

## BRINGING IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE SOCIETY- GENDER DEBATE

Kanika Sharma\*

### *Abstract*

*Emotional Intelligence is the nouveau scientific nomenclature given to the ability of an individual to comprehend, assess and evaluate emotions of one and of others. Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their influential article "Emotional Intelligence" they defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (1990). The object of my present paper titled 'Bringing in Emotional Intelligence in the society-gender debate' is to highlight the imperative requirement of emotional intelligence in the current scheme of the society. Going by the turbulent spate of crime in the society, there is an urgent necessity to generate awareness and sensitization towards Human Rights so as to curb the criminal act from the inception itself. Gruesome incidents like the infamous Nirbhaya gang rape incident blatantly exemplify that our society is passing through a transition phase where practicing emotional intelligence and humane empathy is the need of the hour. The theoretical scope of my study would be focussed centrally around the genesis of the problem that lies essentially in the social construct of our society and by addressing the socio-legal issues in a psychological and emotive manner, the pathology of social-gender and criminological issues can be dealt with effectively. Emotional Intelligence essentially can be viewed as the new successful model to modify and regulate delinquency and anti-socio apathy.*

**Keywords:** Emotional-Intelligence, Psychological, Human Rights, Society, Gender

---

\* Senior Research Fellow @ Centre for Human Rights and Duties, Panjab University, Chandigarh; Contact No.: +91-98152-07418; Email: [kanika.sharma23@gmail.com](mailto:kanika.sharma23@gmail.com)

Emotional Intelligence is the nouveau scientific nomenclature given to the ability of an individual to comprehend, assess and evaluate emotions of one and of others. Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. They defined Emotional Intelligence (E.I.) as, “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions” (1990)<sup>1</sup>. The notion of E.I. emanates from Cognitive Intelligence which is defined as a general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience.

For centuries, common sense, religion, and philosophy have focused on wisdom, the classical version of what is now being called “emotional intelligence.” Wisdom, however, has not fared well in our modern culture. The rush of science and its technologies have brought in not just advancement, convenience and comfort but also confusion and societal dilemmas. There is an unavoidable flipside to every good thing. If there are immense opportunities of research and development, employment via the internet, there are also multiple cybercrimes to regulate. We boast many a times of the clichéd saying ‘unity in diversity’, but the sporadic incidents ranging from the death of ‘Nido Tanian’ who was thrashed and beaten to death by shopkeepers in Lajpat Nagar area of south Delhi, when he retaliated after they made fun of his hairstyle tells an altogether different story. He was the son of Arunachal Pradesh Congress Legislator yet his distinct profile did nothing to protect him from the intolerance that was unleashed on him victimising him for his North-east Indian descent.

Women’s safety and liberation is the most favourite issue of all politicians and seems to be on the propaganda and manifesto of every competing party, be it old and established or new and upcoming, the Congress/B.J.P or the AAP. Ironically, ever since the December 16, Gang Rape incident, there only seems to be an upsurge on the rape criminal statistics. There has been the criminal law amendment 2013 but in effect it has been, followed by numerous other bone-chilling statistics of rape.

Incidents like these reek of bias, discrimination and sheer intolerance. Hate crimes like these unapologetically show the cultural conflict, hate propaganda and emotional apathy of the perpetrator. Catering to any of these incidents in isolation is not the remedy as the solution in

---

<sup>1</sup> Mayer, John D., Brackett, Marc A., Salovey Peter (Eds.). (2004). *Emotional Intelligence: Key Readings on the Mayer and Salovey Model*. New York, United States of America: National Professional Resources Inc.

effect lies in curing the societal woes. There is a profound void in the sensitivity and emotional make-up of the society. Values, morality, and religion, have been severed from the complete picture, and have been largely relativized and compromised. To top it all, there is the all escalating stress. Other than the obvious physiological problems to individuals, a high degree of stress affects congenial relations between colleagues. It often leads to decreased morale, decreased productivity, increased in-fighting and increased absenteeism. If left unchecked, it can also lead to a toxic work culture. When people can recognize their own emotions and those of others understand these emotions and learn to respond to emotional situations in an effective way, they are able to work in harmony, maintain strong, mutually supportive relations and increase morale and productivity.

