

Redesigning Curriculum for Overall Development

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Abstract

The discussion of new curriculum in the institution today is an issue to be taken seriously because of the changing pattern of the industry and its demand in the form of fresh candidates from the institutes. India is a country where we have good resources but still are not properly utilized. The candidates have rich qualification and attain good record of results but still unable to achieve what they dreamt for themselves. Today it being a tough time, the employer desires people having jack of skills and they promote people those are self directed, having soft skills and ready to take challenges at every path of their life apart from the academic knowledge. Therefore, it becomes very tough in the market to compete. The employability issue among the graduates has become a serious issue because of the required skills among the candidates. They started desiring people who have the ability to show leadership skills, fluent in communication, work in a team, and entrepreneurial interest. It becomes very tough job as most of the institutions those are imparting education have Soft Skills as a core subject. Though in most of the institutions some workshops are conducted, but that is not sufficient. For imparting soft skills the students need to undergo various phases to understand and retain what is taught in the class to become strong in the tough competition of market. Audibert and James emphasize the importance of soft skills from employers' point of view to retain help people at their positions. According to them "Soft skills such as leadership, communication, teambuilding and entrepreneurial interest have become important to establish oneself and get opportunity in promotion and maintaining their positions at the workplace and society. The skills required by the industry like Self Management, Communications, Managing people and tasks, Mobilizing Innovation and Change can be grasped provided the institute include this subject in the curriculum and conduct classes regularly for the students and make them employable. The scholars in this paper put emphasis on the necessary incorporation of certain skills under the umbrella "Soft Skills" in the curriculum being followed showing importance and relevance of soft skills and various pedagogies to be applied.

Key Words soft skills, modules, personality development, communication skills, interaction, behavioral skills training etc.

Introduction

The present time is the time where simply grabbing of bookish knowledge is not

sufficient. Today when we are talking about tough competition in the market, it has become necessary for the students to not

only perform well but have technical as well as behavioral skills to survive in the industry and to maintain liaison in the field. To be success at the work place one should have skills that define personal attributes and enhance interaction, quality of jobs, career prospects. Here the colleges, institutes, Universities can play an important role to impart skills and knowledge that help them placing in the industries and to establish business. The institution should change in their curriculum components of Soft Skills through which the students learn to interact well, can present well, add value to their personality, can improve communication, inter-personal skills, learn leadership qualities, and acquire knowledge related to the industry.

Background

When we go through the literature based on Soft Skills, we will find that many thinkers, trainers have listed many corporate skills required or judged during recruitment process and that make the candidate different from others. Today every recruiter first judge the candidates on Soft Skills parameters and this particular demand of the recruiters made the competition tighter and tougher. When we talk about Soft Skills, the HR department of any organization always looks for interpersonal skills, communication skills and management skills. At present the well developed, trained soft skills students are very hard to be found and therefore, when the fresher's join the organization, the management give the m training on the same and it takes time to groom and to develop them, therefore, the recruiters now a day's started demanding people who are well versed in soft skills, so

that the moment they join the industry, they start working and establish rapport with the market.

This shows that the industry as well as the institute has gap between demand and supply in the form of skills the students have or need to enhance. And therefore, it is necessary for a the institutes today to interact with the industry people, the recruiters, HR people and find out what exactly the industry require and how can they fulfill the demand to improve productivity, and profitability.

Hewitt Sean (2008) said those candidates who wish to get an edge over their competitor should refine their soft skills as today's professionals need to encompass a high soft skills quotient, apart from the domain knowledge in order to succeed at the workplace. He further added that to inculcate soft skills in them the institute has to impart training as part of the syllabus clubbed with their regular domain syllabus to help students improve their personality, compatibility to secure a respectable position in the industry.

The Center for Career Opportunities at Purdue University defines soft skills as "the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark each of us to varying degrees." Their list of soft skills includes work ethic, courtesy, teamwork, self discipline, self-confidence, conformity to prevailing norms, and language proficiency. Soft skills are different and distinct from Hard Skills. Soft skills are those skills that add more value to the hard skills adorned by an individual. In

spite of such great relevance of soft skills in the present corporate world many institutions are yet to introduce soft skills in their curriculum, even though studies and findings suggest that there is a dire need of incorporating

soft skills trainings in their curriculum, to ensure commendable placements, According to Tobin soft skills are "non-technical, intangible, personality specific skills" which determines an individual's strength as "a leader, listener and negotiator, or as a conflict mediator". Soft skills are the traits and abilities of attitude and behavior rather than of knowledge or technical aptitude

Martin Carole of the opinion that Soft Skills are "cluster of personality traits, social graces, personal habits, friendliness and optimism." It is not a substitute of hard skills but serve as an effective tool to groom the youth.

