

## **Soft Skills Inculcated from Indian Culture**

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### **Abstract**

This paper presents the findings of an exploration of the cultivation of soft skills within the context of Indian culture. This underscores the contemporary relevance of soft skills and emphasizes the importance of harnessing the inherent soft-skills present in Indian culture. Soft skills are not merely concepts that can be quickly acquired or taught directly in educational institutions. Such competencies require substantial practice. Soft skills encompass a wide range of personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions and contribute to professional and career advancement. These attributes include qualities such as work ethic, attitude, and emotional intelligence, as well as abilities such as team building, leadership, and anger management, all of which play a pivotal role in achieving success in one's career. Employers generally prefer candidates who possess strong soft skills such as resourcefulness, ethical conduct, and self-directedness. India, known for its rich cultural heritage, instills values such as sacrifice, affection, cooperation, selflessness, and open-mindedness among its members, thus creating a nurturing environment for social virtues within families. This paper provides an extensive overview of Indian culture and explores the soft skills that are essential for meeting the expectations of contemporary employers.

**Keywords:** Soft skills, Indian Culture, Unconscious Acquisition, Invaluable Qualities

India is renowned for its profound tradition and cultural heritage. Soft skills, which cannot be obtained through formal education at universities or colleges, are deeply rooted in Indian culture. In fact, culture itself can be considered the world's most extensive educational institution, imparting invaluable soft skills to anyone raised within its embrace. Living within an Indian cultural milieu naturally nurtures and imparts these skills throughout one's lifetime. In reference to globalization, Swami Ranganathananda (2010) explains that

India has always practiced and propagated three sciences namely, physical science, science of human values and spiritual science. The soft skills are otherwise the science of human values. ....The second science deals with the relationship of one human being with the other. This does not come from any material content or the body. It is the mental process shaped by the factors of one's hereditary individual traits, the process of socialization and the environment one is put to. (p.2)

A comprehensive exploration of Indian culture and tradition provides a clear understanding of the essential soft skills sought in today's competitive job market. These soft skills are often innate or acquired unconsciously as they navigate through life. In a nation as culturally diverse as India, with its rich heritage and traditions, these soft skills are ingrained by individuals from an early age. They are seamlessly woven into daily routines and activities, shaping each generation with invaluable qualities. The Indian family system traditionally follows a joint family structure, in which multiple generations and relatives cohabit under a single roof. Such households can consist of anywhere from twenty to 40 members, encompassing grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, grandchildren, cousins, and more. Visualize a residence accommodating a sizable number of occupants! This scenario presents the significant challenge of providing sustenance and fulfilling the essential needs of all individuals, which necessitates financial resources and efficient resource management.

Typically, the family patriarch assumes the responsibility of organizing resources to meet the fundamental needs of the household. This is when resource management skills come into play. Subsequently, tasks are delegated to the succeeding generations. Some family members seek employment, while others oversee domestic affairs. This distribution of responsibilities ensures that each individual effectively contributes to the family's functioning. The family head carefully selects individuals based on their capabilities and assigns tasks accordingly, thus exemplifying the principle of appropriate job allocation. In today's world, we find ourselves immersed in a highly competitive environment, where the adage "survival of the fittest" rings true. Aspiration to secure a livelihood with a decent income is a universal dream. In developed nations such as India,

obtaining employment and sustaining it can be an arduous endeavor. This fast-paced and fiercely competitive job market demands individuals who possess a combination of talent, competence, and diverse skill sets. Employers seek well-rounded individuals who not only excel in their educational pursuits (hard skills) but also exhibit essential personal attributes (soft skills). Employment does not only require technical skills specific to a particular job but also so-called “soft” or “behavioral” skills that help people find, secure, and retain employment in the long term. These skills include capacity for management, entrepreneurialism, ability to problem solve, dependability, commitment, and many others. (Srivastava & Khare, 2012).

