

## IS TAMILNADU YOUTH POSSESS EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS?

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### **Abstract**

Industry looks for a different mix of skills, abilities, capabilities and competencies in potential hires depending on the business it's in. Industry also looks for multi skilled individuals. All these things lead to Unemployability. Employability refers to a person's capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required. India is one of the emerging markets in the world. India's change from an agrarian economy to an industrialized economy is lagging due to the shortage of skilled labor. Although the country has enough potential to deliver to the needs of the global talent market, the strong employability challenge of the graduates. So current study aims to find out all the employability skills possessed by the south Tamilnadu youth and what is all the main reason that affects the development of employability skills. Totally 600 unemployed youth with age group of 15 to 24 was randomly selected for the study. It suggested that "development in educational system" and "motivation" to develop the employability skills will have positive impact on the employability skill of youth. It concludes that that the students and youngsters with work experience have better awareness of the employability skills than the youngsters with no work experience. Enhancing the skills and application of knowledge through specific training will enable the workers to perform their jobs in the best possible manner and that is the need of the hour.

**Keywords: Employability Skills, Students, Youths.**

### **Introduction**

Employability skills are general skills that are needed to get most jobs, but they also help you to stay in a job and work your way to the top. While there will always be some job-specific skills that an employer is looking for, most employers will also want you to have some general skills. Chances are you'll be asked questions about both job-specific skills and general employability skills in a job interview.

Skills development is essential for increasing the productivity and sustainability of enterprises and improving working conditions and the employability of workers. In order to secure that first job as well as navigate in the labour market, young women and men need the technical skills to perform specific tasks as well as core work skills: learning to learn, communication, problem-solving and teamwork. Development of core skills, awareness of workers' rights and an understanding of entrepreneurship are the building blocks for lifelong learning and capability to adapt to change.

### **Concepts of Employability, Unemployability & Unemployment**

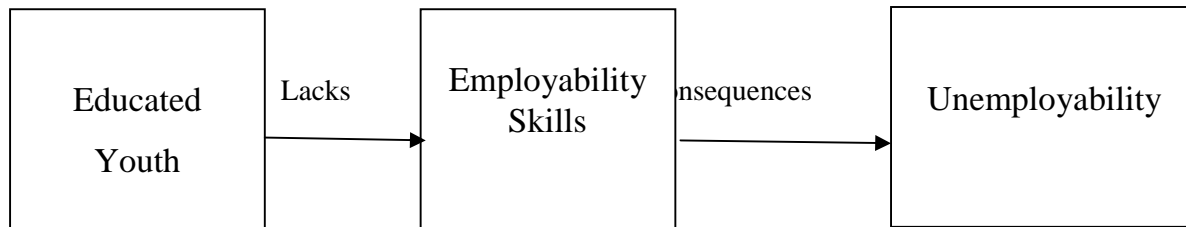
Industry looks for a different mix of skills, abilities, capabilities and competencies in potential hires depending on the business it's in. Industry also looks for multi skilled individuals. All these things lead to Unemployability. Employability refers to a person's capability of gaining initial employment, maintaining employment, and obtaining new employment if required.

In simple terms employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. More comprehensively, employability is the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realize potential through sustainable employment. Employability depends on the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that they possess, the way they use and present them. A widely accepted definition of employability is "a set of achievements, skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy." Thus, employability is about an individual's chances of progressing into and

through the labour market successfully, according to what they choose to do. A person's employability at any one time depends on

- A combination of their own skills, understandings and attributes.
- External factors and circumstances, such as the state of the labour market.

People often confuse between un-employability and unemployment. Unemployability arises when individuals have educational eligibility but lack in capability and suitability to execute job related activities despite being the availability of employment opportunities while unemployment is a state where individuals have educational eligibility, capability and suitability but dearth of employment opportunities. In India, current situation is more of un-employability rather than the unemployment.