In the absence of a strong sustaining foundation, individuals are left with no conceptual system or framework of thought in terms of which they can develop, educate, critically assess, or rationally reconstruct their feelings, emotions, and impulses. There is an imperative requirement of emotional intelligence in the current scheme of the society. Going by the turbulent spate of crime in the society, there is an urgent necessity to generate awareness and sensitization towards Human Rights so as to curb the criminal act from the inception itself. Erosion of certain basic values like respect, tolerance and mutual co-existence blatantly exemplify that our society is passing through a transition phase where practicing emotional intelligence, empathy and tolerance is the need of the hour. The genesis of the problem can be essentially probed in the social construct of our society and by addressing the socio-legal issues in a psychological and emotive manner, the pathology of social-gender and criminological issues can be dealt with effectively. For centuries, common sense, religion, and philosophy have focused on wisdom, the classical version of what is now being called “emotional intelligence.” The Emotional Intelligence model as introduced by Daniel Goleman focuses on E.I. as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. Goleman’s model outlines four main EI constructs<sup>2</sup>:

- i. Self-awareness: The ability to read one’s emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.
- ii. Self-management: Involves controlling one’s emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.

---

<sup>2</sup> Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*, New York: Bantam Books

- iii. Social awareness: The ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks.
- iv. Relationship management: The ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

These are summarized as:

- a) Awareness of self and others, or congruency and empathy,
- b) Approval of self and others, or unconditional caring for others and self,
- c) Self-management or discipline without fear,
- d) Self-awareness or congruency and un-conditioning of the mind in relationships,
- e) Valuing honesty and ethics, or congruency.

Later, the definition was elaborated as “the ability to perceive and express emotion accurately and adaptively, the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge, the ability to use feelings to facilitate thought, and the ability to regulate emotions in oneself and in others” (Salovey & Pizarro, 2003, p. 263). Salovey and Pizarro assert that the concept of emotional intelligence is valuable in that it provides a theoretical framework to deal with individual differences in the emotional areas, as well as extend traditional views of intelligence by unifying both cognitive and emotional domains of human ability. Before the popularity of emotional intelligence in the 1990s, Gardner (1983) proposed the existence of seven intelligences (to which he has added more, such as natural, spiritual, and existential) consisting of linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Of these separate intelligences, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, called personal intelligences, are about the capacity to interact effectively with other people via understanding their feelings, emotions, intentions, and motivations, and the capacity to regulate one's own life through accurate self-understanding of emotions and abilities. Gardner (1999), as well as others (see Mayer et al., 2001), acknowledged that interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences are comparable to Goleman's (1995) emotional intelligence in that the three have to do with knowledge, awareness, and control of one's own and others' feelings, and empathy with and sensitivity to emotional states. Sternberg (2000) defines wisdom as the application of tacit knowledge in relation to intrapersonal (e.g., good ends for oneself), interpersonal (e.g., good outcomes for others) and extra personal interests (e.g., fits environmental contexts). The major function of wisdom is to balance all these three interests with consideration of the common good. Wisdom is similar to emotional intelligence in that it involves tacit knowledge about

oneself and others, but is also like practical intelligence because it only applies to the context of normal daily life (beyond the context of ability tests, achievement tests, or novel creative situations) of individuals.

According to Gardner (1999), morality, though not as a separate domain of human intelligence, is about personality, individuality, will, and character that subsumes certain cultural values and is essential for the highest realization of human nature. Piechowski (1979) asserts that advanced moral development is associated with emotional sensitivity, compassion, and moral belief, and ultimately facilitates self-actualization. He links moral characteristics to emotional aspects of human development in that the emotional mode of developmental potential generates mental functioning, which is crucial for the formation and development of high levels of moral sensitivity. Factually, Research has demonstrated that an individual's Emotional Intelligence is often a more accurate predictor of success than the individual's IQ. No matter how intellectually intelligent someone is, their success is still governed by how well they communicate their ideas and interact with their peers.