Soft skills play a pivotal role in a person’s professional journey. Both multinational corporations and domestic enterprises seek candidates who meet the specific recruitment criteria. They meticulously evaluated a candidate’s skill set, encompassing a range of competencies. Through this lens, we recognize the paramount importance of soft skills in today’s world. Varalakshmi (2006) mentions that “the professional to excel in the ‘republic of the Internet’ needs to acquire a new spectrum of competencies, knowledge, innovative nature, team work, social sensibility, wider knowledge on all subjects with specialization in narrow subjects, possession of soft skills, skills to adopt new ethos, etc”. (p.341)

The concept of soft skills encompasses a wide array of attributes that professionals are expected to exhibit at various times during their careers. These qualities include but are not limited to, a high level of tolerance, adaptability in the face of adverse situations, honesty, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving aptitude, decision-making process, a sense of responsibility, an optimistic attitude, and personal integrity. Human resources departments often look for these traits as candidates. Employers usually prefer to see a fine blend of competencies in their staff and, in addition to discipline-based knowledge and skills, adequate levels of soft skills are considered desirable for moving forward in the career. (Mitchell & et al 2010)

“Hard skills are associated with technical aspects of performing a job. These skills usually require the acquisition of knowledge, are primarily cognitive in nature, and are influenced by an individual’s intelligence quotient score. Soft skills are defined as the interpersonal, human, people, or behavioral skills needed to apply technical skills and knowledge in the workplace” (Kantrowitz, 2005).

Hard skills are competencies related to one’s field of study or profession, which can be acquired through formal education at universities or campuses. Such education provides both theoretical and practical expertise in a chosen subject. However, unlike hard skills, there are no specific courses or programs for soft skills,

and even if they were offered, acquiring these skills through formal education alone would be highly challenging. Instead, the development of soft skills ideally commences during childhood within the family environment. These skills cannot be isolated or taught as standalone subjects in the same way as in traditional courses or tutorials. “Soft skill training is essential because we do not have it in our academic curriculum. Therefore, corporate houses have to take up the task of grooming employees who are the link between the company and the external world, so that they are able to present themselves better” (Nigam,2010, p.69).

Starting with the allocation of tasks to the distribution of work, all aspects are present within our households. Household members must adapt to each other, showcasing teamwork skills. This skill offers a significant advantage because it entails dealing with a diverse group of individuals, each with unique ideas, desires, and preferences. Achieving a comprehensive understanding of all the household members is crucial. This skill is in high demand in today’s industries, where a deep understanding of the team members is essential. It can be easily cultivated even in the Indian kitchen.

The next skill set involves group work in which strong interpersonal skills are indispensable. In a household with a diverse range of people in terms of age, background, and taste, one must adeptly play the role of team player while possessing well-developed interpersonal skills. This is particularly valuable in the corporate world, where collaboration with individuals from various cultures and ideologies is often required. Tolerance plays a crucial role in this process. Dealing with a large number of household members requires significant levels of patience and tolerance. Temporal management aptitudes play a pivotal role within such circumstances. Particularly, homemakers, with a notable emphasis on women, exhibit exceptional prowess in efficiently fulfilling substantial responsibilities within specified time frames. These are fundamental skills crucial in the corporate world, where one often works with diverse groups of people, sometimes in challenging situations that require emotional control. Such valuable background knowledge is ingrained in the Indian culture.

Next crucial skill is decision-making. Typically, decisions in India are entrusted to the elderly. This does not imply that the younger generation is devoid of decision-making abilities; however, due to the wisdom and experience of the older generation, younger individuals often defer to them for important choices. The older generation takes it upon themselves to amicably resolve various issues among household members, and members are generally willing to accept the decisions made by their elders. This kind of decision-making skill is passed down from the older to the younger generations within the household. Consequently, when

situations arise that necessitate decision-making, these individuals, having witnessed such processes at home, are well prepared to make informed decisions in their professional endeavors.

Another significant facet of Indian culture is the practice of showing respect to the elderly, symbolized by the gesture of bowing down and touching their feet. This act carries a deeper meaning as it signifies a humble attitude devoid of ego. When you touch your elders' feet, you acknowledge your own insignificance and embrace humanity. Likewise, when elders bless the younger generation by allowing them to touch their feet, they do so with love and affection without a sense of superiority. While not explicitly taught as skills, these virtuous qualities are ingrained in individuals through Indian traditions. Consequently, when the younger generation enters the workforce, they bring with them a mindset that is free of ego, prejudices, or negative thoughts. They emerge as open and receptive individuals, making them valuable assets in the job market.

Soft skills have emerged as an indispensable facet of professional life. Fostering soft skills not only enhances the individual prospects but also contributes to the nation's growth. India's workforce of the future will be greatly influenced by the development of soft skills like communication, teamwork, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. As the cradle of civilization, India boasts a rich tradition that serves as a profound resource for soft skills. A thorough understanding of Indian culture and traditions provides a clear blueprint for the desirable soft skills sought in the competitive job market. Indian Culture's commitment to nurture soft skills is a treasure for all the generations to relish.

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