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# The Science and Philosophy of Emotional Intelligence: A Pragmatic Perspective

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## Abstract

This article is aimed at exploring the relevance of the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) from a pragmatic perspective. Although the empirical and conceptual articles are written and published on EI, however it does not suffice the purpose for a practitioner of EI who is naïve to the field of EI, either s/he does not understand the psychological literature or does not have time to study EI in great details. Hence, this article is written from a naïve perspective to make the concept useful and that could be used in our daily life. Drawn from psychological literature, this article is simplifying a complex relationship between human intelligence and emotions and clarifies our understanding about the cognitive and affective spheres of human personality. Further, the article also explains the evolutionary or biological basis of EI and also suggests a managerial use of EI for the field of leadership and decision making. The chapter concludes with a developmental focus of EI. The article is mainly using observations and anecdotes based on the author's personal experience from his training programs with more than ten thousand managers in India and taught students in Denmark, Italy and South Africa.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Intelligence, Emotions, Evolutionary Perspective, Role Modeling, Managerial Perspective, Leadership and Decision Making, Developmental Perspective

## 1. Introduction

The word emotional intelligence (EI) has been popularized by two psychologists from Yale University, Peter Salovey and John Mayor in the year 1990 [1]. Later, Goleman [2, 3] has published two books on this concept and its relevance in our daily life and Bar-On [4] has developed a psychometric test consisting of 133 items to measure emotional intelligence. Although the word EI seems to be relatively new, however it has its roots in the literature on cognitive intelligence. Researchers argued that the definition of intelligence, an ability to adapt with the one's environment [5, 6], give space to the construct of emotional intelligence. Researchers have argued that there are multiple intelligences [7]. Since research papers are relatively difficult to understand for managers and practitioners of management to understand and utilize the concept of EI in their daily life, therefore I am aiming at explaining the concept of emotional intelligence by adopting the following perspectives; (1) Intelligence and Emotions: A real misunderstanding (2) Psychological Perspective (3) Evolutionary Perspective (4) Managerial Perspective and Laws of Decision Making (5) Developmental Perspective.

To explain these perspectives, the article adopts a very pragmatic approach to make the concept useful and relevant for people in general. I have adopted various anecdotes and stories to explain these various approaches based on my extensive training experiences with more than several thousand managers over two decades.

### **1.1 Intelligence and emotions: Does intelligence solve emotional problems?**

The word emotional intelligence seems to be an oxymoron because if someone is intelligent then s/he is not emotional and if someone is emotional then s/he is not intelligent. Else, do emotions have intelligence or intelligence uses emotions (hot cognitions)? It is a long standing belief held by behavioral scientists, researchers and practitioners of management that “intelligent people should not be emotional and emotional people are lacking in intelligence”. Nevertheless, Intelligence has evolved as a scientific construct [8] then research studies on emotions. Mostly researchers have ignored working on the concept of emotions at the work place, except job satisfaction and work stress. Meanwhile several intelligence quotient (IQ) tests were developed by psychologists to measure one’s IQ and it has become a major determinant of one’s success in school education or at work place. However, not much tests were developed to measure the role of emotions at the work place.

What psychologists believe is that history of psychology is the history of cognitive intelligence. Psychologists, teachers, and parents all got obsessed with the concept of IQ in Indian context and which they want to develop among their students and children. In schools, it has become the criteria of admission in the schools/ colleges/universities and for the selection at work place. Most of the entrance tests (GRE, GMAT, JEE, CAT) are heavily inclined to measure one’s IQ or memory. IQ has been defined as a ratio of mental age to chronological age multiplied by 100. If someone scores 110 unit of IQ then it means s/he is better than individuals who possess 90 units of IQ. Moreover, Math, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Finance and Accounting etc. have become the parameters of someone’s IQ over those who study arts, games, painting, music, sculpture etc. All parents want their children to focus on Math then on other subjects related to Arts, Sculpture, Music, Paintings, Sports, etc. Most Indian parents want their children to become either an engineer or a Doctor. IQ has become a differentiating factor between successful and non successful students or employees based on the normative structure of the Indian society. Indian society defines a successful person as who possesses high IQ and gets into top institutions or organizations. IQ and social success were made to be related to each other.

However IQ does not explain much variance in health, happiness, psychological well being, satisfaction, commitment, loyalty, altruism and helping behavior, cooperative behavior, kindness, ethics and transformational leadership behavior etc. Hence IQ model of human development has got a few limitations whether high IQ person would be happier or high IQ person are more motivated or high IQ persons have a better interpersonal relationship with family, friends and colleagues or do they manage conflicts better. High IQ model does not answer these questions satisfactorily.

Furthermore, Simon [9] has proposed the concept of “bounded rationality” to explain the decision making phenomena and suggested that human being look for a *satisfying* solution rather an optimal solution of any problem due to the limitations of their intelligence, information and time. A satisfying solution is fundamentally based on heuristics rather rational approaches. So one cannot be fully aware of all the facts and details required to make a certain decision rather one look for an optimum solution based on limited facts and data. Also, human mind has a limited capacity to process the information available to it so it depends on several

heuristics models of decision making. The concept of “heuristics and decision making” is popularized by Kahneman [10] while working on models of human irrationality. He claimed that “cognitive biases” (unconscious error of our reasoning) distort our judgment of the world in which we live and operate. They have also used the word, “*affect heuristic*” to explain why leaders frame their message to activate emotions than those framed in a purely factual way. Therefore, psychologists started looking at the role of emotions with regard to human decision making process. Once someone gets emotional, s/he loses rationality. Practically it is impossible to distinguish between cognitive and affective bases of decision making in a problem situation. Consequently, psychologists have shifted their attention to non-IQ factors of success in life and to other attitudinal and dispositional variables which gets regulated by affective processes. Thus IQ does not remain an absolute concept rather becomes a relative concept. It means that IQ becomes ratio between “how much IQ someone possesses” and “how much IQ someone uses” for practical purposes under emotional and other situational constraints. To explain this logic, I will narrate an incident that took place with me.

