

RESEARCH ARTICLE



PRACTICALITY AND THE ROLE OF SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LITERATURE

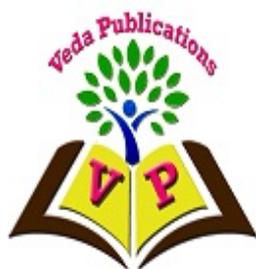
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Doi: <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2025.12415>

ABSTRACT



Article history:

Received on : 04-11-2025

Accepted on : 17-12-2025

Available online: 29-12-2025

In the history of universe the most advanced innovation has discovered that is human being. Among all the animal or creature, the human is the wisest animal has been considered by many. At the same time Aristotle, the great ancient Greek master, greatest disciple of Plato and tutored Alexander the great, has considered that 'human is a social animal.' This strengthen the social needs of human while surviving in the society where with the time human discovered the most intelligent and sharp weapon for themselves that is 'the Language.' Thus among the all other discoveries made by the human, the use of language is the most significant. As the use of language via speech or words made human more powerful and the journey of growth, prosperity and civilization begin.

Further with time the nature of human changed and the human adopted soft, settled and careful behavior. And here human being has started paying attention on their behavior which can be seen in the form of relations between human and human relation with animals via the available paintings of Prehistoric age or Stone age in India. Thus this shows the role of soft skills is significant.

Keywords: *Stone Age, Prehistoric age, Soft skills, English Literature*

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Literature in general, Significance and Development of English Literature:

Broadly literature is considered as the expression and experience of human life. And generally literature is the use of spoken and written words expressed in the form of literary or artistic works, at present electronic media has played vital role and transformed the medium of expression. It is commonly said that 'literature is the criticism of life.' The word 'literature' has derived from the Latin word '*littera*' which means letter or writing. Over the time the meaning and the term got modified throughout the time. And at present literature has become the medium to express the thoughts, add values via piece of work, reflect human life and experiences even the imaginative power of human can also be expressed via literature. A written piece of writing expresses deeper meaning, depth and ideas, it also uses the language very creatively, and reflects human values, nature, standards of human society, their culture and tradition. Thus literature can be:

- An artistic piece of writing or a simple life story,
- The author can use creative language or simple words
- It varies in structure, genres, settings and plots
- It has variety of characters, diversity of life forms
- It can be presented in the written form such as books, articles, etc. or in oral form such as ballads, patriotic songs, or in e-way such as online book writing, poem publication etc.
- It can be written in any dialect of the language or in a standards language too

- The literature presented social reality, social status, culture, norms and traditions
- It brings new thoughts, ideas and creativity in the life
- It also presents human nature, human understanding and experiences
- It can also discover new ideas, theories and movements
- It can be presented in the form of movies, documentaries or series
- It can have certain purpose, specific goal or broader aim
- It can be written for entertainment, education, or for life lessons

As English literature has wider audience, reach, and global position. Its access is easier and thus ample numbers of books, articles, research papers have been written in the domain of English Literature, yet qualitative research is the need of the time. However broadly English literature refers to the literature, written or expressed in the English Language by the authors from England on European continent, later with the spread of the English language, the literature outside England has developed. All the greatest authors of their time contributed with their literary pieces of writing to the world artistically and presented the human life and suffering; technicality and deeper emotions. The literature which developed outside England got worldwide fame later in the upcoming century especially after world wars. And this literature broadly came to known as post-colonial literature. As it highlighted regional issues, aestheticity and imagination deeply with human life experiences such as Indian English literature broadly represented most creative and appealing form



throughout the globe, whereas African English literature raised the issues faced by the native and their lives before and after world wars and similarly others.

As English literature has begun from old English with the long epic narrative of Beowulf, marked the literary journey of English Literature, this time period laid the foundation for English literature as heroism, religion, priorities and loyalty from Beowulf's piece of work the English world learned. Later in the Middle and Elizabethan period, literature became more refined, influence of Norman French and Latin languages, the literature has experienced. The greatest contributors of these ages became Geoffrey Chaucer, Shakespeare, Marlow, Spenser and many other greatest authors in different genres, they significantly contributed at this time. Further the seventeenth century turned the literary lenses towards metaphysical poetry and religious works which can be seen in the works of John Donne and Milton. With the time Romantic age and Victorian age flourished, which primarily changed the literary lenses on common peoples' language, rural life, society, emotions, imagination and nature of human which later brings realism and morality in the literature. These two ages gave English Literature William Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron; and the Victorian age gave Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

Later Modern and Post-modern English literature with flourished with contemporary literature and bloom in different theories and -isms developed. Post-colonial literature from Third world countries also flourished and recognized worldwide such as African English literature, Indian English literature,