The Need of Developing Soft Skills

Soft Skills are the need of the hour, when we talk about tough competition, we simply cannot grab the bookish knowledge and depend upon it, in fact we need to be equipped with the relevant skills demanded by the recruiters or through which we can maintain ourselves the work place and can do justice to our jobs. When we are on the progressive ladder, we have to have skills which enable us to establish in the market, that help us to compete with a number of people in the industry. Today there is a huge mass of qualified job seekers existing in the society and the competition within them for job acquisition becoming tougher. To get an edge over the competitors

they are left with no other choice but to add required skills with soft skills to exhibit their true potential. If one has got advanced soft skills then definitely he will be able to establish them and instinct amongst other job seekers.

Looking the interest & importance of Soft Skills at the institute level, Thacker & Yost noted that the fresher's need training to groom to gel with the present time and the system. Many a time the industrialists and the HR managers complain that the fresher's coming directly from the colleges, institutes lack leadership skills, they are not good at communication & interpersonal skills, the poor management starts training on them and it consumes time.

According to Knell (2007) employers are continually asking for a workforce rich in creativity, communication skills and cultural understanding.

In the year 2013 The NASSCOM McKinsey stated that shortages in soft skills , including communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, high order thinking, responsiveness as far more crucial than hard or technical skills as they found only 25% of students from engineering colleges are directly employable and the situation has not changed in the last five years in India. Poor soft skills like communication skills create a negative impression with employers during the recruitment phase and may exclude a graduate with good technical skills from being selected for employment (Pauwand et al, 2006).

Today whatever condition we experience in the industry or the employability, it is because of lack of soft skills, because the

institutes impart all sort of knowledge except soft skills without which the students do not learn to present, to express, hence, soft skills components after having discussed with the HR and industrialists may be incorporated to make the students place able. To some extent the IT sector companies felt good when interacted with the students where the Soft Skills training program is introduced and found the students well versed in comparison to others. The success rate was high who attended soft skills sessions and found lack in communication, lack of expression who could not attend sessions on soft skills.

Based on these evidence and interaction with the HR of various companies, we can infer that there is dire need of soft skills training prior to join the corporate world to develop students and to prepare them for the industries. The management of the institutes, colleges has to see how can they incorporate it in their regular curriculum and benefit the students. They need to prepare module which would possibly train the students on assertiveness, negotiation skills, communication skills and the skill to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. As such it's felt as these Soft skills as those capabilities that are inherent in an individual. These competencies or skill sets does exist in every individual to a particular level.

Objectives:

- To enhance skills to express effectively.
- To develop interpersonal skills LIKE motivation, team spirit and leadership skills.

The Process

The Soft Skills training can be divided in two parts. One includes various attributes and attitude & the other include fine-tuning on different skills to express attitude, ideas, views, thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc. The first part of the training give students to understand self and their potency to evaluate themselves to fight the hurdles come across. The second part of the training deal with the importance of LSRW, non-verbal, behavioral skills. Apart from these the grooming of students will take place to develop confidence and to look smart while interacting with the mass.

The idea behind both the parts to orient students on the job where they are able to express clear, correct and concise. To achieve success in it the trainers need to prepare module for different cadre of students to make students learn language skills, behavioral skills. Here the students get training of personal growth for working effectively. They also get to know their strengths, weakness and can prepare them accordingly. The trainer can include a variety of topics relevant for the students and market like Aptitude test, team work, leadership skills, Time management, interpersonal skills, negotiation, conflict management, goal setting, punctuality, listening skills, social grace, cooperative and coordination to add values among students and help improve personality. As employment conditions become tougher, potential recruiters look for personal attributes like attitude and values. Training in Group Discussion(the GD's) and Personal Interview (PI) is given through conducting series of simulated 'mock sessions' before the students go

through real job interviews, they are made to go through a series of practice sessions on GD and PI.

