

## EMOTIONAL EDUCATION: A PRACTICAL APPROACH, IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This research study is an effort to draw attention to the fact that Emotional Intelligence can be taught to adolescents. This has been proved by conducting a Emotional Education Training Programme among 50 adolescents in a Government school in Kamrup Metropolitan District of Assam. Several studies have been done in the west to prove the beneficial effects of Emotional Education. In India such studies are few and in the North East it is almost unheard of. The researcher through this approach would like to emphasize the need to make Emotional Education compulsory in the school curriculum. Incorporating Emotional Education in the academic syllabus would go a long way in channelizing our youth towards a sound emotional and mental wellbeing which is required for life success. Culture specific Emotional Education curriculum needs to be developed and parents and teachers should also be included in the process.

**KEYWORDS:** Emotional Education, Emotional Intelligence, Adolescent, Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Adolescence

### INTRODUCTION

Goleman (1995) (6) has proved through his research that success in life can be attributed to only 20% on IQ and 80% on other factors such as EQ. Since then interests of researchers had gravitated towards Emotional Intelligence. A growing body of research has documented the benefits of Emotional Education. Seeking an answer to today's youth problems researchers has tried to establish a strong relationship between Emotional Intelligence and positive outcomes. The present study is based on the outcomes of an Emotional Education Programme that had proved to change the emotionality of adolescents.

With 356 million 10-24 year old adolescents India has the world's largest population. Our educational institutions do not teach our students about emotional skills like empathy. Because students lack social and emotional skills they lack the proper skills to cope with life stress. This results in engagement of risky behaviours, alcoholism, substance abuse, experimentation with sex, alienation from parents and so on.

The six seconds model of Emotional Education, also known as SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) developed in 1997 as an actionable model of EQ is presently embraced worldwide. However Emotional Education is still in a very primary stage in India. Research regarding the effects of Emotional Education Programme is very inadequate and such quasi-experimental approaches are unheard of in the North-East. Therefore this is a small step in that direction.

### **What is Emotional Intelligence?**

In the words of Mayer and Salovey (1997) (8) Emotional Intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to assess 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.

Cefai and Cooper (2009) (2) quotes, various terms have been used interchangeably to define Emotional Intelligence (Goleman 1996), Emotional Literacy (Wearne 2003) and Social and Emotional Learning (Elias 2001). Cefai and Cooper prefers the term Emotional Education, which may be defined as the process by which an individual develops emotional competence, which in turn develops through a social learning process.

### **What is SEL?**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.(Casel.org 2016)(3)

The five SEL core competencies are (sixseconds.org) (14)

#### **Self Awareness**

Recognising one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations

#### **Self Management**

Managing emotions and behavior to achieve one's goals

#### **Social Awareness**

Sharing, understanding and empathy for others

#### **Relationship Skills**

Forming positive relationships, working in teams and dealing directly with conflicts

#### **Responsible Decision**

Making ethical constructive choices about personal and social behavior

### **Emotional Intelligence and Adolescence**

Adolescence has long been characterized as a time of increased emotionality. The term adolescence comes from the Latin word 'adolescere', meaning to grow or 'to grow to maturity'.(12)

Several factors can cause stress in adolescents such as dysfunctional families, overstressed parents, domestic violence, pressure put by parents and also financial difficulties. These factors can cause a lot of emotional turmoil in the adolescent. Due to social changes stemming from westernization Indian adolescents are facing a hard time and the problems are aggravated by the pressure to opt for science streams. A stereotype prevalent in the society that one who is good in maths and science can only have a successful career is sufficient reason to cause stress in the young minds. Identity

crisis, peer pressures and confusion about careers have gripped the Indian adolescents today (Hampel, Meier and Kummel, 2008) (7).

A SEL initiative will allow administrators to hone powerful leadership skills and use these skills to nurture all stakeholders to craft schools and communities that support the development of all as caring, compassionate, motivated and successful individuals, friends, family members, and engaged citizens of the world (Patti, Senge, Madrazo, and Stern, 2015) (9).

### **Research Investigating the Impact of Training in Emotional-Intelligence Skills**

Several studies done abroad have documented that developing emotional competence reduces risky behaviours (such as violence, drug use, dropping out and violence) while increasing pro-social behavior such as exercise, positive peer relationships and leadership.

