

# Globalisation,Technology Inflows And Employability Of Technical Workforce: A Case Study Of ICT Sector Of India

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## ABSTRACT

*The qualified human resources with high competitiveness and employability skills are needed to face the era of technological disruption, but employers find a lack of expertise among job seekers. Insufficient skills are the issue of education quality. The study aims to assess the determinants of employability of technical workforce in India' s ICT sector. In order to fulfill the objective, 400 questionnaires were distributed to respondents of various streams of IT sector from three premier locations of NCR i.e. Delhi, Gurgaon and Noida. However, I managed to get 250 filled questionnaires with response rate of 63 percent. Factor analysis is deployed to determine the determinants of employability. Findings suggested that there is dire need to enhance communication skills, adaptability skills, computer literacy skills, social skills, leadership skills, business skills etc on the part of employees and graduates. The stakeholders, including academics, can lead a social dialogue towards a deliberate approach to develop graduate employability.*

**Keywords:** Employability skills, workforce, ICT sector, factor analysis

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## I. INTRODUCTION

After independence, India was wary of the consequences of dependent development due to its debilitating experience of the colonial past. As a result, India' s development strategy was launched in 1950s.The main objectives of development strategy were the establishment of industrial based economy, especially in basic goods and heavy machine building. The policy makers further emphasized for achievement of self reliance. Government adopted a policy of selective interdependence that allowed import of critical technologies and skills in the most essential areas in order to meet the immediate needs of the country' s industrial sector, on the one hand; and on the other, it strongly favored the strengthening of the country' s own scientific and technological infrastructure.The strategy adopted for growth and progress in India was heavily reliant on planned economy with an emphasis on active public sector participation in economic development.

During 1956-57 to 1977-78, the policy of import substitution was adopted to protect infant and strategic industries. Import substitution was an important phase in the industrialization and development process, but its impact was gross misallocation of resources to industry and enterprises, which provided no inherent advantages and could not survive in competition internationally.

Prior to 1991, foreign trade of India suffered from strict bureaucratic and discretionary controls. After 1991, all the exercises at the government level were related to the changing economic scenario, where privatization would certainly create an environment conducive for the induction of the latest technology and would unleash both entrepreneurship and innovation, which is expected to have a multiplier effect on other industries. Well known formulas from reforms were set again; market supporting institutions; a skilled and adaptable labour; integration into the global economy; good institutions; including good laws and effective enforcement mechanism and strong financial institutions. Undoubtedly there is universal agreement that it is essential to build a strong human capital base by reforming education.Thus a wide network of universities, engineering colleges and institutes of technology including medical and other technical and research institutes was forged, which eventually created in India, one of the largest reservoir of technically trained and skilled manpower in the world(Chadha,2008).

Globalization, increased competition, accelerated technological change, massification of higher education, and evolution of the knowledge/digitised economy has increased the need for ever-rising workforce capabilities in a rapidly changing world. Rapid technological change and equally rapid knowledge obsolescence has led to fast changes in job structures and skill-demands. Increasingly, organizations are looking for a more

capable workforce that can handle increased complexity in the workplace, which inevitably has raised questions about the nature of graduates leaving the tertiary education system (Mainga, Daniel and Alamil, 2022)

Although, a large number of engineering graduates are produced every year in the country, yet the quality of large fraction of these graduates is very much questionable and is below par. Estimates state that 75 per cent of the technical graduates and more than 85 per cent of the general graduates are unemployable by India's high growth global industries. Although, the current demand for workforce is primarily for lower end of the market (IT, BPO, coding and testing, etc.) which can be coped up by non-engineering graduates as well, along with engineering graduates, yet the sustained success in the global market will require the use of highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce (Anand, 2011).