The pedagogy to impart skills under soft skills training may be adopted by trainer practically whereby he/she can conduct activity like role plays, cue card activity, live projects, operations workout, business story presentation, quiz, case study method, experiential learning, presentations, videos of highly motivated industrialists, business tycoons, etc. It is expected that certain changes may occur after having exposed with the above stated activities if the students are serious in their career.

Here the role of a trainer is very important, the trainer has to motivate all the students and take part seriously with the students to gel with them to take part in all activities actively and effectively. And this new student's will easily absorbed in the industry

easily as the inputs were taken in advance while preparing training module from the industry. During the training the trainer has to have the record of students before and after having exposed with the activities, so that the end of the day, the trainer can tell the stud bets their changes in personality and behavior. The trainer even can store the feedback taken from students and time to time they may expose with the industry experts also for appropriate feedback and suggestions. Apart from this the trainer should also see to how soft skills can be clubbed with the domain knowledge to turn the monotonous way of teaching and add value to the system to help the management retain students

Leadership skill:

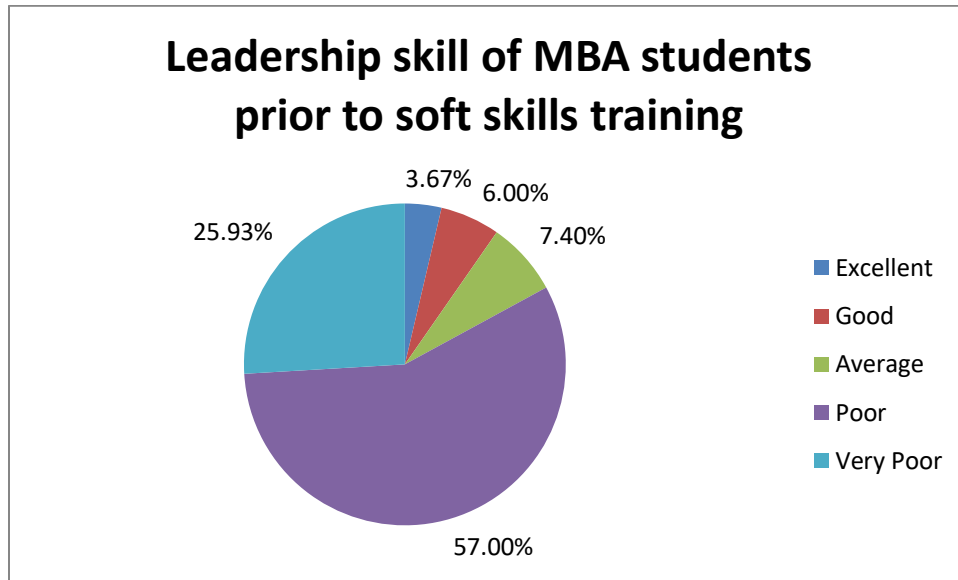
Data relating to leadership skill were collected from the human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4.9

Leadership skill among MBA students prior to soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Leadership skill	55	90	111	855	389	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	220	270	222	855	0	1567

Chart 4.13



Analysis of table 4.9 and chart 4.13 shows that majority of MBA students i.e. 82.93% were poor to very poor at leadership skill. Merely 10% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. Human resource managers of all the six companies were quite disappointed with the students' inability to handle and manage the situations given to them. They were not confident, appropriate regarding their decision level

and were quite confused. They were quite hesitant and were lacking the zeal of taking the decisions while acting as a leader.

After three months intensive training of soft skills having good number of sessions on leadership skill improvement the following data relating to leadership skill of same 250 MBA students were collected from the same human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4.10

Leadership skill among MBA students after soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Leadership skill	115	190	235	700	260	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	460	570	470	700	0	2200

