

## **SOFT SKILLS**

### Information on Areas Tested (soft skills)

Soft skills is a sociological term relating to a person's Emotional Intelligence Quotient- EQ includes the ability to listen well , communicate effectively, be positive handle conflict, accept responsibility work well with others. Soft skills are behavioural competencies, they enhance an individual's interaction, job performance and career prospects. The most important soft skills are Quantitative ability, Data interpretation, Verbal Ability and Critical and Lateral thinking.

### Quantitative ability

Quantitative ability measures the numerical ability and accuracy in mathematical calculations to problems of arithmetic reasoning, graph and table reading, percentage analysis, categorisation and quantitative analysis. Quantitative ability is required in several competitive exams like GRE, GMAT, CAT, Civil Services exam. In various competitive examinations there is a section to test candidate's quantitative ability. There are multiple choice questions, and all of these require quick calculation abilities and sharp analytical skills. For this student fundamental knowledge of mathematics need to be strengthened. Quantitative aptitude covers topics like HCF/LCM, Decimal fractions, Profit and Loss, Time and Distance, Simple and Compound interest, Probability, etc. There are some careers which require exceptional quantitative ability e.g. careers in science, and engineering, architecture, or Quantitative ability helps meteorologist track weather systems and develop accurate forecast.

## Data Interpretation

Data Interpretation section is part of almost all entrance exams like CAT, MAT, etc. for B-schools because this section bears the closest resemblance to the kind of problems that a person faces in his/her professional career. Data Interpretation has no particular syllabus. It tests one's speed, decision making capability and analyzing data. When information is arranged in a systematic manner or an organised form or presented systematically it is called data. Data interpretation is to take out maximum information from given data of information. There are different ways of representing data i.e. tables, diagrams, charts etc.

Data interpretation questions are of following three types

- Observation based questions: These questions require simple and careful observation of the data.
- Interpretation and Calculation (IC) based questions: These questions require basic analysis and calculation with data.
- Explorative questions: These questions will pose a hypothetical scenario, and may expect you to use, observation, interpretation and calculation.

## Verbal Ability

Communication is very important tool in all spheres of life. In almost all competitive examinations there are number of questions to test the verbal ability. Verbal ability is tested to find out how the candidate comprehends the data and understands the meaning of the words used, to find out a person's grammatical competency.

The Syllabus covers reading approach to vocabulary, synonyms grammar –punctuation, usage etc. in ability tests a person's knowledge following way-

comprehension, etymological and antonyms, analogy, the competitive exams Verbal of English language, in the

- I) a) Comprehends the given data (passage/sentence) and understand
- b) the explicit message conveyed
- c) the implicit undertones of the passages or sentence
- d) the knowledge of grammar like punctuation , usage etc.
- e) the direction/ conclusion being hinted at
- II) How well he manages to respond to the question posed by applying similar analysis of each of the 4/5 options presented, before picking his answer.

From the verbal section the question type asked in competitive exams is trying to test the candidate on one or more of the above. Thus for preparing to answer well in this section one must read more and more. Reading has to be consistently spread out across a few months or more.

### Critical Thinking or Lateral Thinking

The term Lateral thinking was coined by Edward de Bono in 1967. Lateral thinking is the ability to think creatively or 'outside the box'. It refers to one's skill of problem solving from an unexpected perspective. This skill includes the ability to think critically, creatively, analytically and innovatively. It refers to a new approach to problem solving or looking from a completely new perspective. Edward de Bono describes lateral thinking as a special kind of thinking that is distinct from ordinary thinking or vertical thinking. Vertical thinking is a traditional type of thinking. Both types of thinking are complementary to each other.

Problem solving skills require to break the barriers, mind should be free to move into problem solving territory. It involves understanding the problem; to solve the problem different techniques are used, one such is brain storming session. This process allows all those creative solutions to tumble out onto the table. Whatever the solutions are coming to mind are listed. Another process is analysing the problem.

To test this ability in competitive examinations multiple choice options are given and candidate has to choose any one of

them. Or sometimes the statement is given and two or more assumptions are given and candidate has to choose which one is implicit in the statement.

