



## SOFT SKILLS FOR LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS

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### ABSTRACT

In today's global environment, required qualification or technical knowledge is not sufficient to cope with the latest developments in a particular field.

Field of library science is developing very fast have great impact of information technology. LIS professionals are not now limited only with the traditional library services, but they have to keep themselves abreast with the current developments in their field. The job of LIS professionals is now blended with IT professionals. To cope with the new challenges in the field, LIS professionals should perform with soft skills.

This paper deals with the some of the important aspects of soft skills starting with the definition of soft skills, significance of soft skills, various kinds of soft skills, soft skills required for LIS professionals, necessity of soft skills in E-world, gender dependency of soft skills, practical approach of soft skills followed by conclusion.

**Key Words** – Competancy, Hard skills, E-skills, domain knowledge.

### INTRODUCTION :

#### A) What do you mean by soft skills :-

##### a) Defination :-

Soft skills are defined as the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language personal habits, friendliness and optimisms that more people to varying degrees. Soft skills are first referred in 1972. These skills includes attributes being able to solve problems working will in a team environment and motivating others. Soft skills are a collection of methods and techniques by which you can influence the behaviour of others in a way that enhance your enlightened self-interest.

##### b) Significance of soft skills :-

In the current global, environment of competition, soft skills are playing vital role in the customer oriented services. These skills are catching up and getting more importance for employees, students and





other professionals. It helps them abreast of current and future developments. The days are gone when in all the sectors of employment only technical skill alone were admired. Now with the essential qualification, professional competencies are required. Technical knowledge or hard skills covers subject knowledge but soft skill includes intelligency, communication skills, management skill, negotiating skill etc. Soft skill can also be termed as life skills.

Sometimes many people get confused with soft skill and hard skills. They assumed that soft skills are inherited. But it is not so. Soft skills are aquired. Some people equate soft skills with English speaking. But the fact is that soft skills deals with how you speak, not in which language you speak. It is also assumed that the people having soft skills can succeed in any filed. But the blending of both hard and soft skills leads to success.

So only intelgency does not mark. Soft skills improves your personality, attitude and interpersonal relation. Soft skills exhibits your real potential.

### **What are Soft skills ?**

We can not specify the soft skills particularly however soft skills are collection of several skills and abilities such as interpersonal skills, communication skill, motivation skill, listening skills, leadership skills, decision making power, presentation skills, negotiation skills, reading skill, writing skills, stress management.

Soft skills are polite presentation of hard skills. There is thin line of demarcation between hard skill and soft skill. High qualification does not justify your complete personality. Qualification with required competencies results into smooth management.

In this E-era, smartness alongwith knowledge is highly appreciated. In the corporate world soft skills with hard skills are mostly welcomed.





## **What are soft skills for library profession ?**

From above discussion it can be observed that these skill can also be applicable to library profession. Libraries are now Information learning centres. There is great impact of information technology on library and library services. The services of the library should be users oriented. To deal with the different types of users according to their demand with the hard skills, soft skills are also essential to flourish the library profession. Following are some of the soft skills useful for the library professionals.

### **1) Leadership Skill :-**

It is very essential to librarian to have good leadership quality, because library work and to deliver the library services effectively and promptly is not individual work, but it is a team work with spirit. So, it is a need to develop leadership quality. This skill create confidence amongst library staff.

### **2) Communication Skill :-**

This skill mainly includes writing and speaking skill. A good communication skill always have great impact while making a good rapport with the users. It is also helpful in making the library reports and correspondence. For good communication library professionals should have sound knowledge about mother tongue, language of the particular locality and good command over english language.

### **3) Teaching Skill :-**

Librarian should be a good teacher. To orient the users with the library services, librarian professionals should have good teaching skill. This will be helpful to inculcate reading habits amongst users.

### **4) Listening Skills :-**

Listening skill is very useful to interact with the users of different age groups. With users of different age group, their requirements varies.





By careful listening to users, one can exactly identify the demand of them. It helps in the betterment of library services.

#### **5) Customer Service :-**

In library field the users are considered as the customers of library. Current Awareness Service (CAS) and Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) and other specialized services must be user oriented. These services should satisfy the users and assures a guarantee that users will always come back to library.

#### **6) E-Skills :-**

Now a days information technology has great impact on library and information services. Library professional should have sound knowledge about e-based library services, and for that he/she must develops IT skill or E-skills. Library professionals should have the knowledge of computer network, E-books, copyright, E-publishing, Internet resources, Scanning, Downloading software purposes.

#### **7) Domain knowledge :-**

Domain knowledge or subject knowledge is very essential in every profession. Library professionals have to deal with different type of users with their varying needs. A sound subject knowledge help them to make good communication with the users.

#### **8) Traditional Librarianship skill :-**

Library professional should have the traditional librarianship skill like cataloguing, acquisitions, reference and information skill.

#### **9) Team work skill :-**

To give effective library services to users is not a job of librarian alone. It is a team work. To inculcate team work spirit amongst library staff, it is very essential to nurture team work skill amongst library professional themselves.

The list and discussion on soft skills is unending, because soft skills are not limited to a particular profession.





These skills can be developed according to the environment and requirement of that particular profession.

### **Why soft skills are necessary in E-world :-**

Yes Now in the E-era, hard skills are not sufficient to flourish the job. To avail better opportunities in a specific profession. Soft skills are proved to be the best solution to sharpen the personality and acquire job satisfaction. Due to privatization in every career, competition is unending. To cope with the challenges in E-era, soft skills are necessary.

So far as library profession is concerned, soft skills are applicable for the betterment of the library services. Apart from the type of library soft skills are useful to popularize the services of the library. In traditional services soft skills can also be applied to attract the users towards library. But the these days of E-learning reading habit is slowly deteriorating. In such situation soft skills are applicable to inculcate reading habit amongst the users.

### **Are the soft skills have gender dependency?**

Now in every field, women are entering with the confidence. They are having equal opportunities like men. With the introduction of co-education, culture of together working is proliferating. This is a very good sign for balance development of a country. The skills required for any profession are not specific but self generated. It is generally observed that women are soft in work culture as compared to men. They have more patience than that of men. They are emotional. Their tolerance capacity is more. These factors affects the some of the soft skills discussed earlier. So in corporate field, most of the front offices having dominance of women. So there is soft skills have gender dependency is some proportion.

### **What is the practical approach of soft skills ?**

Theoretical knowledge gives us an idea about the length and breadth of any subject or domain. But practical study of it gives us





complete knowledge of depth of the subject. Earlier we have discussed different types of soft skill applicable for LIS profession. But LIS professionals should think about its practical approach. Then what is the practical approach of these skills? Answer of this questions is nothing but blending of our personality with complete involvement into the profession. Some of the LIS professionals always critice profession regarding its status. But remember one thing that every job or profession is unique in its responsibility and importance. Only positive approach is the basic requirement for the complete attachment with the profession. LIS profession is such a profession which only can deals with the information requirement of the different strata of the society. This gives us great job satisfaction which is the basic requirement of any profession.

#### **CONCLUSION :-**

From the above discussion it can be concluded that soft skills are playing very vital role in LIS field. LIS profession is one of the challenging fields in this era of information technology. There are different types of job opportunities in LIS field with new challenges. Qualification with the competencies excels the profession. Technical knowledge and domain knowledge help us to survive but competencies help us to success in life. So with systematic blending of hard skills with soft skills always accelerate the profession in right direction.

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