

# IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Emotional Intelligence can be defined as knowing what feels good, what feels bad, and how to get from bad to good. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), "Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth". The key objective in promotion of higher education is to provide various kinds of learning experiences to the youth with the objectives of developing their physical, mental, emotional and intellectual endowments and abilities. The present study conceptualizes the need for Emotional Intelligence in Higher Education and deals with the development of a Model on Emotional Intelligence.*

## INTRODUCTION

The field of Emotional Intelligence is growing at a rapid rate. Emotional Intelligence is being used in a variety of applications including the workplace, the school system, the higher learning institutions and for personal development. It has been suggested that Emotional Intelligence is important for leadership, performance, scholastic success, life satisfaction and interpersonal relationship.

The Indian Education Commission (1964 - 66) emphasizes the pursuit of truth, full development of the youth physically, intellectually, socially and morally with a sense of social purpose, to promote equality and social justice, and to promote attitudes and values needed for developing the "Good Life". Our country is well known for the quality of mind and is recognized as a potential knowledge hub of the world. Its demographic profile is that a majority of the population is in the age group 0 - 30 years. The challenge for the education system, particularly the higher education system is to reorganize itself for enabling the youth in becoming emotionally intelligent.

Emotional Intelligence helps the youth in different ways :

- ◆ Enjoyable to be with
- ◆ Believable and trusting

- ◆ Empathetic
- ◆ Creative
- ◆ Good decision making
- ◆ Good at motivating
- ◆ Social effectiveness
- ◆ Team effectiveness

According to Jaeger (2003) Emotional Intelligence should be included in graduate professional education. He also determined that there exists a strong relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement. Reilly (2005) suggests that negotiation courses using traditional lectures combined with role plays and simulated exercises can be used to train students in understanding emotion and increasing their Emotional Intelligence. He also emphasized using negotiation training to increase Emotional Intelligence of law students.

According to Plato, "All learning has an emotional base". It is very important to understand that Emotional Intelligence is not the opposite of intelligence, it is not the triumph of the heart over the head - it is a unique intersection of both. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to use one's emotions which help to solve problems and live a more effective life. Hence it is about time that Emotional Intelligence was included in the higher education curriculum.

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## STUDIES ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Peter Salovey et.al. (2002) explored links between Emotional Intelligence, measured as a set of abilities and personality traits and the contribution of both to the perceived quality of one's interpersonal relationship. In a sample of 103 college students, the investigators found that both Emotional Intelligence and personality traits were associated with concurrent self report of satisfaction with social relationship. Individuals scoring highly on the managing emotions subscale of MSCEIT were more likely to report positive relations with others, as well as perceived parental support and less likely to report negative interactions with close friends.

Drago, Judy (2004) made a study on the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic achievement in non traditional college students. Results demonstrated that Emotional Intelligence is significantly related to student GPA scores, student cognitive ability scores and student age. Student anxiety was related to certain Emotional Intelligence abilities. No significant relationship was found between Emotional Intelligence and achievement motivation.

Stubbs, Elizabeth Christine (2005) studied the relationship between team leader Emotional Intelligence competencies, team level Emotional Intelligence and team performance. The team leader's Emotional Intelligence would influence the development of group level Emotional Intelligence, which is measured by the team's Emotionally Competent Group Norms (ECGN). Data were collected from 422 respondents representing 81 teams in a military organization. Results show that the team leader's Emotional Intelligence is significantly related to the presence of ECGN in the teams they lead, and that ECGN are related to team performance.

## WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Goleman (1998) identifies five elements as the components of Emotional Intelligence : Self-awareness, Self-regulation, Motivation, Empathy and Social skills. The data indicate a very strong positive correlation between the Emotional Intelligence of leaders and the performance of organizations. The more the leader exhibits emotional

competencies like nurturing others, team leadership, initiative, self-confidence, drive to achieve and empathy, the more effective is the performance.

A large body of evidence, drawn from different lines of research suggests that emotional skills are important for social and emotional adaptation. Emotional Intelligence is observed to be essential for dealing with students in higher education into three fairly distinct groups namely conceptual, correlational, and developmental. The first, conceptual criterion states that intelligence must reflect mental performance rather than simply preferred ways of behaving, or a person's self-esteem, or non-intellectual attainments; moreover, mental performance should plainly measure the concept in question and emotion-related abilities. The second, correlational criterion describes empirical standards: specifically, that intelligence should describe a set of closely related abilities that are similar to, but distinct from, mental abilities described by already established intelligences. The third developmental criterion states that intelligence develops with age and experience This concept is based on the groundbreaking work by Binet and Simon at the beginning of this century.