#### *1.1.1 An anecdote*

I, along with my family, shifted to Aarhus University, Denmark on a post doctoral assignment for a period of two years. The event took place with me on 3rd September 2013 that is my wife’s birthday and I am always under some psychological pressure with a thought of how to celebrate to please her. On that day, I bought a gift, flowers and a cake and reached to VRI football club in Risskov by six pm, where my 6-year old son was going to play football. The idea was to cut a cake and go for dining somewhere in the main town by a local bus scheduled at 6.10 PM from the VRI club. When I reached the playground, my wife did not like the cake and gift and started arguing with me and uttering the same sentences, “you will never learn how to celebrate wife’s birthday.” I become upset and started defending myself. Meanwhile we walked to the bus stand to catch the bus and started changing the clothes of my son to put on some normal dress in place of football uniform.

What went wrong during this period while we were arguing is that we were standing on the wrong side to catch the bus rather than standing on the side where the bus will go toward the town? Since we were arguing and did not realize our mistake that we are waiting on the wrong side. We saw that bus is leaving and next one is scheduled after an hour. You can imagine my plight what would have happened afterwards. Still I have not forgotten while writing this chapter in 2020.

This story clearly indicates that I might be high in IQ but it did not help me take a rational decision of choosing the right side to wait for the bus. Thus having IQ is not enough rather how much we use under difficult conditions is a relative IQ available with us for all practical purposes. IQ is not a fixed concept, “one time high on IQ, all time high on IQ”, rather it varies due to the impact of emotional and situational reasons.

#### *1.1.2 A real misunderstanding*

Since most parents want their children to possess high IQ and for all practical reasons the examination scores, especially in math and science, as they are considered to be an indicator of their high IQ. In India, many students score 100 percent during their 10th and 12th standard. According to data shared by Central Board of Secondary Education [11], 1,99,884 students scored 90 and above marks in the Mathematics paper. “The number of students with 100 marks in



Mathematics is 3,131. The highest number of perfect scorers is for Social Science, in which 6,469 students secured 100 marks. Of total number of students from 12th Grades in 2018, 1,818 candidates scored a perfect 100 in economics, while in psychology and political science the same feat was achieved by 659 and 660 candidates, respectively. A total of 726 candidates scored 100 in mathematics [11]. However, according to the data compiled by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), “Every hour one student commits suicide in India, with about 28 such suicides reported every day and the NCRB data shows that 10,159 students died by suicide in 2018, an increase from 9,905 in 2017, and 9,478 in 2016. According to Lancet report [12], suicide rates in India are highest in the 15–29 age group — the youth population.

The question is if the students have received very high marks in 10th and 12th standard and that is an indicator of his/her superior mental capacities, so why do such students commit suicide? So what goes wrong with those students who committed suicide or suffer with psychological disorders, despite very high marks, but they might be failed in some entrance test even after scoring good marks. So can we argue that they were unable to control their negative affective state and are not ready to accept the situation of a failure because they were consistently getting good marks since their childhood days? So they were not prepared to meet with such a sudden failure as they have never seen high protective and supportive environment in their family and schools. It is also possible that cognitive skills are easier to teach than emotional skills or development of emotional skills is compromised over cognitive skills.

According to an estimate, a pool of 13376 seats were available across twenty three Indian institutes of technology for the population of 9, 41,000 applicants [13]. So it means 1.4% students have chance to get into a top ranked engineering institutes. How to cope and what to do under the situation of failure due to high parental expectations or peer pressure or social status. Thus IQ perspective does not explain why a student with high IQ commits suicide or fall mentally sick? Why highly educated leaders or entrepreneurs become abusive? Why rich people are corrupt? Why powerful people involves in extra marital affairs at the cost of their career or image? To explain it, I would like to adopt psychological perspective to explain a complex relationship between cognition and affect.

## **2. Psychological perspective**

Psychology has traditionally identified and studied three components of human personality: cognition, affect, and conation [14]. Cognition refers to an implicit process of knowing the real world and it is related to our rational and logical thinking, learning and remembering, analysis and prediction etc. The concept of intelligence belongs to cognitive aspect of human personality wherein “*Intelligence is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally and to deal effectively with his environment*” [5].

Affect refers to the *emotional interpretation* of perceptions, information, or knowledge. It is generally associated with one’s attachment (positive or negative) to people, objects, ideas, etc. Mood and feelings are related to affective aspects of human personality. In several social psychological experiments, it is confirmed that mood or emotion directly affects the cognitive skills or functioning of memory. For example, people tend to forget things quickly when they are exposed to highly irritating or depressive movie while remembering things better under a positive mood condition. It means there is a complex interrelationship between cognitive and affective processes.

Conation (or motivation) refers to the personal, intentional, planned, deliberate, goal-oriented, or striving component of motivation, the proactive (as opposed to reactive or habitual) aspect of behavior [15]. Cognitive, affective and conative aspects interact with each other in any situation but one may dominate other in some cases. Out of above three components, cognitive aspects were emphasized more because of its link with IQ and decision making. However, as discussed above, rationality has its limitations in the process of understanding and explaining the events. It ignores emotional side of decision making and each one of these components has their own merits. To understand EI, cognitive and affective aspects are more important than conative aspect. Let me explain how cognitive and affective processes work with the help of three cases.

### **2.1 Case A. when an individual behavior is purely driven by his/her cognitive processes**

This case is of a teacher who was living in small village near to capital of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow. He was an excellent teacher of math, physics and chemistry. He had three sons and taught math and science to his children. After getting good marks in their 10th and 12th standard, they all qualified the IIT-JEE and get into the IITs to pursue their engineering course. After their B Tech, they went to the USA to pursue their dreams of higher education on scholarships. They all did their master and got a wonderful job in the USA itself. Subsequently, they got married and settled down in America. Back home, the poor teacher has become old and got retired from his job in the age of 58. On several occasions, he requested his children to come back to India. But none of them have entertained his request. He was completely ignored by his three sons. All of them they stayed in the USA. After few years the poor teacher passed away and they came to attend his funeral and returned to the USA.