Basically, employability of technical graduates is the congruity or consistence between technical education and the specific professional requirement of the industry. It manifests in the person's capability of gaining initial employment, sustaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required. In contemporary working life, employees' technical or vocational skills are not a sufficient guarantee of employability (Fugate, Kinicki and Ashforth, 2004). Workers need to acquire other skills or attributes, usually soft skills or interpersonal skills, particularly in sectors where work requires customer interaction (Marks and Scholarios, 2007). The new emphasis on employability, moreover, presupposes a greater role for markets to operate in the sphere of skills and competence development. Employability is being linked to knowledge acquisition and learning. This is also reflected in the belief that skills and competences need to be constantly updated, hence the recent emphasis of policy makers on lifelong learning to reflect the more dynamic context of contemporary workplaces (Svensson, 2004). It is noticeable within the ICT sector is that the notion of skills and competencies for broader employability is put to one side so that organizations, instead, focus on those competencies that are necessary for organizational survival (Scholarios et al., 2008). The requisite attributes or traits, although deemed to be learnable, are acquired on the job rather than in formal classroom settings, such attributes or traits are, in effect, add on components or generic employability skills to vocational or technical skills and include such things as dependability, responsibility and positive attitudes towards work. It has been found in a research that has been carried in Scottish software sector that technology-based qualifications are becoming less important for employability and that non-technical graduates could be trained to possess the relevant skills. Skills training is not something formally provided and resourced by employers as part of a package designed to satisfy their employability requirements. Any personal development where it occurs is something largely undertaken by the workers themselves on their own initiative (Augustsson and Sandberg, 2004).

Due to growing graduate unemployment and underemployment, employability skills of new university graduates have become a concern to university administrators, employers, government ministries, graduating students and other stakeholders. Padmini (2012) also highlighted that employability is far bigger a challenge than unemployment. Though there is increasing number of job opportunities emerging across sectors, India is reeling under the pressure of severe shortage of quality talent in the job market. Industry leaders feel that the "skills" and "quality" of the workforce need a lot of improvement.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The present study aims to highlight the determinants of employability of technical workforce in India's ICT sector.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Employability of a professional in his job is the correspondence and matching of the ingrained attributes and skills in him, with the requirements of the job, to enable him to professionally and adeptly handle the assigned task. What sustains the employment of an incumbent in a technical job, has been well researched. There is no gainsaying the fact that most of these studies end up with recommendation in policy implications to stem the rot.

Zaharim et al., (2009) also found that beyond good academic qualifications, employers also required their new engineers to be equipped with relevant capabilities, skills, abilities and personal qualities. The sample included 30 employers at various engineering industry in the Klang Valley area of Malaysia. The findings of the study were that significant gap exists between the skills actually possessed by employees and the skills those were thought to be important by employers. The most important skills but found lacking among employees were teamwork, communication, problem-solving, lifelong learning, apply basic knowledge, understand professional, social and ethical responsibilities. The statistical results exhibited almost congruity between employers' perceptions and expectations of skills that employees should have and what they actually had.

Due to expanded nudge between the low ingrained competencies and technical requirements, Nauta et al., (2009) addressed the issue that how organizations can stimulate their employees to orient themselves towards their employability, even when they are currently happy with their job and career. The sample of 702 Dutch employees in health and welfare sector was chosen. Findings indicated that employability culture is positively

related to employability orientation but negatively related to turnover. The study recommended that organizations should adapt to changing environment and adopt a strong employability culture as it will stimulate employability orientation thereby decreasing turnover.

Adeyemo et al., (2010) found a large mismatch between university output and labour market requirements in Nigeria. The sample included employers' from public and private enterprises, professional associations and NGOs and 100 employees working in their organizations. The results revealed that many science graduates were not good enough in technical and practical skills, poor in entrepreneurial skills and were deficient in IT skills. Main reason behind that is poor education system in Nigeria.

Juhdi et al., (2010) tried to identify the factors that influence employees' employability using factor analysis. The study based on a sample of 260 employees, identified four constructs i.e. formal career management practices, informal career management practices, internal employability and external employability. Furthermore formal career management practices were positively related to external and internal employability whereas informal career management practices were found significantly related to external employability only. Training received by employees was related to internal and external employability. Job experiences were only significantly related to internal employability. Education and tenure had significant influence on external employability.

