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## HUMAN VALUES AND SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN CURRICULUM OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION



**Dr. Rashmi Jaybhaye**

Assistant Professor in MGMJNEC & Director,  
MGM Institute of Indian and Foreign  
Languages Communications, CIDCO, N-6,  
Aurangabad, MS, India

### ***ABSTRACT***

*The greatest ailment of mankind today is that man is terribly deficient of mental serenity and contentment. Therefore he needs powerful value systems which could liberate him from his ethical insanity and mental delusion which are associated with his troubled mind.*

*The technical and professional education today develops only the stereotype intellect and skills. They don't promote the qualities of the heart which could enable the students to take up challenges of life. It hardly develops an innovative and creative mind or teaches a meaningful utilization of their knowledge and skill for the greater cause of humanity.*

*The education on human values establishes a harmony between professionalism and the*

*good qualities needed for living a dignified life. Human values build a synthesis between acquisition of scientific knowledge and the ethical and lofty principles life.*

*Human value-based education is important because it aims at building purposeful life of quality character as the end of education too is character. And only people of good character can build the good and dignified*

*nations. Good nations in turn can make the world a better place to live.*

*The present paper is an attempt to explore the need of inculcating values through the curriculum of soft-skills.*

### **KEYWORDS**

*Human values -soft skills -development – curriculum- Technical Education*

## **RESEARCH PAPER**

Human beings are a social species that relies on cooperation to survive and thrive. Understanding how and why cooperation succeeds or fails is integral to solving the many global challenges we face. Cooperation lies at the heart of human lives and society — from day-to-day interactions to some of our greatest endeavors. Human values are a tool to manage human relations and a tool for peace when the tension is high. We humans are social animals. Technology can't replace human interaction. We need to combine the human and digital elements to communicate across our borders.

Values are beliefs that have an inherent worth in usefulness or importance to the holder," or "principles, standards, or qualities reflected worthwhile or desirable." Values institute an important characteristic of self-concept and serve as supervisory principles for person.

Human values are necessity in today's society and business world. Human values are the features that guide people to take into account the human element when one interacts with other human. They have many positive characters that create bonds of humanity between people and thus have value for all human beings. They are strong positive feelings for the human essence of the other. These human values have the effect of bonding, comforting, reassuring and procuring serenity. Human values are the basis for any practical life within society. They build space for a drive, a movement towards one another, which leads to peace. In simple term, human values are described as universal and are shared by all human beings, whatever their religion, their nationality, their culture, and their personal history. By nature, they persuade consideration for others

To live to the challenge of globalization which is in line with the era of information economy, the strength of a nation is strongly dependent on the ability of its citizen to be highly intellectual and skillful. The development of human capital is thus important and necessary since it drives the nation to the envision vision and mission. Without a quality human capital, a nation will be weak as there is no human factor that is capable to embark on new initiatives and perspectives. A quality human capital comes from a quality education process. A carefully designed and well planned education system is critical to developing such human capital. Thus, institution of higher learning plays a very important role to produce a human capital that is highly knowledgeable and skillful to meet the demand and expectations of many people. The teaching and learning processes in institutions of higher learning should be capable to provide such knowledge and skills to future graduates.

It can be observed that education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. We all realize that the current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education and training are the key elements to move our society towards sustainability. Only quality future human capital can envision development of its nation to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Therefore, the inculcation of soft skills among the students will be two-pronged: to produce quality human capital and to develop their knowledge, understanding, values and skills as well.

Soft skills refer to all aspects of generic skills that include the cognitive elements associated with non-academic skills. Soft skills are identified as the most critical skills in the current global job market especially in a fast-moving era of technology. The reorientation of education which is one trust of education for sustainability also relates the importance of these so-called soft skills. The term soft skills is being used to describe skills that managers and leaders use that are subjective in nature, such as creative thinking, dealing with people issues, coaching for performance, and so on.