Similar to this case, there are many incidences where adult children have tried to get rid-off their parents in a planned and unusual ways in India, where parents are integral part of a person's life. Thus the question which can be asked is whether these children were lacking in cognitive intelligence or lacking in emotions of love, respect, empathy, kindness or gratitude. Why none of them offered help? Does it mean that when we are focused on the development of cognitive intelligence then the emotional development gets hampered? Is it more likely that cognitively intelligent doctors, engineers or civil servants end up their career in becoming more selfish or obsessed with their own career success? Is life all about the career success? Now we turn to Case 2 to understand the role of affective processes (emotions, feelings, and mood) to explain and understand human behavior.

### **2.2 Case B. when an individual behavior is purely driven by his/her affective process**

On October 27, 2018, Deepika Chauhan, assistant vice-president of a private bank in Cyber City of Gurugram, died after falling from the balcony of her apartment in Valley View Estate condominium. The police had arrested her husband Vikram Singh Chauhan and his paramour Shefali Bhasin Tiwari in connection with the case. (From Hindutan Times).

Vikram has planned a murder of his wife (Deepika) because he was in love with Shefali. He has allegedly pushed her from the balcony of their eighth floor apartment on the night of Karvachauth (wives are fasting for their husband's long life). Few days before, Shefali and Vikram failed to push her (Deepika) off a cliff in Nainital. Investigators probing the case had said that at 7.43 pm on that day, Shefali

had sent a message to Vikram that read, “Balcony se phuk do (Throw her from the balcony)” (Hindustan Times).

This is a case of an illicit relationship of a married man with another woman. He was in love to that extent he planned the murder of his wife and did not find anything wrong in committing such a crime. Vikram is a senior executive in a multinational company.

Similar to this, the world is full of such incidences where husband or wife has planned a murder of their own spouse. The mindboggling question is, “how emotion of love has taken over the cognitive capacities of such successful people”. Does it mean that emotions ruin our cognitive intelligence? Does it make us blind of facts and repercussion of our own actions? What is the power of emotions of love or hate, greed, jealousy, ego, sense of absolute power etc. Let us turn to case 3 to understand an adequate mix of cognitive and affective processes in decision making.

### **2.3 Case C. when an individual behavior is driven by a mix of cognitive as well as affective processes**

A young man was pursuing his Bachelors of Arts degree from Patna University along with his childhood girl friend. Once they have decided to disclose their love to their parents to seek their permission for the marriage. The boy approached girl’s father, who was a professor of History, in the same university, to take his permission for the marriage. But the girl’s father clearly refused, although he knew the boy and his family for many years, and told him that he would marry his daughter only to an IAS officer (Indian administrative service). After having some discussion, the boy asked girl’s father, whether it would be acceptable for him if he becomes an IAS within two years period. Since the girl was pursuing the bachelor’s degree so she had enough time before her marriage. The Girl’s father agreed to his request and chose to wait for until next two years for her daughter’s marriage. Surprisingly, the boy has become an IAS within two years and got married to his childhood girl friend. Today he is at the secretary level position in the central government of India.

There are many such stories of love affairs wherein a normal person got inspired to an extent to become a doctor, engineer or IAS officer because of his or her love toward someone. Does it mean that love makes someone more responsible or a better citizen or a nice human being? How the love of Vikran (Case B) is different from love of this boy, who became IAS. Does it mean emotions can enhance cognitive functioning on the one hand and conative processes on the other hand, to the extent that he set a challenging goal and dedicated his efforts in achieving that goal.

First case indicates that cognitive intelligence makes us selfish, second case indicate that affective process can make us blind but a combination can develop a sense of balance and a holistic approach to human behavior. Obviously third case is related to **“the power of emotional intelligence”**. Here emotions are not hurdle rather they become a source of motivation and risk taking, and help adopting a long term perspective in life.

### **2.4 Definition of emotional intelligence**

Based on the above cases, we can now define, “what is emotional intelligence”? Emotional intelligence, in contrast to cognitive intelligence, is an ability to perform under stressful conditions through cognitively controlled affective processes [16]. In this definition, one can note that cognitive and affective aspects of human personality are of primary importance while conative is secondary to emotional intelligence. Thus an appropriate combination of cognitive and affective processes leads to a better understanding of the situations and problems before attempting to solve



them. Thus EI makes people more aware of emotions in one self and emotions of others. The basic skills of “awareness of emotions in self and others” lead to a higher order of skill that is “regulations of emotions in self and others” for the purpose of achieving their goals under any stressful conditions. So cognitive intelligence works well under normal conditions of life, however emotional intelligence is needed under stressful conditions. Cognitive intelligence can work well only when someone remains cool and calm under a difficult situation. Otherwise stress can lower down the functioning of our mental capacities. Emotional intelligence help creating the environment in which cognitive intelligence would play its role more effectively. The challenge for a human being is to learn, “how to control emotions and focus on long term goals before letting cognitive intelligence should perform? In brief, the idea of Emotional Intelligence (EI) is related to the ability to accurately perceive and identify emotions in one self and others, understand and use of emotions to enhance cognitive (conative) processes, and effectively manage one’s own emotions as well as those of others to produce performance or results under high stressed conditions. Thus emotions purify cognitions while cognition gives directions to emotions. Thus emotional energy becomes a long term and consistent source of motivation for the individual’s cognitive functioning e.g., Case C. The boy has become a senior government office by regulating over his emotions and performed through his cognitions keeping a long term perspective to his life and career.

### **3. Evolutionary or biological perspective**

Psychological perspective is limited to interplay of cognitive, affective and conative aspects of emotional intelligence. But a question is often asked, whether EI has any biological or evolutionary base or whether EI is a psychological skill without any biological origin. Many biological psychologists have explored the neurological basis of EI and relate it with the structure of human brain. According to neuroscientists, human brain has three major parts: 1. brain stem, which controls motor function, 2. limbic or emotional brain and 3. prefrontal cortex or rational thinking brain. According to biologists, prefrontal cortex (PFC-located near the front part of the head) is responsible for cognitive functioning (e.g., problem solving, decision making, logical thinking etc) and the researchers state that the prefrontal cortex controls what decision a person makes when faced with an emotional reaction and also regulates anxiety.