Chart 4.14

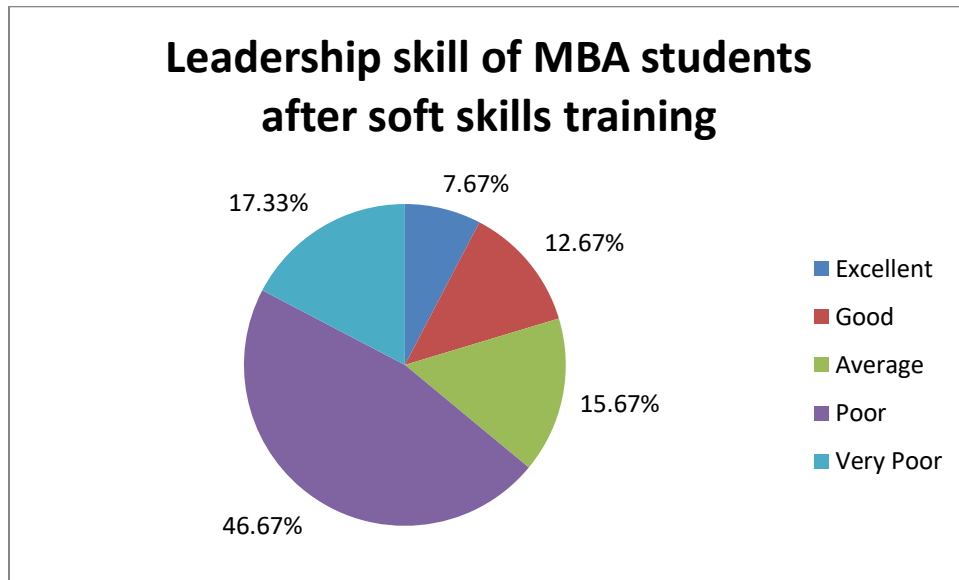


Table 4.10 and chart 4.14 reveals that 64% MBA students were still poor or very poor in leadership after 3 months intensive soft skills training. Near about 21% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. This assessment was done by the same human resource managers who interviewed these 250 MBA students earlier. HR managers were not all that dissatisfied after interviewing the same students again.

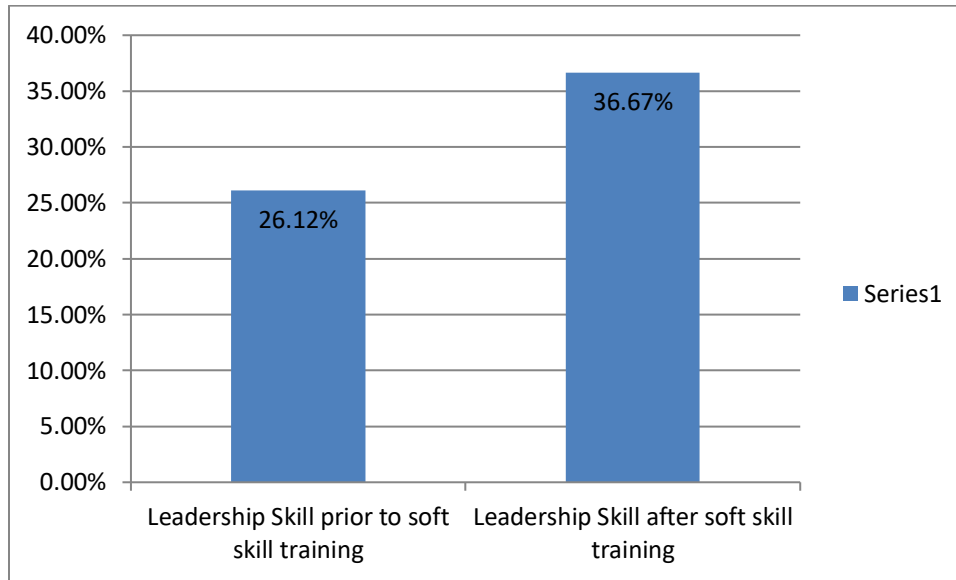
They were little more confident, were having better performance while taking

decisions. They were able to handle and manage the situations well.

Chart 4.15 clearly shows that leadership scores of MBA students which were 26.12% (total marks 1567) prior to soft skills training improved and reached upto 36.67% (total marks 2200) after three months intensive soft skills training. It clearly indicates that level of leadership is low among MBA students and it can be improved by intensive soft skills training.

Chart 4.15

Comparative scores of leadership skills of MBA students prior to & after soft skills training



To ascertain whether the improvement achieved in level of leadership skill of MBA students through intensive soft skills training is significant or not; Z test was conducted.

$$|Z| = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{P_0 q_0 \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = \frac{.3667 - .2612}{\sqrt{.31395 \times .68605 \left(\frac{1}{250} + \frac{1}{250} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = 2.54$$

Since the computed value of $Z = 2.54$ is higher than critical value of $Z = 1.96$. It does not lie in acceptance region at 5% level of significance. Thus we can say that there is significant difference between level of leadership skill prior to soft skills training & after soft skills training. It improves significantly after intensive soft skills training.

