired levels. Thus, there is need to create awareness among the teacher about the importance of soft skills for career advancement and how to develop and practice such skills. However, academic institution should take action regarding training workshops to help teachers for further improvement their soft skills. It is equally important that teachers should also make efforts for improving their soft skills through self-directed readings and participation in appropriate soft skill development

programs and activities. It may be concluded that for successful teaching, the teachers should enhance their soft skills. A skilled educator creates a positive learning environment that would allow students to feel comfortable and confident with high achievement levels making it as a structured space for guided learning. Hence, teacher education should focus on development of Soft Skills in future teachers or teacher educators to produce skilled teacher through professional training program.

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