According to the psychologist Daniel Goleman, soft skills contribute to a person's ability to manage him or herself and relate to other people – skills which matter twice as much as IQ or technical-skills in job success. Based on the research, seven soft skills have been identified and chosen to be implemented. They are:

- I. Communicative skills
- Ii. Thinking and problem solving skills

iii. Teamwork dynamics

Iv life-long learning and information management

V. Entrepreneurship skills

Vi. Ethics and professionalism

Vii. Leadership skills

Each of the above soft skills is comprised of several sub-skills. These sub-skills are divided into two categories of implementation. The first category delineates the soft skills that every individual must have and the second category represents soft skills that are good to have. Despite the emphasis being put on the soft skills that must be present (must-have), it is also desirable to inculcate the soft skills that are good-to-have. All elements of soft skills must be acquired by each individual student and evaluated effectively and comprehensively. Table 1 shows the seven soft skills and the two categories of sub-skills respectively.

The must-have soft skills must be acquired by each and every individual in the institutions of higher learning without which, the student is regarded as incompetent in the above skill. The good-to-have soft skills can be regarded as the additional generic skills and a bonus to the student.

In general, the development of soft skills among students via formal teaching and learning activities takes two models: **(1) stand alone and (2) embedded.**

**1. Stand alone subject model** – this model uses the approach of training and providing opportunities to students to develop soft skills through specific courses that are carefully planned for this purpose. Usually, these subjects are offered as university courses (such as english language, entrepreneurship, etc) and elective courses (such as public speaking, critical thinking, etc). The courses in this category are often a part of the overall requirements that make up the program. The number of courses and credits in this category depends on the curriculum design and the requirements of the program. The stand alone subject model can also be initiated by encouraging students to sign up for several additional courses which can be credited to be a minor course which is different from the initial program. For example, a student who is pursuing an engineering program is encouraged to take minor courses in management or mass communication. However, such an approach will require an increase in the number of credits and time spent for the particular program.

**2. Embedded model** – this model uses the approach of embedding the soft skills in the teaching and learning activities across the curriculum. It does not require the student to take special courses as in the stand alone subject model. Instead the students are trained to master the soft skills through various formal teaching and learning activities that are planned and carried out using specific strategies and methods. In this way, the content and learning outcomes to be achieved for the respective courses are maintained. Learning outcomes related to the soft skills will be integrated and be part of the learning outcomes of the respective courses. This is the suggested model to be implemented in all the courses for the different programs in institutions of higher learning. Each element of soft skills is spelled out in the learning outcomes and then translated into the instructional plan for the semester. This is followed by implementing several teaching and learning activities such as questioning, class discussion, brainstorming, team work, presentation, role play and simulation, task/project, field work and site visits.

In general, the development of soft skills using the embedded model requires the expertise of the lecturers to use various teaching strategies and methods that are entirely student-centered. It also involves active teaching and learning with students should actively participating. Some of the appropriate and practical strategies and methods include:

- (i) learning by questioning
- (ii) cooperative learning
- (iii) problem-based learning (pbl), and
- (iv) e-learning

Value education is very important for students seeking to make a mark in the cut-throat world of engineering. The profession often brings with it bouts of extreme stress and ruthless competition, dealing with which requires a solid base of ethical and human values from the very onset. These values enable aspiring and practicing engineers to maintain their equanimity while facing such challenges. It also makes them capable of taking decisions that do not violate any ethical values in their daily interactions. Often we hear of students committing suicide or taking to harmful habits like drug abuse in order to combat the concomitant pressure of studying for or working as an engineer. A robust value base will ensure that students are never led to such extreme steps, that are not just detrimental for them but also adversely impact those around them.

Value education at the level of aspiring students is aimed at making them realise that technical skills and human values go hand in hand. The fact that their line of profession makes a lot of

difference in the lives of others and in society, if carried out responsibly, can further motivate aspiring students to ace the exams and join the ranks of change-makers. Hence, it is the onus of coaching institutes to keep reminding students of the values and integrity with which they must conduct themselves in the present as well as the future.

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