Motivation skill:

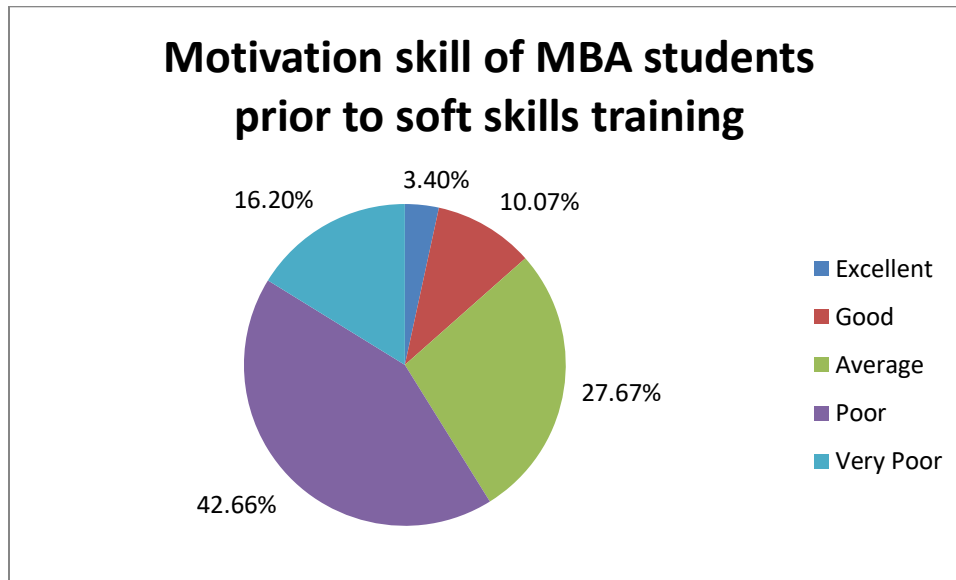
Data relating to motivation skill were collected from the human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4.11

Motivation skill among MBA students prior to soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Motivation skill	51	151	415	640	243	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	204	453	830	640	0	2127

Chart 4.16



Analysis of table 4.11 and chart 4.16 shows that majority of MBA students i.e. around 59% were poor or very poor at motivation skill. Merely 13.5% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. Human resource managers of all the six companies were quite disappointed with the students' motivation level as they were having no zeal in doing the task. They were unconfident, demotivated and lacking

knowledge. They were quite hesitant even in speaking about themselves.

After three months intensive training of soft skills having good number of sessions on motivation skill improvement the following data relating to motivation skill of same 250 MBA students were collected from the same human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4.12

Motivation skill among MBA students after soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Motivation skill	110	180	465	515	230	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	440	540	930	515	0	2425