Dennis and Anderson (2002) (4) assessed 205 middle school students in South California, measuring both Emotional Intelligence and use of alcohol and tobacco and found that the teens with higher emotional intelligence were less likely to use alcohol and tobacco.

Petrides (2006) (10) studied 160 students belonging to elementary school and revealed that those with higher EQ scores were recognized by teachers and peers as both as co—operative and as leaders, apart from being neither disruptive nor aggressive.

EQ scores were strongly co-related with good health, relationship skills, life satisfaction, personal achievement and self-efficacy in a study that assessed 2,665, youth aged 7-18 years. (Fiedeldey and Dijk and the Six Seconds team (2006)(5).

Intervention studies reviewed by Schutte, Malouff and Thorsreinnesson (2013)(11) has revealed that Emotional Intelligence training can influence a variety of outcomes including well being, physical health, relationships, work performance and even change in personality traits.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Outcomes of a Study Conducted Among Adolescents in Kamrup Metropolitan District**

Quasi experimental research design was used and before-after pre-test post-test method was used for data collection.

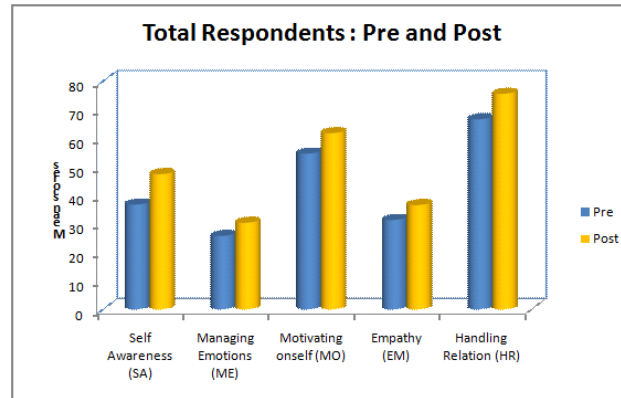
Sample: 50 adolescents comprising of 25 boys and 25 girls of a local Government School. All the adolescents belonged to low socio-economic status with parents earning less than 7000 rupees per month.

Tools used:

- Emotional Intelligence test developed by Dr. Ekta Sharma (13) was administered prior to introduction of the Emotional Education training. After completion of the training the EI test was again administered to find the outcome of the EI training.
- A training module was developed for the EI workshop: The training module borrowed ideas from SEL and measured the 5 domains such as self awareness, managing emotions, empathy, motivating oneself and handling

relationships. Comprised of 16 sessions of 1 hour duration. It included the 5 core competencies of SEL and included activities such as brainstorming sessions, group activity, role plays, creative activities such as collage work, making greeting cards and chart work. Worksheets were also a part of the workshop.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS



**Figure 1: Showing Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the Adolescents**

The outcome of the Emotional Intelligence training is represented in the above figure. Improvement in the test scores was seen in all the five domains – Self awareness, Managing emotions, empathy, motivating oneself and Handling Relationships. Feedbacks given by the adolescents who participated in the intervention training was consistent with the findings that was earlier stated by Brideland, Bruce and Hariharan, 2013(15), that EQ programs can accelerate student learning by increasing students intrinsic motivation to achieve, their ability to be attentive and engaged in their work, their satisfaction with learning, their sense of belonging, and their desire to work cooperatively with others.

### Implications and Future Directions

- Emotional Education should be mandatory in the school curriculum.
- E I should be taught as seriously as Maths and Science or any other subject.
- Parents and teachers should be included in the Emotional Education Training.
- Further research is required in the Indian context.
- Efforts should be directed towards culturally appropriate Emotional Education Programmes.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study was an attempt to find an answer to whether Emotional Education can be taught to adolescents and if it is possible how? Surprisingly, the research could establish the fact that Emotional Education is possible. Well designed curriculum suited to the needs of adolescents could bring promising results. The world today has realized the need to incorporate a more humanistic, holistic and socio-emotional approach to educational practices. The importance of Emotional Intelligence is reflected in the words of many researchers who have concluded that schools and classrooms are called to go beyond measurable standards and performance indicators and become more engaged with the real world and help in the formation of academically, socially and emotionally blended young people.

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