

Emotional Intelligence in Digital Age: Meaning, Importance and Strategy or Emotional Growth Through Stories

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Abstract--*Emotions are the impulsive responses in the circumstances around us. This is absolutely a conservative thought that one should lock away the emotions at work place or there shouldn't be any display of emotions at the corporate corridors. In reality emotional make up largely determines the professional success. Emotions can prove very dangerous if exhibited in an incongruous situation. However, emotions exhibited intelligently are constructive and play pivotal role in healthy environs. The way one maintains interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships reflects one's emotional intelligence. EI is a measure for segregating potential employees and good leaders from the rest. Thus, the analysis is done on how emotions help at work place precisely. My paper will explore the emotional growth through story method. It includes LRTW which stands for Listening, Reading, Telling, Writing stories. The first section of the paper provides an overview of Emotional Intelligence and its importance. In the second section, story method as strategy to indoctrinate EI is introduced. The key words that run through my paper are Emotions, Social skills, Eco therapy, Stories and Script therapy, must be perceived contextually. The objective of writing this paper is to provide the knowledge and necessity of Emotional intelligence at work place and to spread awareness about EI. The experience of different writers from literature is quoted for reference which is collected from various sources duly acknowledged that may provide guidelines to the digital generation.*

Key words--*Emotional growth, stories strategy, Digital age*

I. INTRODUCTION

An umbrella term 'emotion' is the complex state of human mind. Emotions are the response to the world around however feelings are the result of emotions as they create an ability to recognize feelings which lead to emotional intelligence. EI is rightly defined by Michael Kravitz in the introduction of Emotional Intelligence Works as, "The ability to use emotions in a positive and constructive way in relationship with others." (1) Though the term EI is new but the concept is as old as human civilization. In ancient Indian sacred teachings the distinction between right and wrong is emphasized. The ability to make the right decision and better choice is nothing but intelligence of emotions. Mastery over emotions starts from emotional sensitivity and slowly leads to emotional maturity and emotional competency. Even for effective functioning of IQ, emotional intelligence requires. It is well defined by Jitendra Mohan,

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Emotional Intelligence is a critical dimension of a person's makeup required for productive adult work and life. Emotional intelligence is one's ability to recognize emotions and emotional states and to name them. It also includes the ability to control one's emotions appropriately and to recognize them in others and make interventions such as calming or redirecting them in useful ways. EQ is one of the important "soft skills" now recognized as critically important for managers to master. (qtd. in Emotional Intelligence 2)

Importance and need of Emotional Intelligence

EI is the sine qua non of digital generation. Society creates right platform to display emotions as desideratum in conducive environment. Emotional and social development are interdependent. But the role of society in perceiving emotions is largely uncertain in the contemporary world. In the cubic and compact culture of digital world, emotions are neglected drastically. Today gadgets have overpowered society. Being social animals, people turned to live in virtual reality and make virtual friends and family. They try to quench the thirst of emotions digitally. From love to lust, from friends to family, from joy to frustration, all emotions are expressed through social media. As a result, social seclusion has become significant in modern society.

At the same time the importance of social contacts has increased in both personal and societal functioning. At one hand technology has separated human beings from each other, on the other hand organizations demand employees to increase organic interactions in order to accomplish better. Necessary skills of organization like leadership skills, decision making, collaboration and interpersonal skills demand direct interaction of employees. Idyllic and congenial relationship among the stake holders results in growth of any organization. Such people who are embedded in a network of healthy personal relationships generally experience a higher level of being than those who are socially isolated. They live a healthy life beyond self-identity or self-respect. The requirement of intrapersonal skills at the workplace is not possible without direct interaction of employees. To develop EI, self-precept which includes self-awareness, self-management, relations management, social awareness is necessary. Human relationship which is the primary strength of any organization lacks in the present generation.

Augmenting this idea from work place, if we see personal life or relationship, they bloom in seamless social environment. The replications of strong family manifest in society. Without the intelligent expression of emotions the relationship of husband and wife or father and son or even friendship can't last long. The idea of community lunch during festivals in India marks the importance of society. In the absence of proper social environment emotional turmoil can take place which leads to severe issues like isolation, loneliness, undue stress and even addiction to liquor and narcotics. People who are emotionally intelligent give proper space to other's emotions inadvertently in healthy social environment. So, it is perhaps the right time to balance the digital and real lives.

Apart from the unbecoming role of society, lack of exposure to nature is observed in present generation. The remarkable collapse in value systems took place when a techno man without any physical and natural environment spends time with inanimate gadgets for hours. So the present generation is the most frustrated generation working exclusively with machinery. Apart from the physical havoc, emotional harm is in alarming condition. Emotional disturbances of life always have negative effect on work of course on overall health.

Stories almost encompass the entire gamut of emotions. Like many other procedural aspects and innovations, story method has been applied to various fields as they leave more indelible impressions than facts do. It is found that stories are everywhere in different forms. They do not exist only in books or movies but in business field too. A businessman makes money by revelation of their 'brand story'. Every brand tells a story to establish a relation with other stake holders. Stories are used also in public speaking as fantastic beginning to captivate the attention of audience. A patient is asked to share his story by Counsellor or psychologist. Case study is nothing but a short story which explores the solutions for problems. Classrooms from nursery to business schools are filled up with colourful stories to make impressions which last long on student's brain. It has been discovered that listening to stories and telling stories can be a great stress buster. Reading and writing stories give a good acquaintance of emotions. They assist to develop thinking patterns and foster social and emotional development.