Chart 4.17

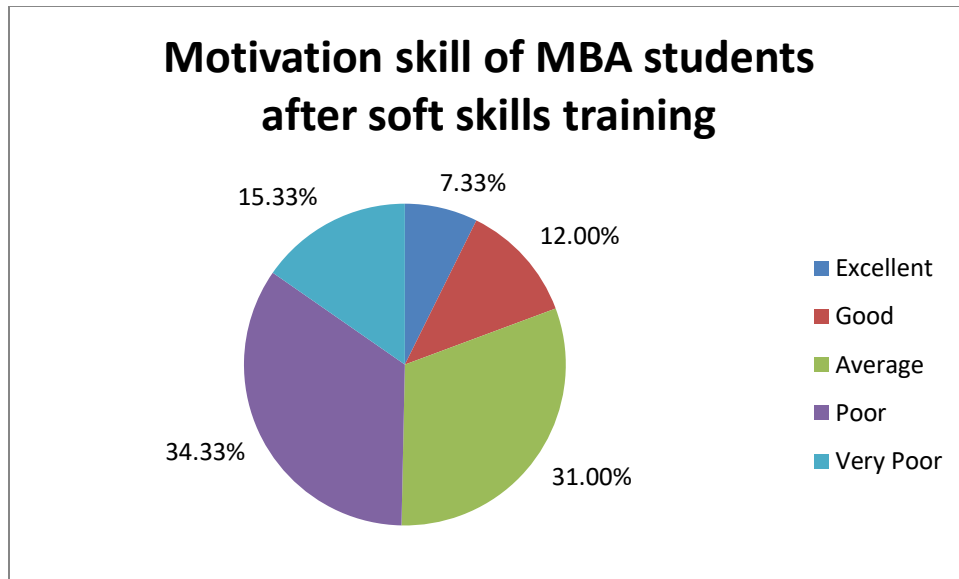


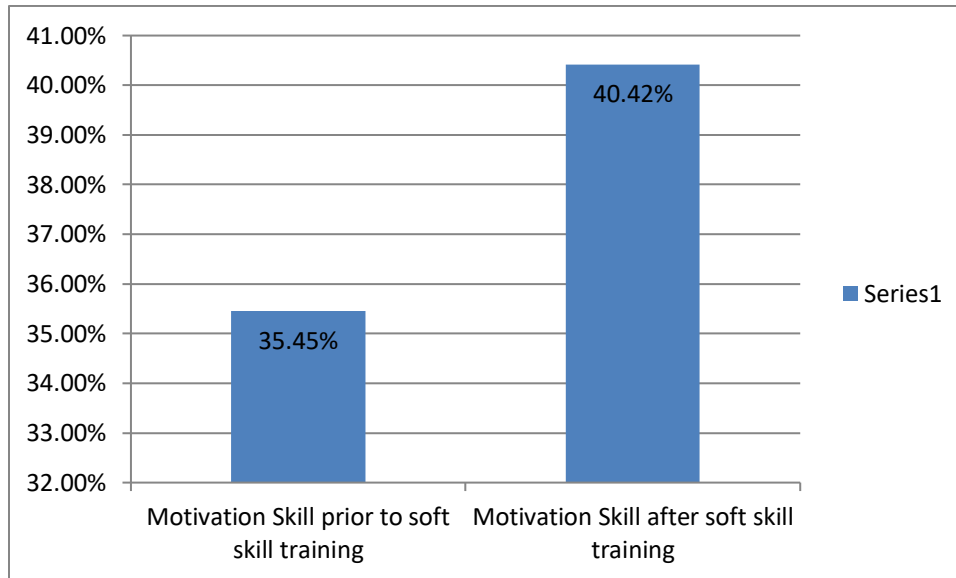
Table 4.12 and chart 4.17 reveals that 50% MBA students were still poor or very poor in motivation skill after 3 months intensive soft skills training. 19.33% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. This assessment was done by the same human resource managers who interviewed these 250 MBA students earlier. HR managers were less dissatisfied after interviewing the same students again.

Students were little more confident, fluent and motivated. They were having the spark and zeal to learn new things.

Chart 4.18 clearly shows that motivation scores of MBA students which were 35.45% (total marks 2127) prior to soft skills training improved and reached upto 40.42% (total marks 2425) after three months intensive soft skills training. It clearly indicates that level of motivation is low among MBA students and it can be improved by intensive soft skills training.

Chart 4.18

Comparative scores of Motivation skills of MBA students prior to & after soft skills training



To ascertain whether the improvement achieved in level of Motivation skill of MBA students through intensive soft skills training is significant or not; Z test was conducted.

$$|Z| = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{P_0q_0 \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = \frac{.4042 - .3545}{\sqrt{.37935 \times .62065 \left(\frac{1}{250} + \frac{1}{250} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = 1.145$$

Since the computed value of Z=1.145 is lower than critical value of Z = 1.96. It does

lie in acceptance region at 5% level of significance. Thus we can say that there is no significant difference between level of motivation skill prior to soft skills training & after soft skills training. As far as motivation is concerned there is less improvement even after intensive soft skills training.