### **Employability Skills of Graduates in India**

India is one of the emerging markets in the world. India's change from an agrarian economy to an industrialized economy is lagging due to the shortage of skilled labour (The skill development landscape in India and implementing quality skill training). Although the country has enough potential to deliver to the needs of the global talent market, the strong employability challenge of the graduates; especially engineering graduates became the bottleneck for India's growth perceptible (Global talent risk-seven responses). Even in India, which produces 400,000 engineers annually, corporations are finding it increasingly difficult to find the qualified workers they require. India's National Association of Software Services Companies estimates a potential shortfall of 500,000 technology professionals by 2010. There were several studies conducted in India to know the employability skills of the students. It is found that 75% of the Indian graduates are unemployable. There was an argument that this study doesn't give a clear picture of Indian graduates and it is outdated. But the recent study conducted by World Bank points out that 64% of the employers say they are only somewhat satisfied with the performance of the engineering graduates in India. Globally about 34% of the employers find it difficult to fill the talent gap and in India 67% of the employers find it difficult to find right talent in India (from both arts and science graduates). These results point out the need for proper awareness and training among the graduates to enhance their skills.

### **Skills Required for Employability**

The need for employability skills differ from one country to another. For instance, American Society for Training and Development identified six categories of skills which are important to employability. They are; basic competency, communication, adaptability, developmental activities, group effectiveness and influencing others. In Malaysia, these are positive values, leadership skills, teamwork force, communicative skills and life-long learning. In Australia employability skills are defined as "the skills required gaining employment or establish an enterprise, but also to progress within enterprise or expand employment capability, so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to an enterprise's strategic directions." The eight employability skills are initiative and enterprise, learning, self-management, communication, teamwork, problem solving, planning and organizing and technology. These days all business cry for employability skills as these enable their growth and competitiveness. Besides this now youth also began to realize that without these employable skills it is difficult to grab jobs.

### **Literature Survey**

Atlay, M. & Harris, R (2000) define employability as a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen

occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. University of Exeter defined employability as; The establishment of clear mechanisms by which students can develop their abilities to use and deploy a wide range of skills and opportunities to enhance their own academic learning and enable them to become more employable. Employment and employability is not the same thing and should be differentiated.

Being employed means having a job, being employable means having the qualities needed to maintain employment and progress in the workplace.

Employability from the perspective of HEIs is therefore about producing graduates who re-capable and able, and this impact upon all areas of university life, in terms of the delivery of academic programs and extra curricula activities. Fundamentally then, employability is about learning – learning how to learn – and employability is not a product, but a process.

Vidanapathirana (2000) studied employability and job expectations of university students using a sample of 68 undergraduates to ascertain the extent employability and expectations affect job opportunities of educated youth. The findings confirmed the view that there is a mismatch. The author claims the more person has been educated, the greater the likelihood that her or she may be unemployed. This situation arises out of high rate of entry to the labor-force on one hand and the relatively sluggish expansion of the economy.

Public services is experiencing resource constrains to generate employment due to lack of funding and lack of organizational planning. Today, private sector is becoming the dominant player in the economy and expected to generate more employment opportunities. But, most of the students expected to select future employment in a government sector (Weligamage, 2005) after their graduation and employment expectations of students varies by study programme. Burden & Mc-Avinia (1998) reports of projects at the University of Surrey Known as the skills project with the main objective to identify and articulate the skills/attributes sought by employers and professional bodies, and to raise the skills of students to a threshold level which is acceptable to the employers of new graduates. The project aims to raise the key skills of new students to an acceptable generic threshold in the first semester of university education and thereafter to enhance the skills of students in a discipline specific environment to meet the requirements of employers and professional bodies. Then it was necessary to gather data from employers and professional bodies as to exactly what they expect of their graduate recruits.

Employability is central to the strategic direction of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), (now the Department for Education and skills – DfES), (Hillage & Pollard, 1998). Government policy to enhance the employability of graduates is part of a wider strategy to extend the skills base in the UK (Coopers & Lybrand, 1998). This interest in employability is associated with human capital theories of innovation and economic performance. Growth in the stock of human capital is essential for economic growth, and hence the government's agenda is driven by the desire to stem the 'productivity shortfall'. The HE system is therefore being steered to place greater emphasis on the employability of graduates (Jackson, 1999; Knight & Yorke, 2001, 2002a).

