

## Emotional Quotient in Students: A Need of the Hour or Not

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### Abstract

In the Indian subcontinent the relationship between the tutor and the taught has always been revered. The concept of education was given even more importance after we gained our independence as it was the only source of getting ahead in the world and achieving success. Every year we see the number of students who attempt the prestigious exams like NEET, JEE, UPSC etc. increase but at the same time the students who graduate from the elite institutions in India are increasingly being termed as unemployable. [1]

One of the primary reasons for this label is that when emphasising the importance of education, we as a society focused on marks rather than a holistic growth of the child which should have included personality development and inculcation of hobbies as well. Here the concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) also comes into the picture. If our students could develop a healthy EQ the incidents of students' suicide might also get lowered. [2]

India is home to 19% of the world's children. 440 million out of our total population happen to be children under 18 years of age. With our economy growing at such an exponential rate, it is high time that we focus on our youngsters who will enter the workforce. [3]

Various studies have been conducted that show the importance of EQ in a student's life. The correlation between a student's understanding, navigating and regulating of his/her emotions is directly related to a successful academic record as well as a successful career. [4]

This paper is an attempt to learn the importance of emotional quotient in a student's life, to determine whether it can be successfully inculcated in our students and the obstacles that we as a society might have to face in this endeavor.

**Keywords:** Emotional Quotient, Students, Classroom Teaching.

### Introduction

"Emotional intelligence, more than any other factor, more than Intelligence Quotient or expertise accounts for 85% to 90% of success at work...IQ is a threshold competence. You need it, but it doesn't make you a star. Emotional intelligence can." [5]

Emotional intelligence/quotient has been defined as the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, as well as the emotions of others. One important difference between Intelligence quotient and Emotional quotient is that the latter can be developed and also improved over time, unlike the intelligence quotient which usually remains stable throughout a person's life. Nothing can alter it. To lead a holistic life, balance between the two, that is, emotional quotient and intelligence quotient is extremely important. [6]

The aforementioned balance between the two plays a very significant role in finding common ground and decision making. It is of special import for a teacher in a classroom – in India there are usually 30 – 40 students in a classroom and a teacher have to bring equilibrium between all 30 – 40 children present in the classroom. Some students might be naughty; some might be going through a traumatic event at home like a parent's death or sickness and some may be disinterested in learning. A teacher can only succeed in bringing all of the students together if he/she has a high emotional quotient. [7]

For the ease of understanding the concept of emotional intelligence – emotional quotient has been divided in to 4 following steps: -

- Self-Awareness – it refers to identifying and understanding of one's emotions and their effect on a person's daily life, for example, whether a person is angry with his wife or simply frustrated at his work situation and that frustration is presenting itself as anger. Once the distinction has been made, dealing with the emotions, especially negative ones become very easy. Students who understand their emotions better may realise that they do not find a subject boring but just difficult to understand and as a result may devote extra time to it.
- Self-Management – it refers to controlling our emotions and adapting to our circumstances and channelling our negative emotions into positive things. Here controlling the emotions does not mean suppressing them, it simply means not letting the emotions rule the tough life situations, for example, if a child who has copious amounts of energy and keeps getting into trouble at school and or at home can be made to join an outdoor activity like any sport whether team or solo which will teach him/her focus and discipline.
- Social Awareness – it means to perceive, interpret and respond to the emotions of others. It is also known as empathy or 'reading the room'. Having this ability is the hallmark of any good leader. It can also be a viable career option – a therapist or counsellor. It is also a great asset to have at one's workplace. In school it may help students to understand their friends and classmates and their perspective in a better manner.
- Relationship Management – having a high emotional quotient also helps in establishing and maintaining healthy relationships as it fosters communications and connections that last. Identifying one's emotions and not letting them get an upper hand in any difficult situation can help you analyse them objectively which in turn leads to finding the solution of the problem instead of fixating on the fact that a problem has arisen or focusing on playing the blame game. It may help students to resolve any disagreements/fights with their friends or class mates in a better manner than calling each other names or hitting each other.[8]

If a person successfully inculcates these four characteristics in his/her life then they would be able to develop or improve their emotional quotient and make the quality of their life better. With the emphasis that the present generation puts on mental health – these four steps would work towards providing the tools for dealing effectively with a difficult situation.

## Review of Literature

- Christine B. Diocos – examined the co-relation between emotional intelligence of 1<sup>st</sup> year students' and their performance in Maths. The study found a strong association between students' EQ and their performance in the subject, which indicates that EQ is an important factor in improving the students' ability in mathematics. [9]
- Arslan, Saleem, et al. – observed the relationship between EQ and academic achievement of MBBS students (3<sup>rd</sup> year). The study found that only 20% of the students showed EQ and 44% needed substantial improvement. A significant

difference was seen in the students who passed and in those who failed in terms of emotional awareness. [10]

- Neethu, George, et al. – compared and evaluated EQ of athletically, academically and artistically inclined children. The study found that incorporating extra-curricular activities along with academics may end up boosting the self-esteem of the children as well as their emotional well-being. [11]
- Shruti Marwaha – examined the EQ and IQ of low performers and high achievers in academics in schools in Chandigarh and Mohali. The results showed that the students who performed better in the academics had high IQ as well as EQ. Students with low EQ and IQ and with High IQ and low EQ – suffered academically. [12]

## Research Questions

1. Does EQ impact the success of a student, if yes, then how?
2. Are Indian schools/teachers equipped to handle the emotional as well as academic needs of the students?