Motivation:- Concept, theories of motivation

The term ‘motivation’ has been derived from word ‘motive’. Motive refers to inner drive or intention that makes a person to do something or to behave in a certain way. Buchanan defines —Motivation is a decision making process, through which the individual chooses the desired outcomes and sets in motion the behaviour appropriate to them. Through motivation an individual chooses a particular set of action to achieve the desired goal. Motivated employees use their potentialities fully to achieve the desired success.

Motivation is a continuous process, it can be positive it can be negative. Positive motivation can be stimulated by providing positive incentives, (high pay, power, etc). Negative motivation implies the use of penalties, punishments, etc. motivation directs person’s action towards achieving desired goal.

Theories of Motivation

- a) Maslow’s theory of Motivation:- Is one of the most popular theory of motivation, Maslow talks about the hierarchy of needs. According to him there are mainly five sets of human needs, they are as follows:-
- 1) Physiological needs:- These are the basic needs of human beings. It includes food, clothing and shelter. Such needs are the lowest level of hierarchy they are to be satisfied first.
  - 2) Safety and Security needs:- Includes security and protection from physical and emotional harm. Employees need job safety and security.
  - 3) Social needs:- These needs includes affection, belongingness, acceptance and friendship . Human being feels a need to belong to a group or community. Everyone wants company of others. They prefer to be loved and cared by others (i.e. family members, workmates, friends, superiors and others.)

- 4) Esteem Needs:- It refers to ego needs. People want that others should respect them. This includes self respect, autonomy, and achievement, status, recognition and attention.
- 5) Self Actualisation needs:- These needs are of the highest level of hierarchy. This refers to drive to become what one is capable of becoming includes growth, achieving one's potential and self –fulfillment.

There is hierarchy of these needs, after satisfying one an individual wants to satisfy next needs, after satisfaction of one the next need becomes dominant.

- b) Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) Theory :  
In 1969 Clayton P. Alderfer, simplified Maslow's theory by categorizing hierarchy of needs into three categories viz Existence, Relatedness, and Growth

Existence needs corresponds to Maslow's physiological ,and safety and security needs. It includes food, clothing, shelter, better pay, good working conditions, job security, etc.

Relatedness needs relates to Maslow's social needs. It includes to be loved cared by others, interact with other people, receive public recognition and feel secured around people.

Growth needs aligns with Maslow's esteem and self-actualisation needs. It includes praise and recognition from others and to realise one's potential to the fullest.

#### Mcgregor's Theory X and Theory Y

In 1960, Mcgregor's theory was published in a classic article —The Human Side of Enterprise|| . He propounded two distinct view of human beings one is negative known as theory X and the other is positive known as theory Y. Theory X is the traditional approach of managing people and theory is the professional way of management. Theory X and theory Y are based on certain assumptions.

Theory X is based on following assumptions

1. People are not creative, they are dull, and lack rational thinking
2. A common man or average person is generally irresponsible, they do not like to take responsibilities and therefore they avoid responsible wherever it is possible.
3. People are basically lazy , they do not like to work, they must be punished or threatened so that they will work.
4. People wants routine work, they are not ready for any change in their routine they dislike innovation or novelty
5. People are orthodox in nature, they are not very ambitious

Theory Y is based on following assumptions

1. People are creative, if they are motivated properly then they will come up with new ideas
2. People are responsible, they are committed to the goals and objectives.
3. People are active. They enjoy their work if the conditions are favourable.
4. People like to accept challenges in life. They are ready to face any hardships and difficult situation
5. People welcomes the innovative ideas, they have the ability to make innovative decisions. They are ready to change if the situation demands.

From these two theories, Mcgregor believed that theory Y assumption were more valid and appropriate than theory X. A manager can make use of both the theories depending on the situation and types of people. All the people do not have the same nature, there are differences in their likes, dislikes and interests and their way approach towards work and therefore depending on the situation he can follow theory X or theory Y.