Morley (2001) suggests that HEIs both mediate and manage government policy, and that the boundaries between the academy, government and businesses have loosened and been reformed. This raises the question of what the purpose of HE is, whether it is to provide to the workforce of the future or educational stimulus, or both. Jackson (1999) suggests that the recent government agenda for the massification of HE, widening participation, the key skills/employability agenda, lifelong learning etc., are leading to the unification of HE and by implication, the curtailing of academic freedoms.

Academics will need to be convinced that an institutions' insistence on their incorporating employability skills into their teaching is not an attack on academic freedom in terms of content, but a request that academics consider how they teach their subject (Coopers & Lybrand, 1998; Harvey, 2000a). In relation to the debate concerning core and generic skill provision, Bennett et al. (1999) comment that there was little impact because of tutor scepticism of the message, the messenger and its vocabulary. The same is probably true for the employability debate. Harvey (2000a) advocates the view that the primary role of HE is to train students by

enhancing their knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities and to empower them as lifelong critical and reflective learners. This is similar to the perspective of the Skills plus Project who see concern for employability as supportive of good learning rather than in opposition to it. Empowering learners is about giving students control over the educational process and their post-educational lives, and Harvey (2000a), suggests that it is debatable how serious academia is in achieving these ends.

### Methods

This study was based on the youths from Virudhunagar and Tuticorin districts. Since the objective of the present study is to analyze the employability skills that lead to betterments of Indian youths; for the current study youths undergoing education and searching for jobs were taken as the sample unit. In the present study, simple random sampling was used for the selection of youths from Virudhunagar and Tuticorin. Utmost care has been taken to take respondents from various demographic characteristics. To ensure required sample size and to allow for the possibility of spoiled questionnaires, trained research assistants targeted 600 youths. Thus the total number of respondents came out to 630. Out of the 630 respondents, 600 questionnaires were received at a response rate of 95.24 per cent. On further filtering, 600 responses were found to be completely filled, which is more than response rate is higher than the response rate of the acceptable limits to ensure the reliability of the data. The questionnaires were distributed to youths in selected districts during February 2014 to June 2014. The research assistants explained the voluntary nature of the survey to the youths, assured them of the anonymity of their responses, and told them to feel free to opt out at any time. They provided each respondent with a copy of the questionnaire, explained how the questionnaire was to be filled out and collected the completed questionnaires. In this study, the structured questionnaire was focused on measuring the level of employability skills of the youths and problems faced by the youths in developing the employability skills. Structured questionnaire includes four parts; first part includes demographics factors like age, gender, qualification and districts. Second part includes (22 items) employability skills, third part include (6 items) problems in developing employability skills and last part include questions related with future development of the students. It presents the mean for the 22 items of employability skills instrument, consisting of the seven point scale. Reliability item statistics shows that (Cronbach Alpha = 0.868) all the 28 items seems to be reasonably well to the scale's reliability.

### Findings of the Study

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Demographics	Options	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	337	56.2
	Female	263	43.8
Age	15 years to 18 years	134	22.3
	19 years to 21 years	316	52.7
	22 years to 24 years	150	25
District	Virudhunagar	300	50
	Tuticorin	300	50
Educational Qualification	S.S.L.C	94	15.7
	H.S.C	57	9.5
	Diploma	50	8.3
	I.T.I	55	9.2
	College	344	57.3
Job position after 5 years	Unknown	278	46.3
	Engineering field	69	11.5
	Medical field	34	5.7
	Business	5	0.8
	Teaching field	58	9.7

	Banking field	57	9.5
	Government job	43	7.2
	Others	56	9.3
Level of interest on higher studies	Yes	400	66.7
	No	200	33.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>600</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the students are males, about 53 per cent respondents 19-21 years old, 300 students are selected from each districts, 57 per cent students have college students, 46 per cent students are unaware about their future, 67 per cent students are interested in higher studies.