Abas-Mastura, Imam and Osman (2013) discussed about the skills preference of employers as well as skills acquisition and competence of employees. A sample of 220 respondents was equally distributed between employees and employers'. Findings indicate that employers preferred personnel management and teamwork skills which were sufficiently acquired by employees. Task performance was rated as satisfactory by employers and very satisfactory by employees. Skill acquisition and skill competence is significant and positively related to task performance.

Varwandkar and Deshmukh (2013) made an attempt to identify the factors impacting the employability of engineering graduates in Chattisgarh. A sample of 75 employed engineers with work experience of at least 5 years was selected for the study. The findings revealed that domain knowledge, empathy, communication skills, managerial ability had a significant impact on employability skills whereas motivation has no significant impact on employability skills

Vergos (2015) found the largest differences between the employers' perception of importance of a particular skill and his satisfaction about the presence of that skill in problem solving, practical skills and the ability to generate new ideas and foreign language(s). The study also highlighted the importance of workplace training to make up for and fill gaps in what are considered to be basic skills that should be provided during study at university. Mainly employers find difficult to recruit graduates in a specific field as they lack essential skills.

Loquias (2015) made an attempt to examine the status of employment of electronics engineering graduates of Camarinessur polytechnic colleges from 1997 to 2011 by investigating the usage competencies developed by graduates during the course of their studies in present jobs and identify the factors that affect the employability of graduate. A sample of 180 (130 males and 50 females) engineering graduates was considered, out of which 165 are working and 15 are unemployed. The study found mismatch between college outputs and industry requirements. Therefore students undergo additional trainings after completing their graduation. Furthermore communication skills are identified as the most important factor in securing employment. Their employability is mostly affected by their acquired academic profile and skills competencies.

Misra and Khurana(2017) explored the theoretical concepts and models of employability to ascertain gaps between the knowledge and skills imparted by academia as well as knowledge and skills considered as important by employers while hiring. The study raised concern over the current state of employability skills in India as it will be facing huge skill gaps in future and suggested that there is exigent need to transform or shift from rote learning practices to reflective learning.

Siddoo et al.,(2019) employed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and found that industries had most expected competencies in the Professional skills and IT knowledge category, followed by the IT technical category and IT management and support category. The top five competencies desired were lifelong learning, personal attitude, teamwork, dependability, and IT foundations. The demand of basic IT for work, database skills, English for IT and software application are also needed in labour market.

Thirunavukarasu et al.,(2020) examined the interpretation of students on the graduate employability and the extent of influence that exists based on the learning outcomes. The gaps between the academic environment and graduate employability awareness are highlighted. The analytical results portrayed that the different levels of expectation and experiences that prevailed in the graduate course need substantial focus in future curriculum development.

Mainga, Daniel and Alamil (2022) tried to determine the relative importance of different employability skills for business graduates seeking initial employment. The results found the statistical significant differences in perceived importance of communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills between graduating students and

employers. The study suggested that graduates by increasing their self awareness and critical reflection on their learning experiences, graduating students can take proactive steps to enhance their positional advantage in the labour market.

### III. DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

The Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector is segmented into Information Technology(IT) sector and Telecommunications sector. The scope of the present study is confined only to IT sector which envelops four segments viz Hardware, Software Products and Engineering, Research &Development, IT Services and BPM(Business Process Management).

The main objective of present study is to determine the factors that influence the employability of India's technical manpower in ICT sector. A survey was carried in 3 selected cities of National Capital Region (NCR) i.e. Delhi, Gurgaon and Noida. A sample of 400 respondents, who are employees of organizations; including Multinational Corporations (MNCs), India's Top 500/India's Top 500-1000, Industry Best and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), was chosen randomly. However, out of 400 chosen respondents, only 250 respondents responded. Thus the response rate was 63 percent. The sample constitutes 33 percent of respondents from BPM/BPO segment. Furthermore, 30 percent, 20 percent and 17 percent of the chosen employees are from Software products and engineering; Research and Development; Hardware and IT services segments respectively.