4.7 Team-work skill:

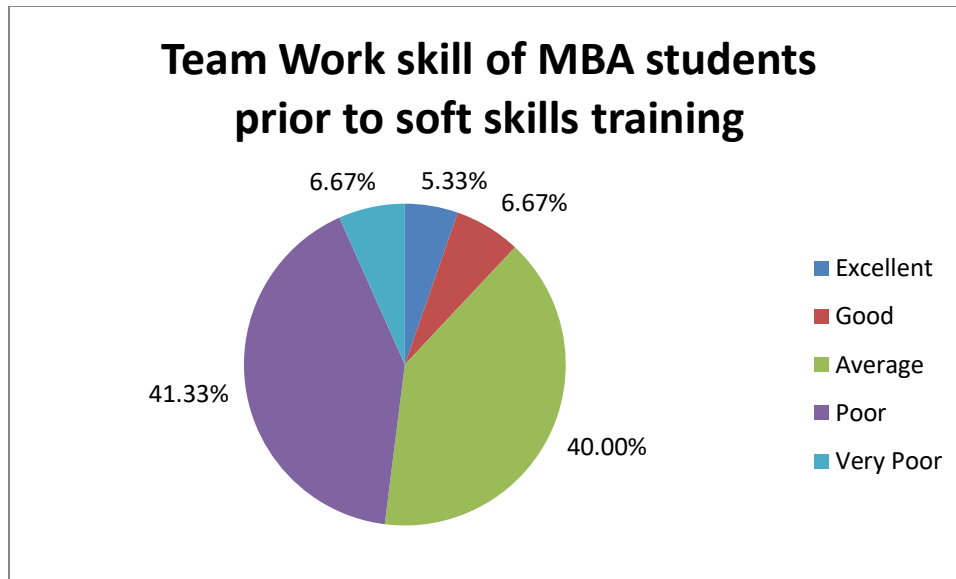
Data relating to team- work skill were collected from the human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4.13

Team work skill among MBA students prior to soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Team Work skill	80	100	600	620	100	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	320	300	1200	620	0	2440

Chart 4.19



Analysis of table 4.13 and chart 4.19 shows that majority of MBA students i.e. 48% were poor to very poor at team work skill. Merely 12% MBA students were between the range of good to excellent. Human resource managers of all the six companies were quite disappointed with the students' inability to work as a team. They were self-centered, were not aware about the team work, division regarding the work as per the

specialization. They were quite hesitant even in speaking with their team members.

After three months intensive training of soft skills having good number of sessions on team-work skill improvement; the following Data relating to team-work skill of same 250 MBA students were collected from the same human resource managers of 6 companies and tabulated as below-

Table 4.14

Team-work skill among MBA students after soft skills training

Soft Skill	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Team Work skill	120	150	880	310	40	1500
Points	4	3	2	1	0	
Scores	480	450	1760	310	0	3000

Chart 4.20

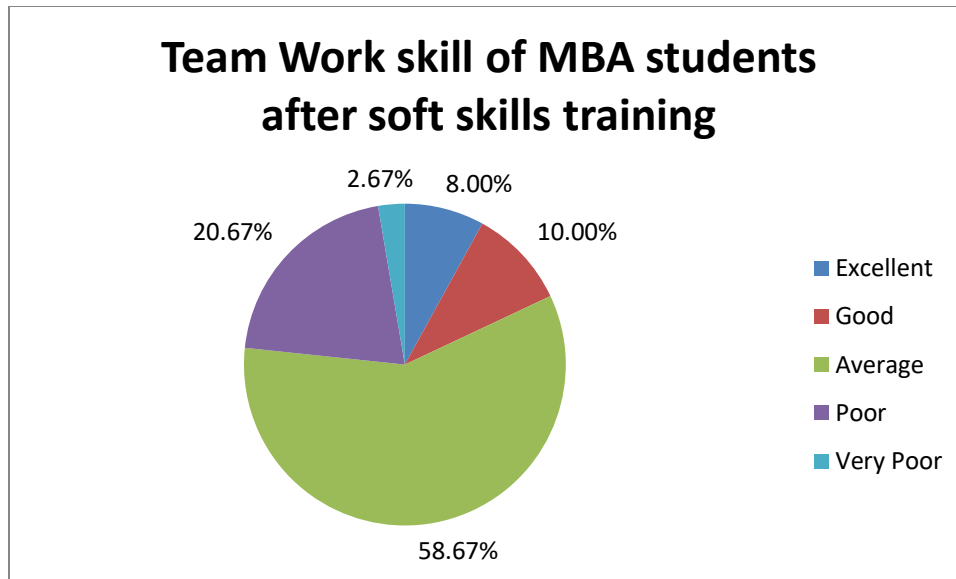


Table 4.14 and chart 4.20 reveals that just 23.33% MBA students were poor or very poor in team- work skill after 3 months intensive soft skills training. 68.67% MBA students were between the range of average and good. This assessment was done by the same human resource managers who interviewed these 250 MBA students earlier. HR managers were not all that dissatisfied after interviewing the same students again.

