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## Making a difference with Social Intelligence

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### ABSTRACT

A teacher should be able to inspire and motivate his/her students by understanding their emotions, beliefs and situations. It is not only about the subject knowledge that is being transferred from them. It is also about the ability to help them in dealing with people, job and such other challenging circumstances. This paper attempts to study the one of the important quality of a teacher, which would enable the students to cross the stream of challenges with their dream held in their minds. Social intelligence refers to the ability of a person to act intelligently and sensibly in the treatment of human relations. The human beings should be respected for their feelings, thoughts and emotions. Under this study, social intelligence of teachers is adopted for analytical study. The class tutors who act as the mentors of their classes have been taken into consideration for study. Students various colleges have been taken into consideration for conducting this study. The students were given questionnaires through mails and were asked to give in their real perceptions and views. The sample size adopted was 223. Only final year students have been taken into consideration for this study. Since these students would have travelled with their teachers for three long years and they are the ones who would have understood the importance while they are ready to step into the world for meeting reality and challenges.

### 1. Introduction

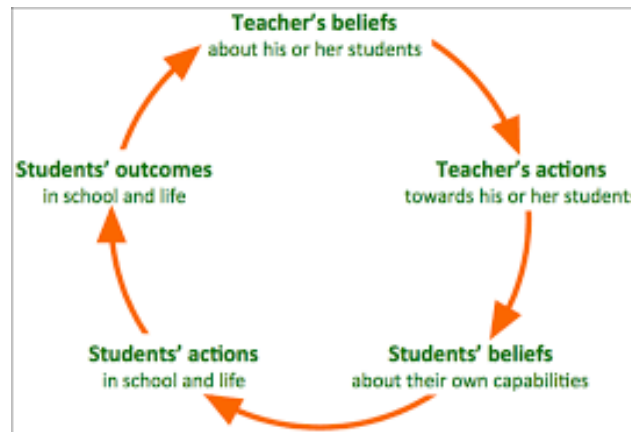
Education is an investment which pays highest interest. Educating a child is a hope for the nation. The teachers have the key to open the successful tomorrow. In the words of Malala, activist for female education and the

youngest Nobel Prize laureate, “One Child, One Teacher, One book, one pen can change the world”. Thus education is a powerful weapon which has sharp minds working for the betterment and growth of the nation. Eventually, the teacher becomes the warrior who can save the nation. With the inspiration, knowledge and virtue imparted by the teachers, the students can become pillars of the nation who can support a nation in their own way towards enhancement and enlightenment. A teacher, thus, is more responsible. A teacher is not only responsible for teaching but also reaching. The teacher should be able to reach his/her students with effective teaching. Effective teaching can be delivered when the teacher behaves with goodness as a person. The personality and attitude of a teacher determines the effectiveness of teaching among the students.

This paper attempts to study the one of the important quality of a teacher, which would enable the students to cross the stream of challenges with their dream held in their minds. Social intelligence is the concept taken for study in this research. Social intelligence originated goes back more than 100 years to American psychologist and adult learning researcher Edward Thorndike who described **social intelligence** as the ability “to act wisely in human relations.” Social intelligence refers to the ability of a person to act intelligently and sensibly in the treatment of human relations. The human beings should be respected for their feelings, thoughts and emotions. Under this study, social intelligence of teachers is adopted for analytical study. The class tutors who act as the mentors of their classes have been taken into consideration for study. Students from various colleges have been taken into consideration for conducting this study. The students were given questionnaires through mails and were asked to give in their real perceptions and views. The sample size adopted was 223. Only final year students have been taken into consideration for this study. Since these students would have travelled with their teachers for three long years and they are the ones who would have understood the importance while they are ready to step into the world for meeting reality and challenges.

A teacher should be able to inspire and motivate his or her students by understanding their emotions, beliefs and situations. It is not only about the subject knowledge that is being transferred from them. It is also about the ability to help them in dealing with people, job and such other challenging circumstances. The teacher’s beliefs about his or her students leads to teacher’s actions towards his or her students which leads to student’s beliefs about their own capabilities which influences student’s actions in school and life and finally determines the student’s actions in school and life. This, in turn

influences teacher's beliefs which acts as a starting point for the whole cycle again.