In study sample, 69 percent of respondents belong to the age group between 25-35 years. Approximately 20 percent belong to the age group of 35-45 years; and 6 percent each, belong to the age group of less than 25 years and more than 45 years respectively. Sample is predominantly composed of male respondents, whereas female respondents constitute 30 percent of the total sample. Most of respondents i.e. (62 percent) have qualified Bachelors' degree. Approximately, 19 percent each have qualified Masters' degree and others including diplomas and professional courses etc. None of the respondents in study sample has qualified Doctorate degree. Mostly sample respondents i.e. 65 percent have got their degrees from private institutions and rest 35 percent are qualified from public institutions.

Nearly 65 percent of the respondents are having less than 5 years work experience. Approximately 31 percent are having work experience between 5-10 years, while only 4 percent have work experience more than 10 years. On the other side, 75 percent of respondents stated that training is provided by their respective organizations to update their skills, while 25 percent argued that their organizations do not provide any sort of industrial trainings/on-job trainings/practical trainings. Furthermore, 62 percent of employees agreed that training provides immense help in achieving their targets while 22 percent disagree with this viewpoint. Nearly 17 percent are of the opinion that it could have been better.

Majority of the respondents i.e. 58 percent are of the opinion that training programmes are organized in an effective manner while 22 percent of respondents argued that it could have been better. Furthermore, 20 percent of respondents stated that training programmes are not organized in an effective manner. The primary reason behind this is lack of poor funding for ineffective implementation of training programmes. Majority i.e. 57 percent of respondents believed that instructors provide knowledgeable training that helps in increasing their efficiency and productivity while 26 percent of respondents argued that it could have been better. Further 17 percent strongly hold the view that instructors are not capable of providing enlightened training.

In study sample, 40 percent of the sample respondents bring to light that their organizations found them not good enough for position and entrust with a specific training program. Mainly respondents have been assigned with programmes specific to enhance their software application skills. Nearly 60 percent revealed that they have not been recommended for a training program specifically by their respective organizations in wake of inefficiency.

The present study deployed factor analysis to 50 statements representing various employability skills, with the purpose to analyze the perceptions of employees regarding the skills they possess, which results in extraction of 13 factors. Factor analysis investigates whether a number of variables of interest  $Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_K$  are linearly related to a small number of unobservable factors  $F_1, F_2, \dots, F_K$ .

Each Y variable be linearly related to the two factors, as follows:

$$Y_1 = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11} F_1 + \beta_{12} F_2 + e_1$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21} F_1 + \beta_{22} F_2 + e_2$$

$$Y_3 = \beta_{30} + \beta_{31} F_1 + \beta_{32} F_2 + e_3$$

The error terms  $e_1, e_2,$  and  $e_3$  serve to indicate that the hypothesized relationships are not exact. The parameters  $\beta_{ij}$  are referred to as loadings.

In present study,

$$Y_1 = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11} F_1 + \beta_{12} F_2 + \dots + \beta_{1(13)} F_{13} + e_1$$

$$Y_2 = \beta_{20} + \beta_{21} F_1 + \beta_{22} F_2 + \dots + \beta_{2(13)} F_{13} + e_2$$

.....

$$Y_{50} = \beta_{50(0)} + \beta_{50(1)} F_1 + \beta_{50(2)} F_2 + \dots + \beta_{50(13)} F_{13} + e_{50}$$

$Y_1, Y_2, \dots, Y_{50}$  are the 50 statements representing employability skills.

$F_1, F_2, \dots, F_{13}$  are the 13 factors extracted viz Problem-solving skills; time management skills ;personnel organization and multitasking skills ; human skills; English language, literacy and communication skills; business skills ; adaptability skills ; leadership skills ; critical thinking skills ; computer literacy skills ; social skills ; application skills and essential life skills.

$\beta_{12}$  is the loading of variable  $Y_1$  on factor  $F_2$

Factor loadings are equivalent to the correlation between factors and variables when only a single common factor is involved. High loadings provide meaning and interpretation of factors.