In this manner Emotional Intelligence essentially can be viewed as the new successful model to modify and regulate delinquency and anti-socio apathy. Acting out of empathy, propriety and a sense of awareness amidst all situations will definitely go a long way in healing the current social maladies. A sense of self-discipline and conditioning of mind towards respect for all communities and towards the opposite sex can undeniably be the lasting solution for peaceful co-existence. Violence against Women has been a chronic problem plaguing the society in not just today's times but since the olden times. Manifestations and forms of violence may have been added to the already tormenting existing ones but empowerment and safety of women has been a hollow concept. The Gender debate in the society is a highly volatile one and depends largely upon the interaction of the diverse elements and constituents within it. The practice of bringing human rights sensitization on this platform particularly in today's contemporary times has brought in rights awareness and mobility. This has been as a result of avid movement towards emotional intelligence. Men and women are the two conspicuous actors propelling forward the progression of the society. Emotional Intelligence here again plays a very pivotal role in ensuring significant results for empowerment, safety and security for women. Intelligence is a function of the intellect; it is a cognitive matter, involving comprehension and critical judgment. However, cognition is widely regarded as restricted to facts and the formal realms of grammar, logic, and mathematics. Feelings and impulses are taken to be subjective

effects of bodily conditions or comprehended facts, not modes of awareness in a judgmental form, not modes of comprehension or belief in their own right. Thus, we do not take our feelings and desires to be subject to being culturally informed, critically assessed, and rationally corrected. When the above statement is scientifically evaluated it shows that if there can be a homogenous conglomeration of cognitive with emotional intelligence, people will be better groomed, better informed and sensitized.

Goleman and his fellow psychologists talk about empathetic awareness of the feelings and awareness of others. Empathy involves not just awareness of the feelings and impulses of others but being aware of them as though they were one's own. It is a matter of imaginatively putting one's self in the other's place and sharing in his or her emotive responses to the comprehended situation. Nevertheless, for Goleman, empathetic awareness of the feelings and impulses of others takes them to be simply part of the factual situation. What is being proposed by Goleman and company is that one's own feelings and impulses and those of others involved are always relevant facts in any situation. The emotionally intelligent are said to be those who are especially sensitive to such facts. Certainly one must be aware of one's own feelings and impulses and the feelings and impulses of others in order to respond to a situation intelligently<sup>3</sup>. We human beings are innately emotional creatures, which is why an inability to manage our emotions, or influence the emotions of those around us, can undermine our interactions and endeavors at every turn.

The sheer awareness of one's own feelings and desires and those of others as though they were one's own may causally transform one's emotions and desires by further enlightening one about the factual situation. Emotional intelligence is an all-encompassing notion that covers under its ambit prudent decisions, whether these are taken personally, professionally or towards the society. Happiness the ultimate goal of every human action is a state of mind and is seemingly the simplest but pragmatically the most complex human emotion. Emotional Intelligence stabilizes this oscillating emotion and an ironic factum of this most sought after emotion is simply that definitions of happiness neither exist nor do they concur. These definitions could be completely polar or marginally similar. Yet, the universal undisputed notion is that every individual aspires towards this amorphous feeling and every action is pioneered towards achieving this well-demarcated human emotion that will render a person finally as 'happy'.

---

<sup>3</sup> Adams, E.M. (1998), Emotional Intelligence and Wisdom, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* , ) Vol. XXXVI, pp. 1-14.

These clichéd checklists of ambitions and priorities are paradoxically common to most. But, does a person really realize contentment and joy, after accomplishing that daunting check list.