Australian English literature. With it due to the practicality and wider reach of the English language English Language Teaching Learning and methods developed with that Soft skills played the supportive and essential role to get flourished any language, profession and genre. Thus the practicality and very impressive role of soft skills can be understood via literature. Hence the significance of English Literature in developing the soft skills can be said that:

1. English Literature provides strong foundation for soft skills development as its development can be seen across the continents such as Indian English literature in Asia etc.
2. The commonality of universal themes such as care, good communication, respect, emotional understanding, love, honesty all can be nurtured with the help of literature.
3. Soft skills can play very vital role in the society with the help of literature, as literature can give visual and artistic long term imagination.
4. The abstract feel oriented sensory imagination and effects via literature can easily bring the deeper learning of soft skills.
5. Soft Skills such as communication development, emotional intelligence, stress management, teamwork, personality development, leadership development and confidence building etc. can be effectively learn and understood with the help of literature.
6. The depth of thoughts expressed by the literary characters, the emotional



- 7. Soft skills are learning oriented and in the literature characters or lines of literary piece evolve with time and learning developed.
- 8. Soft skills can be easily learnt by story-telling, explanation of characters behavior in various situations, artistic talks between characters create long lasting impact, hence literature can play significance role in the development of soft skills.

Thus it can be said that English literature can play vital role in the development of soft skills, as human learns from experiences and literature can be one of the best tool to learn, inculcate, understand and develop soft skills.

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LITERATURE:

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (9th edition) defines soft skills as, "personal qualities that on person's life, learning and experiences.

enable you to communicate well with other people." And thus soft skills can be considered as the individual traits shown via verbal or non-verbal methods with the help of personal understanding. There are many soft skills such as personality development, leadership development, communication development, emotional intelligence, stress management, teamwork and confidence building etc. They are different from hard skills as hard skills require continuous training in a goal specific course, diploma, they trained for a specific task, at the end of completion of the hard skill one get certificate whereas soft skills are personal traits, attributes and qualities learn by individuals. These soft skills help individuals to perform well in the profession, in private or in public domain thus they help individuals indirectly to sustain the job, work or task. Hence it can be said that soft skills has wider consequences on person's life, learning and experiences.