It is possible to select factor score coefficients so that the first factor explains the largest portion of the total variance. Then a second set of factor score coefficients can be selected, so that the second factor accounts for most of the residual variance, subject to being uncorrelated with the first factor. Thus, the factors can be estimated so that their factor scores, unlike the values of the original variables, are not correlated (Malhotra, 2007). The present study uses factor analysis to analyze the perceptions of employees regarding the skills they actually possess, and the skills which ought to possess to make them employment sustainable and warrant their employability. Kaur and Kaur (2008) and Siddoo et al., (2019) also evaluated employees' ability regarding different employability skills using factor analysis.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As elaborated in the previous section, the sample respondents i.e. employees numbering 250 were asked to submit their perceptions for the employability skills they possessed on the basis of 50 statements in the questionnaire administered to them. Factor analysis applied on these 50 statements representing employability skills helped in generating a reduced number of factors

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for overall employability skills for employees working in the IT organizations yielded a score of 0.906, which is excellent value of common variance (Field, 2009 and Beavers et al., 2013). Tests of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Barlett's test of sphericity resulted in the correlation matrix presented in table 1.

**TABLE 1  
CORRELATION MATRIX FOR EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy	0.906
Barlett's Test of sphericity Approx chi- square	4651.168
Df	1225
Sig	.000

**Source:-** Primary Survey

**Note:-** Author's own Calculations

The Varimax rotation method was chosen to uncover a more meaningful pattern of item factor loadings. Table 2 reveals the total variance explained in 14 stages. At the initial stage, it shows the factors and their associated eigen values, percentage of variance explained and the cumulative percentage. In reference to the eigen values, 14 factors were extracted because they had eigen values greater than 1 with 61.731 percent of the variance explained.

**TABLE 2**  
**TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED**

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	cumulative %
1.	13.635	27.270	27.270	13.635	27.270	27.270	3.091	6.182	6.182
2.	1.794	3.587	30.858	1.794	3.587	30.858	2.948	5.897	12.079
3.	1.678	3.355	34.213	1.678	3.355	34.213	2.788	5.576	17.654
4.	1.473	2.947	37.159	1.473	2.947	37.159	2.648	5.297	22.951
5.	1.457	2.913	40.072	1.457	2.913	40.072	2.602	5.205	28.156
6.	1.404	2.807	42.879	1.404	2.807	42.879	2.599	5.197	33.353
7.	1.369	2.738	45.618	1.369	2.738	45.618	2.025	4.050	37.403
8.	1.247	2.493	48.111	1.247	2.493	48.111	1.958	3.916	41.319
9.	1.216	2.432	50.544	1.216	2.432	50.544	1.867	3.733	45.052
10.	1.200	2.400	52.944	1.200	2.400	52.944	1.852	3.704	48.756
11.	1.161	2.323	55.266	1.161	2.323	55.266	1.738	3.476	52.232
12.	1.123	2.246	57.513	1.123	2.246	57.513	1.676	3.352	55.585
13.	1.073	2.146	59.659	1.073	2.146	59.659	1.541	3.082	58.667
14.	1.036	2.072	61.731	1.036	2.072	61.731	1.532	3.064	61.731

**Source:-** Primary Survey

**Note:-**(i) Values extracted using Principal Component Analysis  
(ii) Author's own calculations

Furthermore in table 3 the output in SPSS has been derived from 14 factors. Each factor loading in table 3 below is a measure of the importance of the variable in measuring each factor.