Two Factor Theory

Two factor theory was proposed by Fredrick Herzbeg in 1959. This theory is based on the study of motivational needs of 200 employees of Pitsburghindustry(U.S.A. This theory is also

called as motivation hygiene theory. According to Herzberg one's success or failure in work depends on one's attitude towards work. According to him there are two factors

- A. Job dissatisfaction factors
- B. Motivational factors
  - 1. Job dissatisfaction factors-these factors are also called as Hygiene factors. These are some factors which could a person to become unhappy with their job. These factors need to be satisfied. Some of the hygiene factors are salaries and wages, working conditions, job security and welfare faculties. These factors are extrinsic factors related to job and environment surrounding the job. If these factors are not satisfied then person becomes unhappy with the job. However the presence of these factors do not motivate the person for better performance
  - 2. Motivational factors- there are some factors which can increase a person's job satisfaction, these are called as 'motivators' and they must be satisfied to motivate the people to do the work. Some of the motivational factors are challenging tasks , Appreciation and Recognition, Achievement, Advancement, Possibility of growth, Responsibility etc. the motivators are intrinsic factors. If these factors are present then the chances of individual Growth and Development increases.

## OTHER THEORIES OF MOTIVATION

### McClelland's theory of Needs

David McClelland and his associates proposed McClelland's theory of Needs / Achievement Motivation Theory. This theory focuses on three needs - Need for Achievement, Power and Affiliation.

Need for achievement is the urge to excel, to make efforts to achieve success. The individuals with high achievement needs are highly motivated by competing and challenging work. They always want to improve their performance, they like to take feedback on their performance. They always makes an attempt to do things better and gets satisfaction after bringing improvement in their work. Their high performance results in high achievement. These Individuals are highly motivated, like to accept challenges and are ready to take responsibility.

Need for power is the desire to influence other individual's behaviour as per one's wish. In other words, it is the desire to have control over others and to be influential. They want to lead others and want that other should accept their views and ideas, they like to dominate others. Such individuals give lot of importance to the need for reputation and self-esteem. They are more determined and loyal to the organization they work for. Those individuals with high power helps the organisation to achieve their goals.

Need for affiliation is a need for open and sociable interpersonal relationships. In other words, it is a desire for relationship based on co-operation and mutual understanding. The individuals with high affiliation needs perform well in a team. They want to be liked by others. They like to work in the environment where there is greater interaction.

### Cognitive Evaluation Theory

According to this theory there are actually two motivation systems: intrinsic and extrinsic that correspond to two kinds of motivators i.e. intrinsic motivators like achievement, responsibility etc. and extrinsic motivators e.g. salary, promotion, working conditions etc. intrinsic motivators comes from the interest of the work whereas extrinsic motivators comes from a person's environment which is external to him. One of these motivator is powerful in a person.

Intrinsically motivated individuals perform for their own achievement and satisfaction. If they come to believe that they are doing some job because of the extrinsic motivators then their motivation is decreased. The belief is that the presence of powerful extrinsic motivators can actually reduce a person's intrinsic motivation, particularly if the extrinsic motivators are perceived by the person to be controlled by people.

### Equity Theory

Equity theory is proposed by John Stacy Adams in 1963. According to this theory the individual feels satisfied if he/she perceives that the rewards received are equitable. If everyone got a 5% raise, B is likely to feel quite pleased with her raise, even if she worked harder than everyone else. But if A got an even higher raise, B perceives that she worked just as hard as A, she will be unhappy. So as per this theory it is not the reward which actually motivates but it is the perception of the fairness. People's motivation results from a ratio of ratios: a person compares the



ratio of reward to effort with the comparable ratio of reward to effort that they think others are getting.

#### 15.4.3 Goal- Setting

Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about our ideal future, and for motivating our self to turn our future vision into reality. The process of setting goals helps us to choose where we want to go and what we want to achieve in our life. It gives direction to life. Setting of goals gives us a long term vision and at the same time short term motivation. It focuses on our acquisition of knowledge, and helps to organise our time and resources, so that we make the best of our life.

We should start setting our personal goals, by setting sharp, clear and defined goals we can measure and take pride of achieving these goals. By setting our goals our self confidence is also raised. The first step in setting your personal goals that we first should consider what we want to achieve in our life. This life time goal will give us the overall perspective which shapes the other aspects of our decision making.