Critical thinking is one of the predominant requisites in Higher Education. Emotional Intelligence goes its way to relate with critical thinking. In fact emotional intelligence is attracting a considerable amount of popular attention. Critical thinking cannot successfully direct our beliefs and actions unless it continually assesses not simply our cognitive abilities, but also our feeling or emotion states, as well as our implicit and explicit drives and agendas. In other words, critical thinking provides the crucial link between intelligence and emotions in the "Emotionally Intelligent" person. Critical thinking, it is believed, is the only plausible vehicle by means of which we could bring intelligence to bear upon our emotional life. It is critical thinking which enables us to take active command of not only our thoughts, but our feelings, emotions and desires as well. It is critical thinking which provides us with mental tools needed to explicitly understand how reasoning works, and how those tools can be used to take command of what we think, feel, desire, and do.

Emotional Intelligence describes a set of abilities which will assist teachers and students in higher education

in several critical ways:

- ❖ Making planning of learning process more flexible
- ❖ Motivating themselves and others
- ❖ Making more informed decisions

People who are emotionally intelligent use their emotions to adapt their plans. They do not ignore uncomfortable facts. Emotionally intelligent behavior helps people plan better in many ways:

- ❖ Change plans to meet the need of the moment
- ❖ Adapt to the situation
- ❖ Consider a variety of possible actions
- ❖ Come up with alternative plans .
- ❖ Do not consistently do the same
- ❖ Do not stick to the plan when it doesn't work

The key objective in promotion of higher education is to provide various kinds of learning experiences to the youth with the objective of developing their physical, mental,

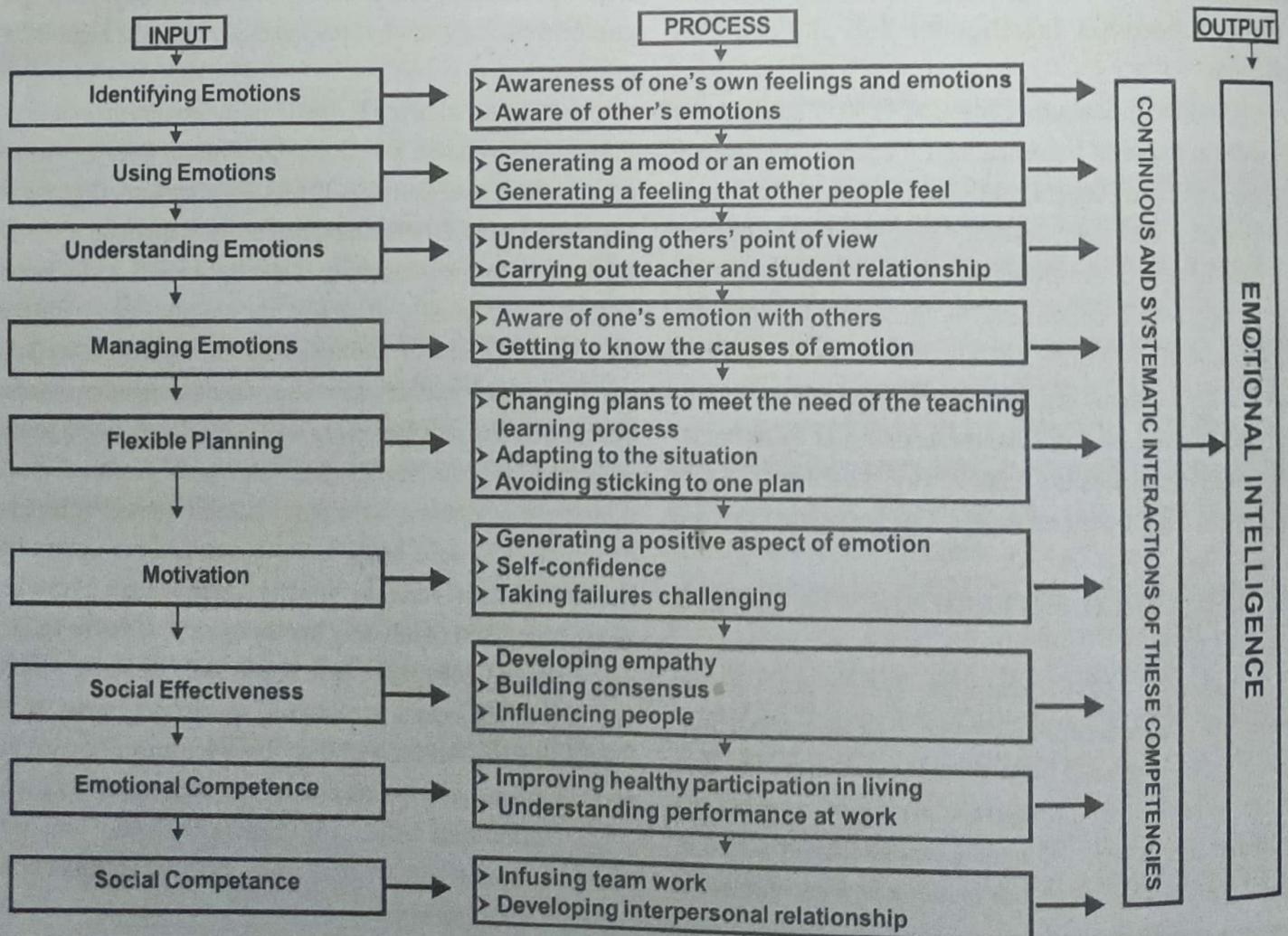
emotional and intellectual endowments and abilities. A greater emphasis should be levied on the emotional aspect of the youth besides the cognitive aspect. In the changing competitive environment, one needs more than just brains to achieve development. Emotional Intelligence helps in creating a good environment to attain the fruitfulness of success.