As far as the industry of education is concerned, it shows good scope of development.

In 2030, it is estimated that India's higher education will:

- combine training methods that involve online learning and games, and is expected to grow 38 per cent in the next 2-4 years
- adopt transformative and innovative approaches in Higher education
- have an augmented Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50 per cent
- reduce state-wise, gender based and social disparity in GER to 5 per cent
- emerge as the single largest provider of global talent with one in four graduates in the world being a product of the Indian higher education system
- be among the top five countries in the world in terms of research output with an annual R&D spend of US\$ 140 billion
- have more than 20 universities among the global top 200 universities

Various Government initiatives are being adopted to boost the growth of distance education market besides focusing on new education techniques, such as E-learning and M-learning. Education sector has seen a host of reform and improved financial outlays in recent years that could possibly transform the country into a knowledge haven. With human resource increasingly gaining significance in the overall development of the country, development of education infrastructure is expected to remain the key focus in the current decade. In this scenario, infrastructure investment in the education sector is likely to see a considerable increase in the current decade. The Government of India has taken several steps including opening of IIT's and IIM's in new locations as well as allocating educational grant for research scholars in most Government institutions. Furthermore, with online mode of education being used by several educational organizations, the higher education sector in India is set for major change and development in the years to come.

### **Social Intelligence**

## 2. Edward Thorndike

Social intelligence is defined as “the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls – to act wisely in human relations”.

Initially social intelligence did not gain much momentum and there were no statistical or research oriented evidences for the existence of social intelligence. The social intelligence was very well felt in its existence. But it was not possible for empirical evidence. Eventually there were two advancements to bring out this amazing concept of social intelligence. First and foremost it was Ford and Tisak (1983) was the ones to make formal and informal observations by employing a behavioral effectiveness criterion to conceptually and operationally define social intelligence. They were able to distinguish social intelligence from academic intelligence. Secondly, distinction made between cognitive social intelligence and behavioral social intelligence has been confirmed (Wong et al., 1995). The fluid form of social intelligence refers to social-cognitive flexibility (the ability to flexibly apply social knowledge in novel situations) or social inference. Conversely, a term such as social knowledge (knowledge of social etiquette, procedural and declarative social knowledge about social events) denotes the more crystallized component of social intelligence (Jones & Day, 1997).

Lievens, F., & Chan, D. (2010) mentions three kinds of intelligence practical, social and emotional intelligence. Unlike other intelligences, social intelligence can be learned and developed by a person. It can be learned expressing and understanding the social needs of a person working along with you. A person is said to be socially effective who understands the persons around and treats them accordingly. This is called a social skill. This is related to the personality of an individual. This enhances an individual to communicate effectively. If this social skill is combined with good leadership quality, it can develop the whole organization and the people can develop healthy and firm relationship bond with the organization and among the people in the ladder of the organization.

Reader, S. M., & Laland, K. N. (2002) attempted to study how social intelligence can do marvels even with animals. The findings of this study confirmed that the innovative methods of learning combined with social intelligence enhanced the ability to learn from others, invent new behaviors which also influenced the brain size

Goleman, D., et al (2008) says that leadership scholars characterize this talent as an ability to recognize patterns, usually born of extensive experience. Social intelligence is one of the important quality for making decisions. It is an inherent characteristic of any leader in an organization. He also adds that, the concept of social intelligence is, content-wise, very closely related to emotional

intelligence. Bar-On (2006) who claims that they are labels of two aspects of the same construct and that the majority of the existing definitions of social and emotional intelligence contains one or more of the following abilities: the ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings;

- (a) the ability to understand how others feel and relate with them;
- (b) the ability to manage and control emotions;
- (c) the ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature;
- (d) the ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated.

(a) the ability to recognize, understand and express emotions and feelings;

As a teacher, one has to be able to deal with the emotions and feelings of one's self and that of his or her students. It is not only about enlightening knowledge but also to understand the emotions and feelings of students. Only then the process of education would be complete.