**TABLE 3**  
**ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX**

FACTORS	COMPONENT													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Problem Solving Skills	0.638													
	0.631													
	0.529													
	0.511													
	0.436													
	0.328													
Time Management Skills		0.619												
		0.527												
		0.519												
		0.510												
		0.507												
		0.430												
Personnel organization and Multitasking skills			0.674											
			0.612											
			0.511											
			0.461											
			0.411											
Human Skills				0.664										
				0.580										
				0.496										
				0.453										
				0.427										
English Language, Literacy & Communication Skills					0.730									
					0.546									
					0.452									
					0.420									
					0.344									
Business Skills						0.576								
						0.546								
						0.545								
						0.509								
						0.462								
Adaptability Skills							0.736							
							0.593							
							0.377							
Leadership Skills								0.790						
								0.455						
Critical Thinking Skills									0.688					
									0.510					
Computer Literacy Skills										0.670				
										0.486				
										0.418				
Social Skills											0.678			
											0.549			
Application Skills												0.553		
												0.536		

													0.482		
Essential Life Skills														0.688	
														0.348	
															0.717

Source:- Primary Survey

Note:-

- (i) Values extracted using Principal Component Analysis
- (ii) Rotation method is Varimax with Kaiser Normalization and Rotation converged in 29 iterations
- (iii) Author's own calculations

Percentage of variance explained = 27.270% + 3.587% + 3.355% + 2.947% + 2.913%+2.807%+2.738%+ 2.493%+ 2.432% + 2.400% + 2.323% + 2.246%+ 2.146% = 59.659%.

Factor one extracted measures pertaining to problem solving skills with a total variance explained of 27.270 percent. Factor two and three extracted measures pertaining to time management skills and personnel organization and multitasking skills with a total variance of 3.587 percent and 3.355 percent respectively. Factor four and five, extracted measures pertaining to human skills and English language, literacy and communication skills with total variance of 2.947 percent and 2.913 percent respectively. Furthermore factor six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen extracted measure pertaining to business skills, adaptability skills, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, computer literacy skills, social skills, application skills and essential life skills with a total variance of 2.807 percent, 2.738 percent, 2.493 percent, 2.432 percent, 2.400 percent, 2.323 percent, 2.246 percent, 2.146 percent respectively. The item, describing that boss trusts you and assigns important tasks in the organization, is the only item loaded in the fourteenth factor and represents 2.072 percent of total variance explained. Therefore it is excluded as a factor to be considered in the present study. Hence only 13 factors are considered and the sum of eigen values associated with each of the thirteen factors is 59.659 percent.

The above results of the study are supported by Kaur and Kaur(2008)which reveals that employees consider themselves competent in problem- solving skills but needs to enhance other soft skills like communication skills, adaptability skills, computer literacy skills, social skills, leadership skills, business skills etc. Abas and Imam (2016) also contended that employees regard themselves as more competent in problem-solving skills which ultimately provides them with more benefits in performing contextual behavior. Jyung et al., (2020) regarded those individuals as best leaders who possess competent problem solving skills and also predicted that jobs requiring problem solving skills for abstract tasks are expected to increase as a result of changing economic scenario.

The following factors were extracted representing employability skills which employees perceive to be significant for the employability sustenance,in order of importance

- i Problem solving skills** – Problem solving skills is the ability to undertake, formulate and solve particular problem. Employers of professional labour market highly value problem solving skills and demand graduates to be competent in problem solving skills. However Adeyemo etal.,(2010); Blom and Saeki(2010) ;Vergos(2015) and Thirunavukarasu et al.,(2020) found significant skill gaps in problem solving skills and commented that universities/colleges focus much on theory rather than imparting practical knowledge. As a result, graduates are unable to think analytically and solve problems in the real world.
- ii Time management skills** - Time management skills is the most solicited skills by employers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the ability to complete tasks in an appropriate manner and time. However Yorke (2006) and Siddoo et al.,(2019) recommended that higher educational institutions should incorporate these skills in the curriculum of the respective courses so as to train graduates for the everadvancing technological frontiers of tomorrow.
- iii Personnel organization and multitasking skills** - It is the attribute of successful people to handle and manage different projects at one point of time. Kaur and Kaur (2008) and Soundararajan; Aro-Gordon; Ravikumar and Jesrani(2020) contended that the person possessing personnel management skills enhances his/her capability to work in teams as well.
- iv Human skills** – Apart from academic skills, employers want graduates to be fully equipped with other skills and competencies. Kaur and Kaur (2008) found strong association between employers’ job position and human skills. Gallardo(2020) also supported the fact that how significant are the high human skills at the middle level and the front line managers in the success of an organization in terms of retaining essential employees and their work performance productivity.