## Research Methodology

In the present paper a normative and doctrinal approach has been undertaken to enhance the understanding of the concept of EQ. Various studies and articles have been analysed to describe as well as interpret the concept as it exists in the present times.

## Common Misconception Regarding Emotionally Intelligent Persons

- Synonymous with Personality Traits – it is completely untrue. It is not a personality trait. A personality trait could be whether a person is an extrovert or an introvert and simultaneously could also be childish and immature. Personality traits are a mix of our DNA and environment whereas, emotional quotient can be learned and developed and improved at any stage in one's life.
- Different Types of Intelligences – There is no single idea of intelligence. According to Howard Gardner there are different types of intelligences and each one is unique in character. He has given a list of eight types of intelligences – spatial, linguistic, musical and logical – to name a few. Emotionally intelligent people recognise their strength/intelligence and use it to further themselves in life, be it career or their relationships.[13]
- Emotionally Intelligent People Suppress their Emotions – it is false. Emotionally intelligent people present as calm and collected and that sometimes makes people believe that such persons are cold and unfeeling. People with high emotional quotient are simply capable of viewing a situation objectively without giving into their emotions. [14]

## How to Inculcate/Improve Emotional Intelligence in Students?

Given today's circumstances with generation Z and Alpha – where employers have termed them unemployable because they lack the work ethic and are easily perturbed has made developing or inculcating emotional quotient in students even more important and urgent. Following are some of the ways through with the aforesaid could be achieved: -

- Start with Small/Young Children – if any habit is to developed and nurtured for the entire life, it is better to inculcate it in the very beginning. When a child enters school at the tender age

of 3 or 4 years old – it is the first time when the child leaves the safety of the home for the first time and starts to develop relationships some of which might last a life time. It would be genuinely helpful for the children to be provided with this knowledge from the beginning.

- Teaching Children to Identify Emotions – children are prone to throwing tantrums and all of us have seen the parents at their wits' end trying to placate such a child one time or the other. In the playschool and or primary schools they could be taught to identify 6 main emotions – happiness, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust and fear. Once this has been achieved then they could be taught the difference between annoyance, nervousness, frustration, boredom and impatience.
- Children Learn at Home – the home has been often termed as the first school of any child and rightfully so. Children learn to identify emotions and how to deal with difficulties by watching and observing their parents, elders, friends and teachers. So, if the parents and the teacher are also emotionally intelligent, they can benefit the children a great deal more. [15]
- Adolescents – once the young children have learnt to identify their emotions correctly, they can during their teenage years be taught empathy, sympathy, gratitude and they should be encouraged to volunteer and show gratitude. Teenagers are often seen as moody. They are undergoing numerous physiological and hormonal changes. If they have been taught how to identify their emotions, they might be better at dealing with these issues along with school and their inter-personal relationships. [16]

### **How it Benefits the Students?**

- Increased Problem Solving – if a child has been taught to identify the emotions correctly, he/she will be able to analyse the situation better and come to a better solution much faster.
- Better Stress Management – children now a days are racing after good marks, so they can enter a prestigious college and if and when they fail, they sometimes take the easy way out and commit suicide. Emotional intelligence can teach the students better stress management and to utilise the frustration they feel in a positive rather than a destructive manner.
- Enhanced Social Skills – also known as soft skills or people skills. Indian graduates have been termed woefully inept in these soft skills which is also a very big reason as to why companies do not want to hire Indian graduates. They have the requisite knowledge and technical know-how but they lack empathy, confidence and non-cognitive skills – which are the actual keys of success. These skills also help in increasing the quality and productivity of the workforce.
- Better Self-Regulation – students who do understand their emotions are known to manage and organise their time and homework/tasks in a better manner than other students. They can also cope with any failure, challenge or setbacks which leads to perseverance and resilience.
- Enhanced Compassion/Empathy – students with EQ show a greater understanding of the feelings and perceptions of others, especially their classmates and friends. This leads to stronger bonds of friendship and helps them to navigate any conflict or fight in a peaceful and positive manner rather than with their fists.

