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# Employability Skills among Information Technology Professionals: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

Employability of graduates has become an issue that is not easy to be ignored in the global economy. It is a necessity to have a right set of employability skills. The purpose of this paper is to find out the required skill set for enhancing the employability of graduates and employees majorly focusing on information technology (IT) sector. The paper explores 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.

This paper proposed the set of skills important for employability of IT professionals in this sector. We have majorly focused upon six skills: technical skills, higher order thinking skills, personal skills, social skills, generic skills, and self-perceived employability skills. On the basis of above-mentioned skills a checklist has been proposed which has been verified by Industry experts. The implications of this study will be helpful in guiding both industry and academia in incorporating and enhancing these skills among professionals.

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## 1. Introduction

Unemployment is a matter of concern since ages and in today's highly competitive and contemporary global labor market this concern is transforming into the phase of employability. In the long-term, India's unemployment rate is projected to trend around 4.60 percent in 2020, according to Trading Economics global macro models and analysts' expectations [1]. According to The International Labour Organization World Employment and Social Outlook report, the unemployment rate will remain at 3.4 per cent in 2017-18 [2].

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The report urges for having a right set of skills to earn a job and manage it properly; look for better opportunities. However, having such skills do increases the possibility of gaining employment but do not assure the same [4]. For employment subject related knowledge and skills are important yet, other skills play a major role in the life of students which help them in not just getting a job rather it helps in getting a career of their own choice and to sustain and grow it further which aptly defines an employability [5]. Subject related skills refer to those skills that students study during their degree course whereas, transferable skills are those which individual's learn while doing his job and these can be used further in his job roles within the same organization or outside it and further moving ahead in the career path [6].

In this study, the focus is majorly on IT professionals since Information Technology has a pervasive influence in current global markets. IT companies frequently develop and adopt newer technologies. Moreover, employers look for skilled candidates who can adjust in today's dynamic work environment and have the zeal to learn new things. ILO emphasized upon rapid globalization, changed working environment and technological development while working towards improving employability. This will generate the need to invest in skill development and training in their workforce [7]. Since 2015, the Indian economy is moving towards the road of digitalization, which needs more skilled and competent workforce. This will be creating many jobs in future e.g. SWAYAM (platform with at least 350 online courses to enable students to virtually attend courses taught by the best faculty) [8]. Information Technology is a more applied computing discipline rather than being strictly theoretical in nature. Specifically, it focuses on meeting the needs of users within an organizational and societal context performing the following for computing technologies, such as; selection, creation, application, integration, and administration. Therefore, IT graduates must possess certain skills and knowledge to get appropriate positions at work place; who can anticipate changes in the field of IT and communicate the importance of the same to an individual or organization'[9].

IT industry employs around 10 million workforce. Its contribution is 67% in the US \$ 124 – 130 billion market. Its growth rate is expected to be 12- 14% for the financial year 2016-17 [11]. IT industry is growing, has good cash flows, and return on equity is very good [12]. Nonetheless, with respect to enhancement of digitalization several IT companies are moving towards deployment of automation rather than hiring new employees. For example -Infosys has reduced hiring by 60% and adopted automation in its work process. Likewise, Wipro fired some of its employees on the basis of performance appraisal. This further gives emphasis on possessing better employability skills [13].

### *1.1. Rationale of the study*

A number of researchers in various parts of the world have done considerable work. Some prominent ones are Gazier[ 14], Robinson[39], Grip [19], Harvey[18], Rothwell[59], Knight and Yorke [5], Lorraine Dacre Pool and Peter Sewell[28] while few researchers have worked on employability skills in India. However, the studies have found employability skills such as technical, communication, leadership, team work, and cognitive skills. Additionally, today's dynamic work environment requires a lot more work to be done for enhancement and development of employability skills.

Further, there is a need to bridge the skill gap by finding out the possessed skills among the individuals and the required skills that employer search for at the time of recruitment. Besides, there is a necessity to prepare a comprehensive set of employability skills and finding out the methods of imparting and enhancing required employability.

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