Introduction

As the second fastest growing economy in the world today, India has already entered the league of trillion dollar economies. Its GDP is expected to continue growing at about 8% a year till 2022, by which time its population will reach 1.4 billion; 83% of the population increase will be in the 15-59 working age group making India home to 25% of the world’s workforce. Known as India’s demographic dividend, this development will give India an unrivalled edge in the globalized economy.

The Indian Government has set up a target to impart employment-linked skills to 500 million people by 2022. Here 12.8 million youngsters join the job-market every year; this number comprises highly skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled. Current skill-providing capacity of India is about 5 million per year. The deficit is obvious. National Skill development Corporation – NSDC – was set up as part of Government’s national Skill Development Mission. NSDC works through private sector participation, and among other criterion, litmus test for getting NSDC support is “the trainee must get employment”

A DASRA-Godrej white papers says ‘since the current system provides Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to only 25% of new entrants to the workforce, increasing capacity, improving utilization and enhancing the quality of TVET is essential to enhancing employability’ Despite a significant shift towards services, India’s past as a predominantly agrarian economy has resulted in populations that are poorly skilled and that engage in trades more aligned to the unorganized sector. This makes them largely unemployable in industry, where the job potential exists.

The recent study by PurpleLeap indicates that “only one out of ten students coming out of Tier II, III and IV Engineering colleges is readily employable”; that students across the country fall short of desired levels in generic abilities including communication skills and problem-solving skills; and that interventional training enhances probability of getting employment by four times.
Different stakeholders—the government, corporate sector, education sector, social businesses and non-profit groups—need to operate in a cohesive ecosystem to overcome the challenges of capacity, quality and utilization.

Employability has two sides – the ability to work and perform the task on hand (the hard-skills, vocational skills or professional skills) and the Soft skill, which is not a visible skill like the domain subject content in a student but it helps in improving the personality, ability to see through people and situation, and to manoeuvre factors not directly linked to the job, to get the job done.

News items also indicate scattered concern. Having the best brain, product or service in the world is not enough. One must also possess the skills to create a bridge of communication with the people who need to know your value. Harvard University is credited with stating that career achievements are 80% determined by soft skills and only 20% by hard skills.

An initiative of Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, several jail inmates from a sub-jail in Goa will be armed with a soft-skills and a business plan in their kitty, when they would be released in next 3-6 six months. This seems to be country's first ever initiative in the jail.

Hindustan Times (10 July 2012) reports of ‘efforts to make the traffic police force more cultured and courteous, a 10-week soft skills and communication training’ in Gurgaon; The Economic Times article ‘Effective leadership requires a mixture of soft and hard power skills’ talks about need of balance between hard and soft power for leaders; Financial Standard reports of leading industry associations’ expectations from the next generation attracted to financial advisery must possess the right soft skills, industry-specific education and strong ethics. The Hindu reports about MGR Medical University’s proposal for several changes in both teaching of the subjects and improving the soft skills of the medical profession students.
SEBI is reported (July 9, 2007) to ensure that regulatory officials have required ‘soft-skills’ to be patient in dealing with clients; and trained batches of 100s of officials.

Consider these facts:

- 40% of all adults have social anxiety, and 75% of all adults experience anxiety at a party with strangers - Dr. Bella De Paulo, People Often Can't Judge How They Impress Others
- A 2003 study co-sponsored by Johns Hopkins University found that 65% of surveyed employees witnessed what they considered to be uncivil behaviour in their workplace. 70% contemplated leaving their jobs as a result
- Front-line professionals reflect directly on the bottom line of a business and companies are recognizing that etiquette and protocol knowledge is a form of business intelligence
- An overwhelming 84% of respondents in the John Hopkins study believed that efforts to improve civility in their workplace would increase their personal productivity. However, more than a third (36%) said their company had no policy regarding professional interpersonal contact
- Less than 30% of U.S. business persons sent abroad can be expected to succeed. Training for employees for MNC work-culture can save companies tens of thousands of dollars, benefit the employee, and increase the company’s chances of being successful - The Wall Street Journal

Literature suggests that hard skills contribute to only 15% of one's skills success while remaining 85% is made by soft skills. [41]

**Definitions and Components of Soft Skills**

Various definition-like statements about “what is soft-skill” indicate the vastness, abstractness as well as significance and usefulness of soft-skills
“Soft skills are a sociological term relating to a person's "EQ" (Emotional Intelligence Quotient), the cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with other people”. (Source: www.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Soft_skills)

“Non-technical skills, such as the ability to communicate, problem-solve, empathize, be courteous, etc. Long assumed that these employee skills are naturally occurring, businesses are only now coming to the realization that their employees lack the soft skills to deal with others. ...” (Source: www.buzzwhack.com/buzzcomp/indsu.htm)

“As opposed to hard skills (professional competences). Soft skills primarily comprise social competences and basic skills important to the exercise of an occupation and dealing with people.” (Source: www.europass-info.de/)

“Business term for non-technical/non-IT related business skills such as communication, negotiation, time management, team building etc.” (Source: www.cybermediacreations.com/elearning/glossary.html)

“Communication and interpersonal skills that are behavioural and abstract in nature, but nevertheless essential to performing most jobs.” (Source: www.netplaces.com/coaching-mentoring/appendix-a-glossary/)

“Skills needed to perform jobs where job requirements are defined in terms of expected outcomes, but the process/es to achieve the outcomes may vary widely. Usually, (soft-skill is) an area of performance that does not have a definite beginning and end (i.e., counselling, supervising, and managing).” (Source: www.neiu.edu/~dbehrlic/hrd408/glossary.htm)

“Personal management skills such as attitudes and behaviours that drive one’s potential for growth and team work skills.” (Source: northernopportunities.bc.ca/for-students/glossary/)
“Personal qualities, characteristics and attributes; Soft skills refer to those "interpersonal" skills that one possesses and uses on the job. For example, one may be well organized, be a team player, and be a quick learner.” (Source: www.unemployedhelp.on.ca/clientglossary.html)

“The skills, traits, work habits, and attitudes that all workers across all occupations must have in order to obtain, maintain, and progress in employment.” (Source: www.coryellautismcenter.org/glossary.shtml)

“Soft Skills include personal management skills, interpersonal skills, and leadership skills. They are skills that relate to a person's ability to interact with others at the workplace.” (Source: paraelink.org/general/glossary_pop.html)

“Personality attributes that enhance a person's job performance.” (Source: www.goodfilipino.com/2010/10/english-dictionary-added-21-ne)

From the above, it is quite obvious that soft-skill is the ‘environment within a person’. A wide variety of topics are covered and discussed under domain of soft-skills; following is a partial list:

- Intrapersonal skills, people skills, social skills
- Time management and Money Management
- Goal setting
- Mood-management
- Communication
- Use of English
- Business correspondence,
- Presentations skills
- IT Skills for effectiveness
- Team-building,
- Personal and Team Leadership,
• Career management - Group discussions, Interviews, resume skills, Job-search skills, Networking skills, Career visioning and planning
• Body language, Business Manners and etiquettes
• Selling skills

Hence, we get a clue that while soft skills are significant for enhancing economic worth of a person; this area is quite complex, and fit for pursuing research to bring further clarity and details on the subject matter.