

## **Soft skill training takes centre-stage** *Delhi emphasizes personality development*



There is a "remarkable mismatch between what is being taught in schools, colleges and universities and the knowledge and skills businesses and organizations are looking for in new recruits, even in India", says a recent global study. In this context, the importance of soft skills is being increasingly appreciated as they are not taught in school and college curricula. Especially in a competitive job scenario, soft skills are becoming even more important than academic qualifications. In order to address this concern, Delhi University (DU) recently launched a personality development course. Following a pilot project that was launched by the university's Institute of Lifelong Learning (ILL) last year, the institute has now decided to start two batches — of 40 students each.

The three-month course will be offering 75 hours of training to participants on various aspects related to one's personality. The university is charging Rs 2,500 for the course. The pilot project, last year, was meant only for DU students. However, this year, many non-DU students too had applied for the course and the university decided to keep it open for all.

Sumit Kumar, an engineering student from Krukhshetra University, is one of the participants. He said, "I think it is important to be confident and have leadership qualities. This course will help me develop those skills." According to Hemant Kumar, a student of School of Open Learning, the course will help him build a bonding and a network with fellow students and give him an opportunity to interact, thus developing his confidence.

Besides students, parents too are keen on sending their children for such courses, informed AK Bakhshi, director, ILLL. The institute also runs a course in English language teaching in a number of DU colleges. Bakhshi informed that the personality development course, too, will be started in various colleges. He added that many students withdrew this year because North Campus was inconvenient for them in terms of distance. The course content includes topics such as understanding self and others, psychological assessment, communication, motivation, stress and time management, group discussion and interview, conflict management, leadership and holistic wellness.

Deepak Pental, vice-chancellor, DU, said, "Society is getting more and more complex. There is a difference in the way we travel, interact or work. Hence, it is important for all of us to know how to operate within these complex structures." While advising ILLL to include this aspect in the course, he added that a person should know how to run an organisation, institute or a department as well as learn to blend theory and practice (TNN 7 September 2009).