According to Seligman<sup>4</sup>, father of positive psychology talks about happiness having three dimensions that can be cultivated; “The pleasant life” is realized if a person learns to savor and appreciate basic pleasures such as companionship, the natural environment and bodily needs. An individual can remain pleasantly stuck at this stage or can go on to experience “the good life,” which is achieved by discovering unique virtues and strengths and employing them creatively to enhance their lives. The final stage is “the meaningful life,” in which a person finds a deep sense of fulfilment by exploring and mobilizing their unique strengths for a purpose much greater than themselves. Cultivating the very same components fundamentally means to be stable, peaceful and wherein a calm and composed emotional intelligent person can evolve the simple emotion of harmony and happiness.

According to Gary van Warmerdam author of the popular book ‘Mind Works: A Practical Guide for Changing Thoughts Beliefs, and Emotional Reactions’<sup>5</sup>, self-awareness is the key to change and lasting happiness. In essence, achieving sustainable happiness also denotes a stable, equally gendered and peaceful society. Cultivating mindfulness, yoga, meditations etc. are some perennial practices, which enable in attaining the above.

Spiritually stating, human nature in its very essence is full of bliss and tranquility. It could be the material, technological and external elements that compel man to act in delinquent ways. So as social scientists and social beings we are always endeavoring to evolve ways to achieve that stable sense of gender equilibrium in the society wherein society’s tenacious inclinations are curtailed by inevitable regulations that discipline human behaviour, checking criminal tendencies and assuring safety and security of all.

To conclude, it can be stated unanimously, that imbibing the concept of Emotional Intelligence within the society and observing our behaviour and demeanor along those lines would lead to a harmonious co-existence within the society. It has been reiterated that concepts like Globalization and Liberalization have shrunk the world. However, it is still a gender-divided world. Violence against women has magnified and has reached alarming proportions. Hate and

---

<sup>4</sup> Seligman, Martin E.P. (2012). *Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being*. New York. Free Press.

<sup>5</sup> Warmerdam, Gary V. (2014), *Mind Works: A Practical Guide for Changing Thoughts Beliefs, and Emotional Reactions*, California: Cairn Publishing.



racial crimes are a clear manifestation of the widening cultural conflict, and in fact within this category women are yet again, a soft easy target for further exploitation. The intelligentsia of the society has in many ways stepped forward and is bringing about a change. The previous 'silent voices' have now assumed a strong slogan. Women, youth, and above all, the common people are now occupying the central pedestal and rhetorically stating the imperative of rights awareness. This is all courtesy the culmination of a heightened Emotional Quotient of the masses with the projection of the appropriate Human Rights sensitization in the society. It is now an accepted and admitted fact, that a more emotionally aware populace will be more emotionally stable and responsible. All in all, a complex situation in which the expression of emotion is expressed depends on:

- the gender of the person concerned;
- the particular emotion being experienced;
- the social circumstances in which it is being expressed

And if all three elements are in sync in a harmonious mixture, then scientifically and sociologically, the society will be discrimination and bias free.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, E.M. (1998). Emotional Intelligence and Wisdom. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, ) Vol. XXXVI, pp. 1-14.
- Goleman, D. (1998). Working with emotional intelligence. New York: Bantam Books. Mayer, John D., Brackett, Marc A., Salovey Peter (Eds.). (2004). Emotional Intelligence: Key Readings on the Mayer and Salovey Mode. New York, United States of America: National Professional Resources Inc.
- Neyroud, Peter and Beckley, Alan. (2012). Policing, Ethics and Human Rights. New York. Routledge Publications.
- Seligman, Martin E.P. (2012). Flourish: A Visionary New Understanding of Happiness and Well-being. New York. Free Press.
- Warmerdam, Gary V. (2014). Mind Works: A Practical Guide for Changing Thoughts Beliefs, and Emotional Reactions. California: Cairn Publishing.
- Zamora, Gloria (2013). Social & Emotional Intelligence: The Key to Optimizing Decision-Making. Retrieved on 9 February 2014. (<http://the-iseiblog.com/category/self-management/>).