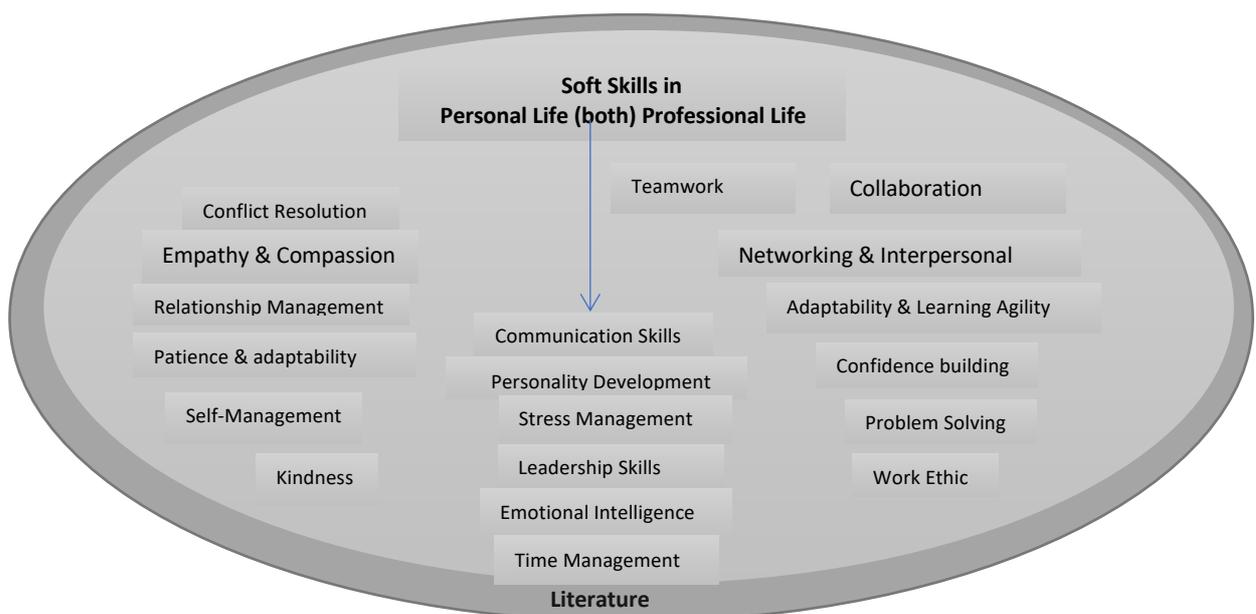


Fig 1: Soft Skills Personal Life, Professional Life and in both



The term Soft Skills initially coined by US Army and in 1970 it was called as 'People skills' but proper understanding shows the use of soft skills has wider historical evidences such as paintings in ancient caves show the human-animal relation and early domestication of animals by human is the result of soft bonding between the two which shows how humans were used their soft behavior, even the paintings itself are the sign proof to show that how people of ancient time were much connected with nature, animal, art-forms etc. these shows the use of soft skills has ancient tradition the name might be new. Thus soft skills are the building blocks of human life in private or public domain. Thus literature due its wide reach and diversity of masterpieces and genre can deeply impact the human behavior, thus soft skills development through literature can be more practical and has greater role to play. Soft skills can be developed via literature such as:

- Story telling
- Moral message driven story telling
- Role play of characters by readers in real life
- Inculcation of best practices adopted by characters
- Learning via understanding the characters and their role
- The sensory image literature will provide
- Film Review program at institute level to get them visual experiences
- Activity driven syllabus based on soft skills in the colleges/institute
- Street play based on importance and understanding of soft skills

- Poster Presentation on role of characters on specific soft skills
- Dialogues based poster presentation
- Short clips of characters while showing the soft skills via their performance
- Characters based exhibition with the help of technology to learn the importance of the skills in private and public life
- Inculcation of soft skills syllabus throughout the full course of Degree, Diploma etc.
- Short courses related to the learning of soft skills
- Seminars, presentation based on the importance of soft skills
- Real life leaning of soft skills through Teacher-Training Orientation Programs (TTOP)

Thus it is clear that soft skills can be developed via literature and hence legislative backup should be given to the soft skills and also in educational policy implementation.

PRACTICALITY AND ROLE OF SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LITERATURE:

Soft skills learning, understanding and real life experience is based on its clarity. Soft skills are the part of real life experiences, they are essential for character development, uplifting of human behavior, and societal upliftment. Soft skills are personal qualities based on deeper understanding, they are goal oriented and with experience we can easily gain expertise on them. Soft skills are practical in nature as in life we walk, move away, converse with others thus throughout the day from morning to end we



need certain skills to perform well even to impress but to express oneself. Thus the nature and development of soft skills is very practical in nature and the role is significant.

PRACTICALITY OF SOFT SKILLS THROUGH LITERATURE

- Literature gives visual experience to the reader hence easy to understand
- Literature is a criticism of life and one can easily connect soft skills with literature
- Literature is the expression of nonverbal behavior hence soft skills understanding via literature can become easier
- Literature is open to wider interpretation hence one can easily connect oneself with the literature
- Literature leads to deeper understanding of the characters and hence individuals in real life can develop better understanding of human behavior
- Literature is one of the best healthy visual experience giver tools as compare to any e tool hence learning of soft skills inculcate human friendly practices
- Literature is related to the life of human similarly soft skills are related to human behavior hence nurture of behavior can happen

- Soft skills are practical and the nature of these skills make them more experience driven; value oriented
- Soft skills such as communication skills, personality development skills etc. can be efficiently learn from literature
- Via communication skills can give the message to world about common human life goal such as saving environment, pollution free world etc.
- Literature is a fine example of society and social standards hence readers in real life learn, acquire best of the skills
- Visualize has higher impact in the society hence literature can make task easier
- Soft Skills are also collaborative in nature hence mixed development can takes place

Thus apart from these, there are several practicalities of soft skills via literature. Hence literature has very practical aspects and importance in real life and also to develop Soft skills such as:



Soft Skill	Literature	Practicality
Communication Skills	Pride and Prejudice (a novel, by Jane Austen)	Characters shown misunderstanding initially later resolve via communication only; wise dialogue of characters allude people to behave in a certain way
Leadership Skills	The Road Not Taken (poem, by R. Frost)	Poem shown choices in life, believe in oneself, be practical, trust on decision
Personality Development Skills	The Beggar (short story, Anton Chekov)	Small act of kindness can change someone life, Kindness and compassion
Emotional Intelligence	My Financial Career (Short story by Stephen Leacock)	Management of situation well can leads to more prosperity,
Teamwork and Collaboration	Swami and Friends	Life and society and friendship and loyalty

Fig 2: The Soft Skills Development w.r.t. the Literature

Thus the practicality of soft skills via literature is one of the easiest and more engaging learning one might have, as literature provides the main ground for soft skills and their development and practicality in the life. Similarly one has to understand the role of soft skills:



Fig 3: The Role of Soft Skills

Thus with time the old literature has modified and later middle, new and contemporary literature emerged, similarly the soft skills are also emerging in nature, with time, situation and experiences they get modified. Hence it is right to say that, 'Soft skills are the backbone of life whereas literature is the life.'

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