- v **English language, literacy and communication skills** – It is the most essential skill required to get and hold employment in recent economic scenario. Remedios (2012) and Gunagle and Zizka(2020) argued that communication skills; language proficiency can be enhanced by socializing with others.
- vi **Business skills** – Ability to start and run business efficiently is yet another important skill that is essential for one' s development. Blom and Saeki (2010)and Ali et al.,(2020) underlined the importance of intangible skills including business skills in new product development that results in sustainable competitive performance and also recommended that there is need on the part of higher educational institutions to incorporate business sense skills in curriculum of business programmes.
- vii **Adaptability skills** – In the fast changing dynamic world, driven by technological advancements, employers require graduates to adapt quickly to the fast changing needs of the labour market. Remadevi and Kumar (2011) highlighted that there is need to impart training regarding adaptability skills since childhood. Lee, Xu and Yang(2021) highlighted that career adaptability has proven to be useful in handling career challenges in amidst tough times.
- viii **Leadership skills** – It is the ability to guide, direct and motivate other group members to fulfill desired organizational goals. Hodges and Burchell (2003) and Thirunavukarasu. etal.,(2020) discussed that graduates least value leadership skills at the initial stage of their career. Therefore educational institutions should embed those activities in the curriculum that give personal and professional development, that further enhances leadership skills in graduates.
- ix **Critical thinking skills** – It is one of the most essential and required skills in workplace and outer world. Kaur and Kaur (2008) and Gunagle and Zizka(2020) stressed on the fact that creative thinking is very much required in graduates so as to face business challenges in the complex real world.
- x **Computer literacy skills** – In globalized economy, computer literacy skills are highly needed so as to gain and maintain employment. Blom and Saeki (2010) and Alrifai and Raju(2019) found significant skill gaps in basic and advanced computer skills as per employers' viewpoints.
- xi **Social skills** – Social skills are required so as to deal with clients in and out of workplace. Remedios (2012) and Fajaryati et al(2020) discussed although employers are satisfied with the technical skills of graduates but often complain about lacking of social skills in them.
- xii **Application skills** – Ability to apply knowledge to practical situations is often required in every workplace. Remedios (2012) and Konig,Jager-Biela and Glutsch(2020) argued that application skills should be incorporated in curriculum so as to make courses more relevant to the requirements of the organizations.
- xiii **Essential life skills** – These skills are needed to accomplish tasks in a positive manner.Lowden et al., (2011) and Lee, Xu and Yang(2021) emphasized that individuals possessing such skills effectively contribute to the organizational motives, which ultimately strengthen their employability.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The above analysis exudes that employees consider themselves competent in problem-solving skills but need to strengthen other essential skills. There is strong need to incorporate soft skills subjects in their course curriculum. Teachers should adopt methodologies such that soft skills training that may chisel their pupils into pragmatically employable staff. Students should be encouraged to participate in lead clubs/societies, participate in debates/group discussions, attend various courses that focus on enhancing their soft skills. Soft skills training should be given to graduates at university level and students must be aware of the needs of professional labour markets and try to meet the expectations of employers and evolve themselves accordingly. Stakeholders such as faculty, students, educational authorities and industry leaders should adopt an integrated approach to inculcate soft skills in students thereby enhancing their employability.

Nevertheless, even after implementation of above policies and schemes, employability of graduates is often circumspect. Therefore it is imperative that graduates reinforced their employability skills. In nutshell, many studies in the past have analyzed the perceptions of employees concerning the workplace skills they need in order to maintain entry level jobs; but the present study makes an effective contribution by throwing light on the valuable perceptions of the employees about the skills they have acquired and to what extent are these significant in sustaining their employability. The prime motive behind attending university/college for the majority of students is not to gain higher education only, but also to enhance their employability. Higher educational institutions and employers should collaborate to provide learning experiences that will foster the embedding of employability skills among graduating students.

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