However, limbic system plays a critical role in the activation of emotions like fear and love. While the limbic system is made up of multiple parts of the brain, the center of emotional processing is the amygdala, which receives input from other brain functions, like memory and attention. The amygdala is responsible for multiple emotional responses, like love, fear, anger and sexual desire and any damage to the amygdala can result in abnormal emotional responses or overstimulation causes excessive reactions. The other parts of limbic system are hippocampus and hypothalamus that sends information to the amygdala and acts as a regulator of emotion, controlling levels of sexual desire, pleasure, aggression and anger. Thus limbic system (emotional center) is a pathway to prefrontal cortex (rational center). However, in a study on combat veterans from the Vietnam Head Injury Study, psychologists also showed that any damage to prefrontal cortex hinders the perception and integration of emotional information, and damages the ability to understand and regulate emotions. Thus human brain plays a critical role in the decision making under highly volatile and complex conditions and PFC and limbic systems acts as a unit to process emotional information and the subsequent decision making.

However, when the situation is emotionally volatile then it is more likely that decision can be made by the limbic system alone, without PFC processes the



information. According to evolutionary biologists, limbic system is a primitive part of the human brain and prefrontal cortex or neo cortex has evolved much later. Limbic system may create a tendency to spend and consume without any regard to the long term consequences, the addiction to instant gratification and the rejection of self denial and sacrifice, lack of patience and civility in society, micro term decision making by business and political leaders and on and on. Human brain has a capacity to process the emotional information faster than the logical information. Therefore, under high stress condition, limbic system may react faster than prefrontal cortex. Decision made by limbic system is not necessarily based on facts and available information. So limbic system can keep you away from making a good decision.

Thus the reactions made by limbic system are necessarily originating from extreme emotions of love, greed, rage, jealousy or ego. One can understand the effect of limbic system on our behavior with a story from Mahabharata. When the war of Mahabharata was over; Ashwatthama (last warrior from Kaurav's camp) planned an attack on Pandava's camp at night. He wanted to please his commander, Duryodhana, with this attack or action. Ashwatthama butchered all five children of Pandavas in their sleep. This act of cowardness of Ashwatthama was not even approved by Duryodhana. In the entire story of Mahabharata, this act was highly criticized by those who have written a commentary on Mahabharata. The story depicts an example of human behavior under the influence of extreme emotions of rage, revenge and jealousy. In fact, the entire Mahabharata can be summarized into two emotions that are **insult and revenge**. Kaurav's had hated Pandavas since their childhood days. Under the conditions of lust, jealousy, ego, greed etc. one can lose control over his behavior and may do sinful acts of harming weak or incapable person or animal or plants.

Another example of instinctual aggressive behavior is of a rape victim, a 23-year-old woman, Jyoti Singh. While she and her male friend, were returning home on the night of 16 December 2012 after watching the film Life of Pi in Saket, South Delhi. They boarded the bus at Munirka for Dwarka at about 9:30 pm. There were only six others on the bus, including the driver. One of the men, identified as minor, had called for passengers telling them that the bus was going toward their destination. Her friend became suspicious when the bus deviated from its normal route and its doors were shut. When he objected, the group of six men already on board, including the driver, taunted the couple, asking what they were doing alone at such a late hour. During the argument, a scuffle ensued between her friend and the group of men. He was beaten, gagged and knocked unconscious with an iron rod. The men then dragged Jyoti to the rear of the bus, beating her with the rod and raping her while the bus driver continued to drive. A medical report later said that she suffered serious injuries to her abdomen, intestines and genitals due to the assault, and doctors said that the damage indicated that a blunt object (suspected to be the iron rod) may have been used for penetration. That rod was later described by police as being a rusted, L-shaped implement of the type used as a wheel jack handle (from Wikipedia).

In the court trial, four of the accused were executed to the death penalty on 20th March 2020. This incident is nonetheless is not less aggressive then incidence of killing children in sleep by Ashwathamma. This is not just one case of the rape of a girl rather clearly evident that "what people can do once they are under the influence of extreme emotions of "lust, violence and aggression" and unable to understand the long term repercussion of our own actions.

### 3.1 The concept of Amygdala Hijack

These two abovementioned case are a good evidence of highly charged emotional behavior when rational thinking is completely ceased. This is termed

by scientists as Amygdala hijack where in a person is involved to satisfy his/her immediate emotional urge without considering its long term impact on their career and life.

The amygdala hijack is an immediate, overwhelming emotional response with a later realization that the response was inappropriately strong given the trigger. Goleman [2, 3] coined the term based on the work of neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux, which demonstrated that some emotional information travels directly from the thalamus to the amygdala without engaging the neocortex, or higher brain regions. This causes a strong emotional response that precedes more rational thought.

Under normal circumstances, you process information through your neocortex or “thinking brain” where logic occurs. The neocortex then routes the information to the amygdala, a small organ which lies deep in the center of your “emotional brain.” On occasion, there is a short circuit whereby the “thinking brain” is bypassed and signals are sent straight to the “emotional brain.” When this happens, you have an immediate, overwhelming emotional response disproportionate to the original event. The information is later relayed to higher brain regions that perform logic and decision-making processes, causing you to realize the inappropriateness of your original emotional response.

Why does this happen? Hundreds of thousands of years ago this type of immediate emotional response served a purpose. Imagine you were out collecting food for your family. Along the way, you found yourself face-to-face with a ravenous, four-legged creature that also happened to be out looking for a snack. In this situation, your brain would waste no time in rational thinking. Thanks to the amygdala hijack, you would bust be thrown into a flight or fight response, and hopefully survive to tell the story.