(b) the ability to understand how others feel and relate with them;

A good teacher should be empathetic towards his or her students. When the teacher is able to understand their circumstances, they will be able to console and counsel them to bounce back to normal. In few colleges there are many students from economically and socially backward areas, so the education is everything for them. It is a life changing agent for them. When they come to expose themselves to such colleges, they might have few conditions which are making them feel fish out of water. There could be culture shock. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to make them feel better at studies. If it is there, a student can grow in life.

(c) the ability to manage and control emotions;

A teacher must have the ability to manage one's own emotions. Whether it is anger or happiness or excitement so on and so forth. The teacher should try to be calm and composed while working and dealing with students. That is more important.

(d) the ability to manage change, adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature;

This is one of the factor to determine the social intelligence of a teacher. A teacher stands as a role model in front of the students. The students would observe the behaviors of their teachers and while the same situation is confronted in their personal lives, they tend to replicate the similar kind of behavior of that of their teacher. Thus a Teacher should have ability to face problems and draw solutions and conclusions carefully. Every movement of a good teacher becomes a lesson.

(e) the ability to generate positive affect and be self-motivated;

When a positive behavior is exhibited by a teacher, it can create a ripple effect among the students. This effect can be doubled when the teacher is acting as a mentor for the students. The teacher as a mentor becomes an inspiration. When a teacher is self-motivated and optimistic, he would improve student's level of confidence. At one point, he starts to act as a role model.

Goleman, D., (2008) also says that those individuals who develop both social and emotional intelligence are those who can become leaders in an organization. These individuals can also act as a good boss. They can get things done through their subordinates so easily since they can handle any circumstances with social and emotional stability. Thus social intelligence makes people to make a difference in whichever jobs they are. Such important ability, if possessed by the teachers, it can make a drastic difference in the lives of the students.

Bar-On, R., et al (2003) say that the somatic marker hypothesis posits that deficits in emotional signaling (somatic states) lead to poor judgment in decision-making, especially in the personal and social realms. Emotional intelligence helps an individual to be more effective personal, professional and social life. Because it gives the ability to deal with emotions, different kinds of people in their day to day life. On the other hand, those responsible people who are emotionally instable who suffer abnormal level of emotional and social intelligence develop the severe inability to serve as a leader or a teacher or merely as a person.

Kaukiainen, A., et al (1999) attempted to study about social intelligence and the level of aggression. This study was conducted in Finland, which stands first in high school completion rate at the world level. Study was conducted on 526 Finnish students. The study suggested indirect aggression correlated positively and significantly with social intelligence. Social intelligence is significant among the teachers in order to reduce indirect aggression. Aggression is the state of behavior which exhibits absence of emotional stability in an individual. The social intelligence combined with emotional stability can bring about make phenomena in the process of education.

Ford, M. E. (1983) used two approaches to study social intelligence which can be categorized as implicit and explicit theories. Implicit theories include four major ideas: being a pro-social person (sensitive to the feelings of others), having well developed instrumental skills (communication and leadership), enjoying social activity, and having a good self-concept. Explicit theories focus on two sets of interrelated abilities: self-assertiveness, which is the ability to maintain and promote the well-being of the self in social situations, and integrative, which is the ability to maintain and promote the well-being of other people or the social groups of which one is a part. The single most important

process is social planning ability. Other processes that appear to be important are an individual's perception of control, competence, empathy, and goal-directedness, and degree of interest in social kinds of accomplishments.

Zaccaro, S. J., et al (1991) attempted to study the relationship between the leadership and social intelligence. It is also suggested that the successful leaders has two components of social intelligence, social perceptiveness and behavioral stability. 'Social perceptiveness' refers to the level of understanding about socializing, empathizing and understanding emotions of individuals whom one deals with. 'Behavioral stability' refers to the stability that could be maintained by an individual while at stake.

➤ They viewed leaders as experts in the operations of complex social systems. Leaders are those who should face the problems and challenges confronted during the work life. Eg., interpersonal problems, communication gaps, etc.,;

➤ They considered social intelligence as part of a network of leader attributes. That is, this is one of the important qualification to become a leader and inspire more followers. While becoming a leader, one also becomes responsible.;

➤ They also examined the differences between leaders and non-leaders in their cognitive qualities and representations. The leaders should have refined though process.

