

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

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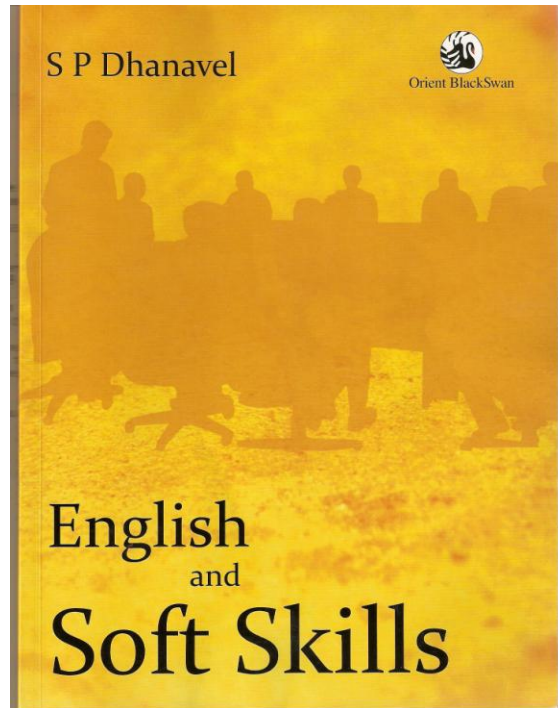
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## **The Book and the Author**

Professor S. P. Dhanavel's book on *English and Soft Skills* clearly reveals the author's expertise and specialization in this field. Professor Dhanavel has been teaching English to engineering graduates for many years. This teaching experience has led him to recognize the need for a book on soft skills so that engineering graduates will have sound training and better employment prospects. In addition, soft skills acquired in the class using English will help the graduates to prosper well in their careers as well.

## **The Content**

Ten essential soft skills are discussed and presented in this book. The book begins with the author's Preface, followed by How to Use the Book. Instructions are given to both the Teacher and the Student. Thus, the book is oriented toward both student and teacher and this is a very useful and economic strategy.

Ten soft skills are dealt with in ten units in this book. The following are the soft skills presented, analyzed, discussed and practiced:

1. Listening Skills
2. Teamwork Skills
3. Emotional Intelligence Skills
4. Assertive Skills
5. Problem-solving Skills
6. Interview Skills
7. Interview Skills
8. Adaptability Skills
9. Non-verbal Communication Skills
10. Written Communication Skills

## **A Significant and Special Strategy**

An interesting feature of the units is that a story in original is presented as the body of each unit. Various activities of the unit that each student and groups of students are expected to pursue revolve around this story. Of the 9 stories and an extract from a novel presented in the textbook, only two are by Indian authors (Ruskin Bond and R. K. Narayan). Perhaps next edition may have more stories by Indian authors which may enable focusing on culture-bound soft skills as well. Also some assessment of the length of the story may be made.

The reading section in every unit, in general, presents some suggestions for further reading. These are mostly stories by the author of the story that is presented as the main part of the unit. Students are encouraged to read these stories. We'd recommend that this

“further reading” list be replaced by some reading directly relevant to soft skills to help students to gain more confidence in exercising and practicing soft skills.

### **General Structure of the Units**

In general, each unit has the following exercises for individual students and groups of students:

1. Understanding the Story
2. Understanding People
3. Understanding Places and Events
4. Understanding Ideas
5. Vocabulary Development
6. Focus on Selected Grammatical Categories and Processes
7. Accurate Use of Words
8. Thinking about Soft Skills
9. Soft Skills at Work
10. Real Life Experience
11. Further Reading.

In a few lessons some additional categories are also exploited as part of group and individual work.

### **Soft Skills – More Focus May Be Called for Here**

Of great relevance to the main focus of the book (Soft Skills) are the three items/sections in each unit: Thinking about Soft Skills, Soft Skills at Work and Real Life Experience.

As the book is intended to present English and Soft Skills, a good part of the book devotes to the learning/teaching of English by focusing on the lexical, grammatical, semantic and discourse elements. There is room to integrate the language aspects with performance of soft skills in a more seamless manner.

Situations provided in the stories are connected to various soft skills, and hopefully both students and teachers will recognize the immense potential these stories offer to further learn, integrate and use language skills and soft skills. Creativity of both students and teachers will add value to the content and structure of this very useful book.

### **Curriculum Developers to Note ...**

Teaching Soft Skills has not received the attention it deserves in our academic reading and writing in the classroom. Such skills are generally considered to be part of work experience, not relevant to academic mastery of various subjects.

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However, as study of academic subjects, choice of career and promotion in the chosen career are increasingly recognized as important values that depend on successful use of soft skills, we now have begun to emphasize the importance of soft skills and appropriate language use even when students learn academic subjects in colleges, etc.

Imparting these skills were once the privileged domain of the corporate sector, but the corporate sector now prefers those who have mastered these skills even at the entry point.

### **A Need-filling and Timely Book**

Yet, very few attempts have been made to develop reliable resource material in lucid style to inculcate soft skills. This scenario leaves thousands of potential candidates jobless. The book, *English Soft Skills* by Professor S. P. Dhanavel fills this need and bridges the gap between eligible candidates and the expectations of the job market.

The book is an eye-opener for curriculum designers and material developers to reflect on the changing contours of higher education in India in order to meet global standards.

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