In modern life, of course, we are unlikely to encounter ravenous, blood-thirsty beasts. We are, however, almost certain to encounter drivers that cut us off, disrespectful colleagues, children that misbehave, and countless other situations that may very well lead to the occasional amygdala hijack. So what to do to prevent the negative effect of amygdala hijack on our behavior and use the same to safeguard ourselves? The short answer lies in becoming more emotionally intelligent human being rather driven purely by emotions which have a strong biological origin on which you do not have direct control. Similarly, individuals who are high on EI can cope better with the problem of COVID-19 keeping a long term perspective in mind.

#### **4. Managerial perspective and principles of decision making**

The managerial perspective is based on the idea of managing emotions for the purpose of taking effective decision under highly stressful conditions. Managers, police officers, army personnel, doctors, and other fire fighter staff perform their job under tough conditions. So the concept of emotional intelligence is directly beneficial to them. To derive the principles of decision making for such professionals, let me share a case then discuss those principle for a better understanding.

##### **4.1 Case study**

It is the year 2008 when I was living with my family in MDI campus. My family is consisting of myself, mother, wife and a two year old son. My mother was almost 60 and having a problem of high blood pressure. One day, she asked to me take her to a Doctor for the medical check up as she was feeling little anxious and nervous on that day. It was 9.00 am so I told her that I have a class at 9.45 am so we can go to see the doctor in the evening. She agreed for that and I came back from office at 6 PM and my wife also drove back to home. She was working in Siemens, located in IFFCO tower.

We all drove to the doctor's clinic and reached by 6.15 as clinic starts at 6.00 PM. The clinic is of Dr. Vinod Wadhwa in sector 14, just 2.5 KM away from our residence in MDI. The compounder put us in a queue and our number is 23. Since we went up there for the first time so did not know that patients can call over phone and can take a number. Since we have no other works so decided to wait and were watching television. Our turn came at 8.35 PM after waiting more than 2 hours. Doctors had given enough time to see my mother and gave prescription. After the check up is over, I asked my mother to go downstairs and sit inside the car. In the meantime, I paid the bill and took receipt. While I came down and saw that my mother is standing outside the car and keys were left inside and it got locked. When I asked my mother then she said that first she sat inside but it was very hot inside (it was the month of June). So she came out and but did not know that it will get locked automatically.

Now I am really upset because we were stuck with doctor so long and now have to face this problem so I was feeling angry, upset, and irritated. So I stopped talking to my family and started thinking how to solve this problem. After a while I thought let me get a scale (one foot measurement) as many people told me that if you are in such a situation the car can easily be get unlocked using a scale. But I was not carrying the scale so started looking for it in the market place. After 10 minutes I got one scale and tried to unlock the door putting the scale from the driver's door. However I failed and then requested few more people if they knew to unlock the car using scale. But we failed; thereafter I realized that I was having a mobile phone so let me call Hyundai on road service person for help. When I called, he said that he will reach in 20 minutes. Its 9.10 PM and we waited for until 9.30 PM. When he reached and saw that he has got a similar scale and put inside the door and unlocked the car so easily. We were pleasantly surprised. I said thank you very much but he asked for 200 bucks. I paid Rs 200 and drove back to home and reached home around 9.50.

It was bad evening as nobody was talking to the other and everyone was silent. My son was the happiest person as he got some extra hours to play around. My wife seems to be busy in looking after the kid but mother was looking upset and feeling guilty of making this mistake. After coming back, my wife cooked the meal and we ate and then went to bed.

Next day, when I was sitting in my office and working on a research paper, a sudden thought strikes me related to the episode of previous night. While I was struggling to unlock the door, I did not realize that my house keys were in my pocket. I felt so bad for my inability to solve that problem more effectively as we all could have immediately come back to home on rickshaw and I could have taken the spare key to bring that car back. It was a simple and direct solution. Why I could not solve this problem more effectively and what went wrong with my cognitive capabilities? What principles of decision making you can derive from this case and highlight the biases (heuristics) in decision making? What are the managerial implications (leadership and conflict management styles, employees' health and well being, attitude of job satisfaction and commitment) of this case in organizational context?

## **4.2 Principles of decision making**

### *4.2.1 Primary principles*

1. Whenever you are upset, you should take a pause or relax.

I did not take a pause rather started feeling nervous, anxious and irritated that might have lowered down my problem solving capacity. Under such situation, we must relax before taking any decision. Otherwise we might suffer with a bad choice. This pause can vary from 30 second to few minutes.

2. Whenever you are upset or irritated or nervous or happy, you should not take any decision.

I immediately took a decision to unlock the door using a scale without thinking of the availability of scale or competency to use the scale. So the solution that comes to our mind in a highly emotional situation may suffer with the cognitive bias, called availability heuristic. Ultimately we take decision even under stress but the one which is easily available at the top of the mind. A rigorous training may help developing such a heuristic based solution to work under a crisis situation.

3. Whenever you are upset, you can postpone a decision.

I did not postpone the decision even for 5–10 minutes. Are we comfortable in postponing the decision, sometime, leaders have to live without taking a decision. It means, not taking a decision, is also a decision. For example, when we receive a mail that puts an allegation on us then we quickly get nervous and want to send a quick reply to be relieved from our anger. However it does not solve rather aggravate the problem. Still if you have to take decision then apply following rule.

Case: Whenever I get a chance to meet a CEO, I often ask one question and that is, “what you do when you are upset at work?”

An interesting response I got from chairman and CEO of big business house is, “I do one thing that I do not take any decision and postpone all my meetings.” Then I ask, how do you manage your work if you postpone all your meetings? Rather answering my question, he had shown a red color diary in which he used to write, Ram, Ram, Ram. He said, “I keep writing Ram-Ram until my mind is at a complete peace. Once I feel peaceful then I call for all my meetings. But it is unlikely that I can take a good decision with a disturbed mind.”

#### *4.2.2 Secondary principles*

1. Define the problem using various perspectives in a given situation.

I have defined the problem partially, not holistically. Whether the problem was to unlock the door or how to go back to home? I could have also defined the problem situation how to get back to home. So If I would have thought of going back to home then the solutions would have come accordingly.