Dunbar, R. (1996) says that social intelligence as the ability to 'mind-read', to understand another's mind sufficiently well to be able to use that information in building and servicing one's relationships. The teachers should be able to read the mind of the students, understand their situations and impart the education. The students must be able to relate themselves with their mentors or tutors or teachers so that they will be able to share their views and opinions. They may even come forward to share their personal issues and problems.

An empirical study conducted by Juchniewicz, J. (2010) examined the influence of social intelligence on effective music teaching. It was concluded in the study that all the teachers who demonstrated effective social skills were perceived as effective teachers. They were able to create a good impact on the students through the process of education. Effective communication skills were one more attribute which made them 'exemplary' teachers. These social skills need not necessarily be in born. It can also be developed. When the class tutors, in particular possesses such social skills, it may create more impact on the life of the students. Students belonging to this generation, need a lot more attention and assistance from their second parents that is 'The teachers'.

### **Analysis**

About 60 percent of the people have opined that the teachers act professionally and thus they are inspired by them. The behavior of the teachers while it is professional, influences the students. The students tend to replicate the behavior of the teachers. When they admire the teachers, they tend to behave like them. The teachers should learn this social skill of acting professionally. The ethics exhibited at all times influences the students. The teachers act as a role model for the students.

The chi square test value is 0.043 for the factors “My teacher/tutor/mentor is honest” and “I like my teacher”. This proves a statistically significant relationship between these factors. While the teacher is honest in his or her day to day simple activities, even these are noticed by the students. The fluid form of social intelligence refers to social-cognitive flexibility (the ability to flexibly apply social knowledge in novel situations) or social inference. Conversely, a term such as social knowledge (knowledge of social etiquette, procedural and declarative social knowledge about social events) denotes the more crystallized component of social intelligence (Jones & Day, 1997). As per this, the knowledge of social etiquette, procedural and declarative social knowledge is more influential on students. The above test of significance tells us the relationship between teachers being honest and socially appealing creates more impact on the students. That is why they are able to decide to like the teachers. There is a positive correlation between “My teacher/tutor/mentor shows interest when I approach to share” to “Happy during my course”. While the teacher shows interest towards the students while they approach to share some personal or professional or any kind of problems, it is reflecting on the happiness of the students during their course duration. There is also strong correlation between “I like my teacher” and “I have pleasant memories during my course”. The teacher with the understanding of the emotions and the ability to to manage and control emotions start getting likes from their students and eventually make the students carry pleasant memories during college days in life. In a particular department there are about 34 percent complaining about partiality.

If we closely observe the concept of social intelligence, since it deals with the emotions and feelings of people around, it has good impact of emotional intelligence. When a person is emotionally stable, he can develop his social skills very easily. In addition to that, he will also act as a confidant and counselor to his or her people. Relationship between social and emotional intelligence is substantial. Bar-On (2006) brings out the importance of emotional intelligence to social intelligence,

- a) To understand and constructively express emotions,



- b) To understand the experiencing of other people and create cooperative interpersonal relationships,
- c) To manage and regulate emotions effectively,
- d) To cope with the new situations realistically and solve problems of a personal or interpersonal nature, to be optimistic, positively charged and internally motivated to formulate and reach goals.

### 3. Conclusion

Education sector has seen a host of reform and improved financial outlays in recent years that could possibly transform the country into a knowledge haven. With human resource increasingly gaining significance in the overall development of the country, development of education infrastructure is expected to remain the key focus in the current decade. In this scenario, infrastructure investment in the education sector is likely to see a considerable increase in the current decade. (www.ibef.org). Thus this sector is acting as a confidant for the development of the whole nation. The Intelligent quotient (IQ) alone should not be given importance. It is also about the emotional and social intelligence which would help in developing themselves and also in developing the students. Social intelligence of teachers would enable all round student development. The mentor while acting as a socially intelligent person would act as a Guru for the life of the students. The process of education would give the positive effect among the students as it was during the ‘Gurukulam’ era of education. This is because the teachers are responsible citizens to carry forward the nation towards development and advancement.

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