**Table 2: Relationship between overall employability skills and problem in developing employability skills**

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall employability skills	1	.213**	.230**	.165**	.172**	.347**	.316**
Family support in development		1	.396**	.437**	.383**	.313**	.404**
Opportunity and exposure to develop skills			1	.574**	.529**	.468**	.468**
Availability of time and money to development				1	.623**	.396**	.392**
Proper motivation					1	.350**	.356**
Support of educational system in development						1	.616**
Interest in development of employability skills							1

\*\* Significant at 1 per cent level

Correlation analysis shows that overall employability skills are have significant and positive relation with family support in development ( $r=0.213$ ), opportunity and exposure to develop skills ( $r=0.230$ ), availability of time and money to development ( $r=0.165$ ), proper motivation ( $r=0.172$ ), support of educational system in development ( $r=0.347$ ) and interest in development of employability skills ( $r=0.316$ ). Inter correlation between problems in developing employability skills shows that all the problems in developing employability skills factors have medium level of positive relations.

**Table 3: Effects of problems in developing employability skills on overall level of employability skills**

Problems in developing employability skills	Beta	t	Sig.
Family support in development	0.085	1.908	0.057
Opportunity and exposure to develop skills	0.048	0.937	0.349
Availability of time and money to development	-0.058	-1.076	0.282
Proper motivation	0.022	0.424	0.672
Support of educational system in development	0.232	4.606	0.000**
Interest in development of employability skills	0.132	2.563	0.011*
Multiple R	0.381		
R	0.145		
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.137		
F value	16.711		
P value	0.000**		

\*\* Significant at 1 per cent level, \* Significant at 5 per cent level



In terms of the relationship between problems in developing employability skills and overall employability skills the adjusted R square = 0.137 was statistically significant. It was observed that the overall employability skills explained 14 per cent of the variance for the criterion measure. It entailed that 86 percent of overall employability skills was explained by something other than problems in developing employability skills. Summary of Regression Analysis treating problems in developing employability skills as predictors and overall employability skills as criterion variable was shown below table. It was observed that the overall regression model was significant ( $F=16.711$ ,  $p<0.000$ ). Support of educational system in development and Interest in development of employability skills are the main predictors for overall employability skills.

### Discussion and Conclusion

Since 46% of the respondents are not having any future plan / goal, they may not be having self-directed activities. Hence the youth shall be helped in finding goal and helping them in marching towards it. It is observed that, candidate belong to age of 15 to 21 are not interest for higher education. The youth shall be directed / counseled in this regard. It is understand from the respondents' perspective that time management ability to write their resumes, commitment, health aspects & diet and English language communication shall be improved. Also it is observed that lack of motivation, opportunity, exposure and time and money factors are reasons for not developing the above mentioned attributes.

Youth education and skills is about generating individuals who have a capacity to ask interesting, demanding, and difficult questions. It is also about skill development that takes the youths beyond refining a strong analytical mind. In the recent review of graduate education for the 21st century, concludes that many are ill-prepared for the full range of rules they must play, be they in academe or beyond, and often the experience is marred by a mismatch between the opportunities available to students as they complete their work and their expectations and training along the way.

Suggestions to lead graduates in a direction that will leave them well prepared for the challenges they face in a global environment include a strong focus on professional development, mentorship by faculty, establishing milestones to mark achievement, integrating practice into research, and creating a connection to the community. Recognize that while research skills are essential in an academic pursuit, there are many skills that graduate youths can sharpen during this time. During any higher studies or in future jobs, youths need to be aware that employers will evaluate candidates on the basis of how their diverse skill set can enhance their workplace, and how their personality will complement their new community.

The study shows that there is a strong need for awareness among the Indian youths to know the employability skills required by the global talent market. We cannot blame the youths for this reason. It is necessary to update the curriculum at regular interval to cater the needs of the industry. Further, there should be long and sustainable plan to train our youngsters to raise their bar to attain jobs in the global talent market. It is essential to increase the industry-academia contact. This will assure regular supply of talent to the global talent workforce. The research shows that the students and youngsters with work experience have better awareness of the employability skills than the youngsters with no work experience. Enhancing the skills and application of knowledge through specific training will enable the workers to perform their jobs in the best possible manner and that is the need of the hour.

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