2. Do not jump to a solution rather think of alternative solutions.

I could have thought of several alternative solutions in that situation. First, I should have realized that I have never used a scale so it is unlikely that I can open the door. Second, I had a cell phone and could have called to on road service person. Third, it was almost 8.50 PM so we could have taken the Dinner as we all were very hungry. Fourth, I could have also realized I have house keys in my pocket and we can go to home without a delay. But I could not think of these alternative solutions because stress narrows down our focus and makes less flexible to alternative one. The mind becomes less thoughtful and more rigid.

3. Do not get obsessed with one solution rather apply alternative ones to save time, energy or money.



I spent almost 50 minutes on solving the problem using the scale although it was not a good solution. I could have directly opted for on road service solution to save time. But I got obsessed with my solution. The practitioners of management suggest that if you fail then fail quick and cheap. Nothing is wrong in accepting the failures but the wisdom lies in accepting the mistake and moving quickly to the next solution. However it did not happen because of volatility of conditions we are surrounded with that damage our intelligence and increase emotionality in terms of ego, lust, greed, rage etc. As emotionality goes up, rationality goes down. But if emotions are kept under control then rationality works better.

4. You can consult and talk to those who are not upset to seek their opinion on the problem.

Interestingly I did not seek any advice from my mother or wife rather acted on my own. Probably you may suffer with “ego syndrome” especially when you think you are the only one who is capable enough to solve and undermine the other’s talent. Due to cultural reasons, many times, man does not seek advice from their mother or wife or children. For example, Ravana has never accepted the advice of his wife, “Mandodari” though he knew she is correct in her arguments in suggesting that he should return Maa Sita to Lord Ram. But he chose to die rather adopting a flexible approach. Similarly, Krsna tried convincing Douryodhana to return the kingdom of Pandavas but he told Krsna that you forget five villages I will not give them even the land equal to the size of a needle. Ravana and Douryodhana were unable to switch to flexible ways to adjusting with the circumstance due to which they lost their glory, kingdom etc. The concept of power corrupts our thinking ability that is why Lord Krsna demonstrates that a king should leave the battle field if he is not well prepared to fight the battle. Similarly, Gandhari tried to convince Dhritrashtra to make Yudhishthira as the crown prince. But Dhritrashtra was in a deep love with his son and always ignored his son’s mistake.

5. One should learn to regulate negative emotions in a stressful condition.

Moreover, I could have avoided blaming my mother for this problem. However it was just a mistake and any one of us can commit such mistake. Once you blame others the problem gets further aggravated. One should avoid blaming the team members during the time of crisis to prevent the breakup of the team. So when team fails one must take the responsibility rather blaming others. Even sometimes, the commander or the captain of an army/team knows that they may lose a war/match but they hide their fears and insecurities so that the soldier or team members should not feel discouraged. In a movie, “Life is Beautiful” father made the holocaust as a big game and hide his emotions in order to protect the innocence of his son. Hiding negative emotions is a wise idea under the crisis.

6. One should express positive emotions in a stressful condition.

Furthermore, controlling negative emotions are not enough; rather one should learn to express positive emotions to make the situation lighter. I could have suggested it as an opportunity to dine outside. Under worst circumstances of life, leaders should be able to create hope and optimism by using positive jargon or language e.g. We will win, Good Days will come, We are a great team etc. Leader should always trust their people and must use a positive language.

Case: Controlling negative emotions and expressing the positive one.

Once I was talking to a CEO who had been the CEO of a public sector bank and the bank was not performing well. So his challenge is to transform it to make it profitable. He took an initiative and inducted high valued client on the board. In one of the meeting of the board, an old lady (high valued client) raised her hand and said “Mr. CEO, I think my money is not safe in your bank”. The entire board took a back and got silent. Nobody dared to say anything. Then the CEO said, “madam can you look at me” CEO is relatively a heavy weight person “do you think I can run away with your money.” She started laughing after hearing this remarks and kept laughing for a while and then she uttered that she thought her money is safe. Sometimes, CEO also understands the reality that the bank is not in a good position but it is his job to transform. So before he transform anything, he needs to learn to keep negative emotion under control otherwise team or organization may lose the morale or positivity. Be aware of your negative and other’s negative emotions and then regulate yours as well as others emotions.

Sometime, leaders know that no rational explanation of a problem can convince the people. Then they prefer to shape the emotions of their followers by cracking a joke or by telling a story or reciting a poem. Atal Bihari Vajpayi, former PM of India, used to recite a poem while he was not willing to share an opinion. In the world of leadership, shaping follower’s emotions is equally relevant task for which high EI leaders use all the tricks to keep them calm and quiet. Former PM Dr. Man Mohan Singh used to keep a very plain facial expression not to disclose his feelings. Probably it is difficult to find a pic when he is smiling.

Case of a young police officer

It is another example on the importance of learning the expression of positive emotions. Once I got an opportunity to be the program director for a management development program on leadership and motivation for the newly recruited Assistant Commandants of CRPF. The biggest training centre of CRPF is located in Kadarapur, Gurugram. After completing a session on emotional intelligence for leadership development, I assigned a task to them. The task was that after going back to the academy and each one of them has to call the parents over the phone and convey a “thanks” or a feeling of gratitude. They are also allowed to say anything positive. Out of 76 officers, most did not show a willingness and finding it a difficult task. So they asked for any alternative task should be given to them and some have asked the reasons for doing this task. So I told them that CRPF is an internal peace force and deployed mostly within the India, especially in highly violent and conflicting places e.g. Naxalities Area. In contrast BSF is deployed at the border and the enemy is known and defined, but CRPF has to work through the people of India. So they need to work carefully without hurting them. So I told them that you need to develop a good relationship with the communities in order to win the trust and protect them. For which you should learn to express the positive emotions and the best place is to learn from home. Finally they agreed and said we shall try it. The next morning, a sharing session was organized.