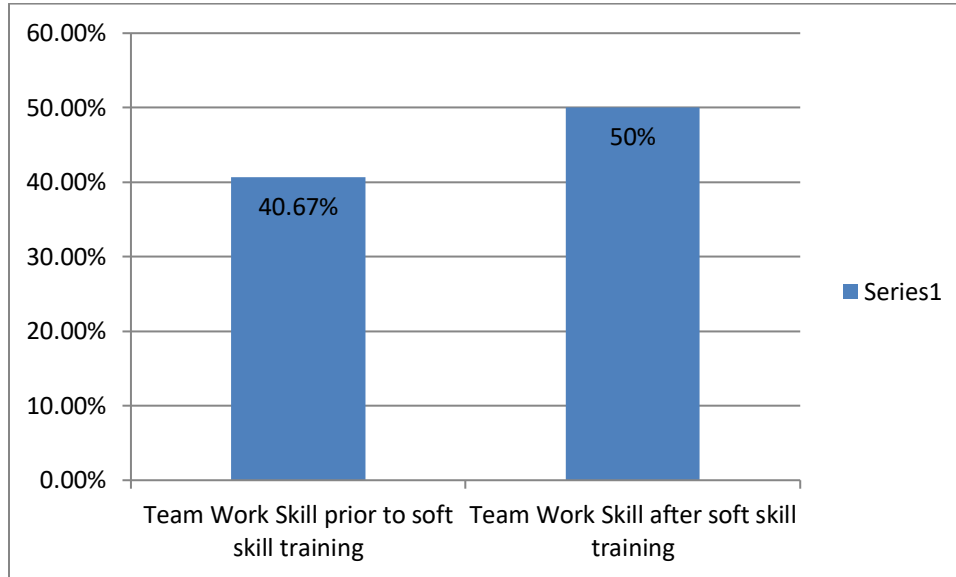
Students were little more confident and were able to work as a team. They learn how to

work cohesively. They spoke quite confidently with their group members.

Chart 4.21 clearly shows that team work scores of MBA students which were 40.67% (total marks 2440) prior to soft skills training improved and reached upto 50% (total marks 3000) after three months intensive soft skills training. It clearly indicates that level of team work skill is low among MBA students but it can be improved by intensive soft skills training.

Chart 4.21

Comparative scores of Team-work skills of MBA students prior to & after soft skills training



To ascertain whether the improvement achieved in level of Team-work skill of MBA students through intensive soft skills training is significant or not; Z test was conducted.

$$|Z| = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sqrt{P_0q_0 \left(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = \frac{.5 - .4067}{\sqrt{.4534 \times .5467 \left(\frac{1}{250} + \frac{1}{250} \right)}}$$

$$|Z| = 2.09$$

Since the computed value of Z= 2.09 is higher than critical value of Z = 1.96. It does not lie in acceptance region at 5% level of significance. Thus we can say that there is significant difference between level of team-work skill prior to soft skills training & after soft skills training. It improves significantly after intensive soft skills training.

Findings and conclusion:

The researchers ultimately found that the industry in India is moving with a great pace and therefore, it is a mandatory for the young graduates to work according to meet the requirements of the industries. They should work in aligned with the guidelines of the industrialists and take help of the mentors to improve their Leadership skills, Motivation, Team Spirit skills and likes. Apart from the regular subjects being taught, the fresher need to undergo various types of training at the graduation level to groom and develop themselves, hence at the institution level they should be motivated to take an active part in all the activities being conducted in the institutions, in fact it should be made compulsory for them to work hard and learn the above listed skills to overcome the challenges they will face after having joined the organization prior to that phase.

Conclusion

Based on the study the researchers reached to the conclusion that various behavioral skills are required at the time of interaction for placements and overall grooming and development of students at large therefore, it should be reflected in the curriculum and make it regularize to help students learn the corporate etiquette and to improve their skills which are utmost important today and demanded by the industries.

In view of the problems being faced by the organizations, the following are some suggestions on which the educational industry should work out and include in the regular syllabus to make a complete package for the market.

1. Focus should be given on Motivation and Leadership Skills from the beginning of the session.

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2. Students' abilities and skills be refined in terms of fluency in language so as to provoke qualitative thought process in problem solving, critical reflective ability, flexibility, and adaptability, willingness to learn and to continue to learn.
3. Industry need people with a jack of traits therefore, students be prepared accordingly, means more focus be given on practical aspects of business.
4. Students are taught with proper grooming with appropriate skills that help them present well.

With these points the researchers conclude that the employability quotient be taken care at the institute level to make the students more employable and placeable in the market.