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE - A MODEL GENERATION

To identify the components of Emotional Intelligence, the investigators have attempted to conceptualize various theories and concept on Emotional Intelligence, theorized and studied by various researchers. After having gone through the various steps and strategies suggested by various researches, a model on Emotional Intelligence was

developed by the investigators.

### A MODEL ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



Generally speaking, emotional intelligence improves an individual's social effectiveness. The higher the emotional intelligence, the better the social relations. In a recent review, the emotionally intelligent person is described in these terms: The high EI individual, most centrally, can better perceive emotions, use them in thought, understand their meanings, and manage emotions, than others. Solving emotional problems likely requires less cognitive effort for this individual. The person also tends to be somewhat higher in verbal, social, and other intelligence aspects. Particularly if the individual scored higher in the understanding emotions portion of EI, the individual tends to be more open and agreeable than others. The high EI person is drawn to occupations, involving social interactions such as teaching and counseling more than to occupations involving clerical or administrative tasks.

The high EI individual, relative to others, is less apt to engage in problem behaviors, and avoids self-destructive, negative behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking, drug abuse, or violent episodes with others. The high EI person is more likely to have possessions of sentimental attachment around the home and to have more positive social interactions, particularly if the individual scored highly on emotional management. Such individuals may also be more adept at describing motivational goals, aims, and missions. (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000).

To be emotionally intelligent means to "Know yourself", "Choose yourself", and "Give yourself". Know yourself is increasing self-awareness. It is based on understanding how you function. Choose yourself is building self-management. It focuses on consciously choosing your thoughts, feelings, and actions. Give yourself is developing self-direction. It comes from using empathy and principled decision-making to increase wisdom and to create a more compassionate, healthy world of higher education.

## CONCLUSION

This is the information age. All of us are dependent on information and using it wisely. The advent of emotional intelligence enriches one's knowledge of the information surrounding one. An important task of Higher Education is to translate academic theories and research into practical application in the educational programs. It is important to provide the students of Higher Education with the knowledge

they need to enhance not only their careers but also their quality of life across the social spectrum. Orienting the students of Higher Education about the significance of EI for their personal growth and enhanced teamwork in the classroom they seem to be more productive and proactive. Furthermore, EI is a model that promotes both intrapersonal and interpersonal communication skills as a means for understanding the role of emotions in the workplace, because identifying, understanding, regulating, and expressing one's emotions are inherently communicative actions.

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## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT . . .

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