Next morning when I asked how has been your experience of sharing the positive emotions then most denied that they could not say anything special like thanks or gratitude. They perceived it as it was not an easy task for them, although they called their parent but could not convey their warm of feeling of love or gratitude. The conversation went on as usual like other days. We kept thinking of saying something positive to them. Out of 76, only 20–22 were able to convey thanks.

Here I quote the experience narrated by one of the officers and he said.  
“Yesterday when I went back from MDI, I was very firm that I should not miss this opportunity. However, I was little nervous. After taking dinner, I called at home

around 10 PM, my father has picked the phone. He uttered the same sentence in Hindi, “ruko teri maa ko bulata hu” (wait, let me call your mom). Actually if I call at home and mother picks up the phone then we used to talk at length. However if father picks up then he used to say the same sentence and never talks to me. So I thought let me talk to my father today. So I said, do not call her. I phoned you only. He said, “mujse kya baat karni hai” (what do you want to talk to me). I said no I just wanted to share that we are attending an interesting training at MDI on leadership and motivation. So I thought of asking you, if you have got a chance to attend any such training while you were serving the Army (he was a JCO). But he did not say anything but I kept sharing and started feeling how to say thanks. After talking to him for 5–10 minutes, I realized, aaj nahi to kabhi nahi (if not today then never). So I told him the real reason of calling him. I said, “aaj aapki yaad aa rahi thi and mein jo kuch bhi hu aapki wajah se hu”. (I was missing you today and whatever I am because of you). Suddenly my father got silent and could not say anything and uttered one thing, “muje lagta tha ki tu apni maa se hi pyar karta hai, lekin ab mein chain se mar paoonga” (I thought you love your mom only, but now I can die peacefully). It seems he was crying on the other side then he kept the phone off. I realized that my relationship with my father is so distant. Thankfully mein kar diya tha (I did it).

The above case indicates son-father relationship is not that straight or simple. Mostly boys are comfortable with their mother but more neutral toward their father in their expression of positive emotions. But the moment you express a positive emotions, it breaks ice so easily. I shared this story at many platforms. One day another student of mine, Sachin Malhotra told me that his father has asked him to leave the house after a conflicting episode. He left his house and staying away from him for last two years. After listening to this story, he went back to home after finishing his part time class in MDI. He reached around 11 PM and called his Dad and said, “papa, sorry, meri hi galti thee us din” (it was my mistake on that day). His father reached to his house in the mid night, said pack up and get back to your home. It took 2 long years to realize that he can still say sorry. A simple sorry and thanks has a wonderful impact on our relationship.

An expression positive emotions and controlling negative emotions are of tremendous importance in the context of a team. Leaders should hone their skills to regulate emotions in self and others under a crisis situation.

## 5. Developmental and sociological perspectives

What is the difference between IQ and EI based on the developmental perspective? Psychologists believe that the development of IQ stops by the age of 17 while the development of EI is an unending process and remain active until the age of 45 [4]. Does it mean that elderly people are naturally more emotionally intelligent?

It is not true that all elderly persons are emotionally intelligent because the development of EI depends not only on age but other attitudinal and dispositional variable. For example, married people might be more emotionally intelligent because of their ability to live in a relationship. Temperamental changes occur with new social experiences in the life. However the personality of an individual plays a central role in the development of EI. For example, the personality traits, e.g., openness to experience, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism [17] are closely associated with the development of EI.

**Openness to experience** is the degree to which a person is curious, original, intellectual, creative, and open to new ideas. **Conscientiousness** refers to the degree to which a person is organized, systematic, punctual, achievement-oriented, and dependable. **Extraversion** is the degree to which a person is outgoing, talkative,



sociable, and enjoys socializing. **Agreeableness** is the degree to which a person is affable, tolerant, sensitive, trusting, kind, and warm. **Neuroticism** (emotional instability) refers to the degree to which a person is anxious, irritable, temperamental, and moody. Until a person demonstrates favorable personality traits required in order to develop EI skills than it is unlikely a person can grow to become an emotionally intelligent just because of biological age. In some case women are considered to be better emotionally intelligent than men because they are taught to be aware of any gender related exploitation or discrimination.

*Development of EI through Role Modeling:* The development of EI can take place by observing the behavior of emotionally intelligent people. So better to watch them and follow their behavior. In support I would like to narrate the following incidence.

### 5.1 An anecdote

Once I was traveling to Lucknow from Delhi to teach a course in IIM Lucknow in 2008. During my journey, I met two gentlemen sitting my both sides as I was on the middle seat. After a short while, we all started talking to each other, I noticed that both are elderly people, may be they are in their late sixties. One of them was a scientist and worked in CSIR and belonged to Lucknow. The other one was a businessman from Pune and going to Gola-Gokarnnath (a palce near to Lucknow, capital city of Uttar Pradesh) on a consultancy assignment for a sugar mill. Both had two sons and one daughter and all were married and well settled in their career. The scientist's son did his B.Com from Lucknow University and went to US for his master and PhD. After a while I realized these two gentlemen are really very successful in their personal and professional life. So I could not resist myself by asking a personal question on parenting skills because my son was just 2 years old at that time. So I asked from both of them **“what exactly you did to your children to make them so successful”**. Immediately they both got silent. We stopped talking for a while. After couple of minutes both spoke the same sentence at the same time is, “sir humnein aisa kuch khas to nahi kiya, apni life mein hum log to kafi busy rahe” – We have not done anything great as we had been so busy throughout our life and did not realize when our children grew.

So I got the answer for my question. Parents do not do anything specifically but they grow by watching them as they had been busy so children also learn to be hard working. Thus it means the biggest influence children or subordinate have on their behavior is of their parents, teachers or the immediate boss.

For example, while talking to them, the scientist shared one incident where his (who is now assistant professor in American University) son used to ask *“why do you often come late while other scientists from the same neighborhood come back home in time.”* He tried to convince his son that he gets late in the office because of work. But he never understood this argument. Now his son is the assistant professor in an American university. So whenever he calls his son in USA, he asks where are you, he mostly says I am in office. Then he ask, what is the time, his son says 10 PM. Now it is his father saying, “beta ghar jaldi chale jaaya karo aur apni health ka bhi dhyan rakho” (my son you should go home in time). Thus he learned to be like his father. The biggest influence on the development of emotional intelligence is of our parents' behavior. Emotional awareness and emotional regulation both we learn from our parents.