There are various types of life time goal which we can choose depending upon our interest and liking. Some of the important categories of life time goal are as mentioned below

- 1) Physical goals
- 2) Educational Goals
- 3) Career Goals
- 4) Artistic Goals
- 5) Financial Goals
- 6) Relationship and family Goals
- 7) Attitude Goals
- 8) Pleasure Goals
- 9) Social Goals
- 10) Spiritual Goals
- 11) Public Service Goals

After setting our life time goal in any field, set a smaller goal in order to achieve or reach to our life time goal. Then prepare one year plan, then six months, one month progressively of smaller goal, however all these should be based on our previous plan.

Finally we create a daily to-do-list of things to achieve our life time goal. Once we decide our first set goal we should review and update our to-do-list on daily basis.

To achieve our goal it must be SMART which means, Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant And Time Bound

**Specific:** Chances of accomplishment of a specific goal is more than the general goals. To set a specific goal one must know what exactly one wants to achieve, should know the time limit as well as proper requirements and constraints. Person must know specific reasons, purpose of the goal. E.g. A general goal is to get success in life but specific goal is to become an I.A.S Officer

**Measurable -** Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal one set. Measurable goal means one must know when and how the goal is to be accomplished.

**Attainable –** attainable goal means one must be able to judge whether the goals are to be accomplished or not. One must know the importance of goals in his or her life and the ways to achieve one's goals. When one see oneself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow him or her to possess them.

**Realistic-**one should be able to judge oneself while setting a goal, one should not underestimate oneself. One should be able to know what are one's capabilities and potentialities and accordingly one should set a goal. A goal can be higher so that one can use his full capacity to achieve it.

**Timely –** A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If someone wants to lose or gain weight then one must fix the time period, that within next three months I will lose ten kg. or so. T can also stand for Tangible – A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses, that is, taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing.

**Time Management-** Effective strategies for the Management

Time management helps one to use available time more effectively. It has also other benefits like health benefits or monetary benefits. If the time is managed properly and wisely then lot of stress can be reduced and it will help in bringing improvement

in life. There are some strategies one can take help of those strategies to make effective use of time.

Planning- if proper planning is done then one can utilise time in an efficient manner. While making plan one must plan each and every day. Keep a schedule of daily activities to minimize conflicts and last-minute rushes.

Plan each day. Planning your day can help you accomplish more and feel more in control of your life. Write a to-do list, putting the most important tasks at the top. Keep a schedule of your daily activities to minimize conflicts and last-minute rushes.

Prioritize your tasks. One must be able to identify more important and less important tasks and accordingly one prioritise the tasks. This will help in spending time and energy on important tasks only.

Say no to nonessential tasks. One should be able to say no to the things which are not so important. For that should be able to know clearly one's goals and objectives.

Delegate. Take a look at your to-do list and consider what you can pass on to someone else.

Take the time you need to do a quality job. Doing work right the first time may take more time upfront, but errors usually result in time spent making corrections, which takes more time overall.

Day to day check on your time schedule –this will enable one to know where the time is wasted.

Taking Review of the work done- Before making a plan one should evaluate how he/she spends the time. Writing a diary will help in finding out how the time is spent and how it is wasted?. Look for time that can be used more wisely. By avoiding the things which distracts a person lot of time is saved.

Get plenty of sleep, eat a healthy diet and exercise regularly. A healthy lifestyle can improve your focus and concentration, which will help improve efficiency in work this will result in doing things faster.

For effective time management distressing is must. For this one needs break from the routine work and then by relaxing and rejuvenating oneself one can do the work more efficiently.

## SUMMARY

In today's competitive world there is a need to have knowledge about the various skills, for the future graduates the knowledge of various career opportunities is essential. There are two types of competitive examinations; they are for entry into good educational institutions where they can take up higher education. Other competitive exams are for entry into jobs. For getting success in the competitive exams some skills are to be developed. If one has a clear idea about objectives of life, is able to set SMART goals, practises effective strategies of time management then success and happiness is not far away for him/her.