- Career and Relationships – EQ helps in making better connection with persons as it enhances empathy. Self-awareness and understanding of one's emotions helps in communication and conflict resolution – whether it is a job setting or in a relationship. [17]

### **How it can be Developed in Children in India?**

- Integrating Eq in Curriculum – emotional intelligence can be taught. From nursery to primary education the main focus could be on teaching the young children how to manage their emotions in a better way. Then for older kids, special workshops or weekly exercises could be conducted. We can take the example of Japanese schools – for the first two years they are only taught manners and nothing else.
- Create a Supportive Learning Environment - the latest National Education Policy has eliminated the rigid boundaries between the subjects – arts, commerce and sciences. Now students can choose any subject that interests them.
- Emotion Room in Schools – the notion behind the concept is that if a child is feeling any extreme emotion, he/she can leave the class and sit quietly in the designated room and come to terms with the feelings. Once the child has calmed down and dealt with the situation in his/her own way, they such student can re-enter the classroom without any recriminations from the teacher. J & K has started this concept in their schools. Most of the schools also employ a counsellor as well who is there on the school premises to help the students.
- 4 Day Working Week – it has been felt by the parents and the Indian Government that the students are made to only focus on the academic curriculum in their school years leaving little to no time for interests and hobbies. To combat this problem the schools in Bihar and Odissa have come up with 4 day working week. Monday to Thursday would be devoted to classes in the traditional way and Friday would be for hobbies and interests and fun activities in school. In this way students will get to experience new things and find out about their interests.
- 10 Bagless Days – NCERT has come up with the plan to introduce 10 bagless days in which students would be shown practical application of their knowledge. They would be taken for field trips relating to their subjects, for example, for the subject of history the students can be taken to a museum or a historical sight. [18]

### **Limitations in Incorporating Eq in Indian Schools**

- Lack of Infrastructure – Most of the schools in India are not equipped with proper infrastructure for seating of the students' let alone sports, computer or art and craft. They only focus on academic excellence. The scenario is a little better in urban areas but given the fact that 73% of the children go to school in the rural setting, the scope for improvement is great.
- Skewed Teacher-Taught Ratio - The national Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in India varies by school level. Generally, the PTR in elementary schools is around 24:1, while in secondary schools, it's about 27:1. Having 24 to 27 students in a classroom, it becomes difficult for the teacher to pay close attention to the EQ of the students. The main focus stays on finishing the syllabus and in maintaining the discipline. In countries like, Finland it is - primary education



(grades 1-6), the ratio is around 13 students per teacher. Lower secondary education (grades 7-9) has a ratio of around 9 students per teacher, while upper secondary education (grades 10-12) sees a ratio of 17 students per teacher, making it easier for the teacher to focus on the students' emotional needs as well.

- **Cultural Barriers** – Societal norms, stereotypes and prejudices can impede the inclusive decision making which can make it even more challenging to foster an atmosphere where EQ is practiced and appreciated, for example, in India, concepts like men have to be strong and men feel no pain, may hinder the ability of men to imbibe the concept of handling the emotions in a better manner.
- **No Structured Training** – There is an absence of structured and formal training programmes to teach EQ to school teachers. Little to no resources have been allocated under the new education policy for incorporating EQ in the school curriculum. The task is made even more difficult by the intangible nature of EQ. It is tricky to measure the effectiveness of EQ.
- **Hierarchy** – The hierarchical nature of school administration may also be to blame. Junior or young teachers may feel restricted or may fear ridicule from the senior management and as a result may not mention empathetic or innovative solutions to problems of the students.
- **Work-Life Imbalance** – Teachers have been made responsible for the academic performance of the students, maintaining discipline in the classroom, acting as a mentor to the students, other work commitments along with the responsibilities of their own homes and marriages leaves the teachers with little to no time to develop EQ in either themselves or the students.

## Conclusion

After careful analysis of the aforementioned information the research questions can be answered as follows: -

- EQ does impact the success of the student in a positive manner. The aforesaid studies mentioned in the review of literature clearly draw a parallel between a high EQ and a brilliant academic performance. It also teaches the students better communication skills, empathy, self-awareness and regulation which does help them in becoming a well-rounded human being and an asset to the society and the country.
- Indian schools and teachers are not adequately equipped to handle the emotional needs of the students. Some schools in the urban areas employ a psychologist/counsellor who can be approached by the students themselves, but their suggestions or recommendations are seldom taken seriously by the parents who take any negative comment about their children as a personal affront to their parenting skills.
- Given the present world scenario, the technological advances, addition to the smartphone and social media it is imperative that EQ be incorporated in the school curriculum but it is easier said than done. However, the Indian Government has undertaken certain steps (mentioned earlier in how to inculcate EQ in students). Only time will tell how successful these have been in taking care of emotional needs of the students and instil a well-rounded personality in the students.

We have often been taught that mind matters over matter. It means that the intellect always wins any battle. One intellect we are born with (intelligence quotient) and one can be learned. India is hailed as a young country as it has the largest population of children in the world. India is home to 19% of the world's children. It is imperative that we as a nation take care of them in a way that makes them able to deal with the issues and challenges in a positive and constructive manner.

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.”

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