### 5.2 Sociological perspective

Sociology is defined as a scientific study of social relationship in a society. Human behavior is directly impacted by all our relationship since the time of our



birth. So it should be inquired, what is the impact of social relationship on someone's EI?

Parents, siblings, teachers and superiors (significant others) have a potential to directly shape our personality, attitude and behavior. What should be considered normal and acceptable in a given situation is verified based on our elder's behavior. For example, if someone's father had been an angry person who commonly demonstrates anger by shouting and screaming then the children is more likely to accept this behavior as normal for their personal learning. At the same time, if someone's father has been controlling the expression of his anger and simply remain cool and calm under highly emotionally charged situation then children are more likely to become like them. Emotionally intelligent parents inculcate the traits of emotionally intelligent person in their children while it is opposite in case of emotionally unintelligent parents.

The parenting style or leadership style of the superiors also influences the development of emotional intelligence among the children and subordinates. Parents or superiors, with high autocratic style, are more likely to suppress the expression of emotional expression among their children and their staff. However, democratic parents and superiors demonstrate an ability to listen to diverse ideas and give opportunity to their children and subordinates to take lead or initiatives and provide emotional support if they meet with failures. So children or subordinates who are nurtured by democratic leaders are more likely to develop the traits of emotionally intelligent person.

We can take real life examples from the society. For example, Lord Krishna, Lord Mahaveer, Lord Buddha, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi are good examples of emotional intelligence at the spiritual level. If we watch their movies or listen to their stories it helps the development of EI skills in us.

In the field of corporate leadership, Azim Prem ji (owner of Wipro), Narayan Murti (Chairman of Infosys), Ratan Tata (chairman of Tata Group) all demonstrate emotionally intelligent behavior. Reading their autobiography and understanding how they deal with difficult situations will help designing our responses in various situations.

In sports, one can learn from the behavior Dhoni (captain of Indian cricket team who won ODI and T20 world cups), Dhyan Chand (world's best Hockey player- has scored 101 international goals) etc. they all demonstrate the ability to remain cool and calm under the difficult conditions of a match and focus on the match in hand. Similarly the emotionally intelligent behavior is also demonstrated by Italian goalkeeper, Gianluigi Buffon. He always remains cool even under highly difficult conditions of a match. Buffon holds the record for the longest streak without conceding a goal in Serie A history: over 12 league matches, he went unbeaten for 974 consecutive minutes during the 2015–2016 season; achieving the most consecutive clean sheets [10] during that run.

In Indian politics, M.K. Gandhi, Atal Vihari Bajpayi, PV Narsimha Rao, Narendra D. Modi, all demonstrate the traits of emotionally intelligent leadership. They learn to be more tolerant, patient and decisive under highly volatile conditions. In Indian movies, Amitabh Bacchan and Rajnikant are biggest epitome of emotional intelligence. Both are very hardworking and sincere in their profession. They demonstrate humility toward their young colleagues from films and cinema. Both are living an exemplary life.

Moreover one can also develop EI skills by watching movies. For example, **Chak De India** is a good movie to learn several EI skills of understanding and managing the emotions of his team member as the coach. A Movie titled as **"Life is beautiful"** tells a story of a man who saves the innocence of his son in Nazi's camp. Another interesting movie is **"12 Angry Men"** that depicts how a jury member is successfully able to turn the decision of guilty to non guilty by remaining cool headed and

follows facts and data. Another interesting movie is “**Gandhi**” which shows several occasions where Gandhi has used his emotional intelligence in taking decision.

For example, Gandhi withdrew the non-cooperation movement in Feb 1922 after the chauri chaura incident in which police station was burnt by the agitated crowd keeping in mind the non-violent nature of the movement. Before taking this decision, he has been shown that he is spending time all alone near to a temple and giving grass to a goat to regulate his emotions.

Some interesting source of learning for EI skills are autobiographies of people like Gandhi (father of India), Mandela (president of south Africa), Abram Lincoln (American President), Martin Luther King, Akira Morita (Sony), Lou Gerstner (IBM), Jack Welch (GE), Jack Ma (Alibaba), Colonel Sanders (KFC) etc. who had been transformational leaders. In this context, Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory and Tolman’s Latent learning theory are useful to learn from other’s direct and indirect experiences.

## 6. Conclusions

This article is exploring the relevance of the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) for people who are novice to this area. The empirical and conceptual articles are written for researchers and practitioner of management; however naïve people do not understand this field of EI. Thus this article is an attempt to simplify a complex relationship between human intelligence and emotions and clarifies how cognition should control affective processes and how affect can purify cognitive processes. Further, the article has also explained the evolutionary or biological basis of EI and also suggests that people are more prone to use limbic system under a crisis condition. Limbic system is more primitive in nature and prefrontal cortex has evolved much later among human beings. One should train his/her mind to take a pause or relax under highly chaotic or complex situations in life before taking any decision so that information should be well processed by rational centre of brain. Otherwise emotions can capture over rational thinking. All kinds of extreme emotions, love or hate, success or failure, attachment or jealousy can completely ruin our thinking processes. Rational mind should regulate emotional processes but emotional processes should support rational mind to take a balanced approach. Hence article suggests few fundamental laws of decision making for the managers and practitioners of management. The chapter also suggest one can improve his/her EI skills by watching others’ behavior who demonstrates better emotional intelligence in their personal life or at work. Role modeling can be an effective means for improving one’s EI. If someone does not understand the concept of EI by reading literature than at least one can observe others’ behavior, especially under crisis situation and can learn to remain cool, calm and composed. Many corporate and political leaders, film stars and sports persons demonstrate wonderful EI skills in their field of operations. EI is to be used rather just taught or discussed only.

## Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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