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EI strategy

Narrative Therapy

Emotional skills of such a society who has distanced itself from each other can be enhanced through narratives which are influential ways of communication and they bring augmented emotional growth. When general stories are crafted well, they are called narratives and when a narrative is shared through a proper platform is called Narrative therapy or Scriptotherapy. Suzette Henke coined the term Scriptotherapy while narrative therapy is attributed to Michael White and French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. Though the terms are newly explored, but they have thoroughly been practised for years in the form of letters and diaries. But systematic investigation of its efficacy has arisen recently. In this therapy, victims share stories of stress and heal themselves, as stories create a proper platform for expression of emotions. Identity crisis is the cause of brain disorders and other severe health issues and chronicling or sharing about it helps psychologically. This can be a powerful tool of self-introspection. Behavioural scientists or psychologists endorse that it works like medicine. Therapists or psychologists generally tell their patients to narrate their life story and those who can't do, writing is suggested. Just like a drama, in life narrative, there will be plot and characters, a beginning and an end. There is relationship between past and present as past heals the present. One can observe past as a detached observer, console and heal and unlearning takes place. Tears roll down inadvertently, stress reduces and patients feel good at the end. It is useful tool to communicate emotional traumas through story which will improve the positive mental health. It refurbishes new identities humanising better self-understanding. We literally and metaphorically find the sense and essence of our lives through stories and "It is this storying that determines the meaning ascribed to experience" (qtd. in Scott xii). As we build stories portraying our experiences, we form a matured version of ourselves. White emphasizes, Our stories don't simply represent us or reflect back, like a mirror, a discernible reality; instead, our stories are active, they constitute us. The stories we tell are the stories we live. When we write new stories of our lives, we live new stories. By telling unhelpful or oppressive stories about our lives, we keep these stories alive, and with them, often misery, unhappiness, and injustice" (xix-xx) Under story method basically four skills come. I - Story Listening, II Story Reading, III Story Telling, and IV Story Writing (LRTW) Story listening makes seamless emotional transition. When people are offered

to listen stories, they create better understanding of emotions. Listener is passive and speaker can be in physical form or digital form. Listening to rich language which describe emotions can vent, resulting in mood transition. For successful communication of emotions, it is important to have hold on the choice of words and the arrangement. Listening stories provides an opportunity to get connected. People get the chance to listen to the emotions of others which will help them to empathise and develop their own emotional understanding. The stories can be regarding the emotional state or conditions where a listener can easily draw a parallel to his own 'self' with the speaker.

Apart from story listening, story reading has its own benefits. It is important to know how to read and how to interpret. The stories related to frustration, anger, sadness or success stories are often read by people. Story reading also enhances language vocabulary for emotional expression. When a reader is completely engrossed in reading, he becomes one with the writer and writer's emotions become reader's emotions. He imagines his own 'self' at the place of narrator and feels the emotional support. One step ahead in reading is introduced by Roland Barthes in *The Death of the Author* where he liberates the text from the author's identity and focuses on readers by taking them into confidence as the creator of the text.

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Story telling too is an excellent tool for encompassing the emotional range or introducing emotions in an appropriate way. When we tell stories, we naturally involve our 'self'. Story telling is more flexible. It is called an emotional event in the book *Classroom Tales* by Jennifer M. Fox Eades as she says, Stories contain the whole range of human emotions and events- life and death, hate and love, birth and loss. Through telling a range of stories one can help people to think about and recognize emotions in a safe and appropriate way.

Story teller can vent out his emotions which lead to the emotions of listener too. Coleridge in his long and famous poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* has characterized an old mariner who got healed after sharing his story of guilt and sin with one of the wedding guests. He not only feels relieved after telling the tale but also shares his wisdom with the guest:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all. (614-617)

Apart from listening, reading, telling stories, story writing has an enchanting effect. By writing about dark deep chasms of life, one can heal oneself. Self-represented stories are used for therapeutic purposes. It is a process to heal or cure oneself from traumatic experiences in life through writing. In this process, a narrator turns bold by struggling to speak the unspeakable layers. Reinterpretation of the unspeakable conceding the imperfections often results in understanding of self and gives new identity. Many important questions arise for justification. Why was I troubled? What was my existence? What was my happiness linked to? What was my self-identity? A whole experience of reliving the moments indeed!! Not only traumatic experiences but all those things which are close to the victim are decoded.

In literary studies, authors encounter multiple intimate interactions with readers and apportion their harrowing experiences, thus healing themselves. Traumas are erased and writers feel tranquilized. Afro-Americans were suppressed for generations which gave birth to African Literature. We find Dalits giving vent to their anguish and suppression through what is now known as Dalit literature. Hemingway participated in many wars. He kept for himself the burden of war' with him for several years. He was relieved after penning them in his writings. Literature provides people an opportunity to wipe out the burden of their conscience. Even contemporarywriters like Ruskin Bond makes his problems public through his writings. He constructs his life story honestly and writes the incidents conspicuously. Through his characters, Bond is very much interested in narrating his own life in a free and fair way. He handholds and takes us through the different phases of his life including his loneliest phase when he went to live with his stepfather and mother after his father's death. Bond is healed when he talks about the loss of his father and loneliness in his life. It had its amazing effect on his wellbeing as an aftermath.

Eco therapy

It is a well-constructed fact that living in close proximity with nature strengthens emotional set up apart from delivering health benefits. To substantiate this claim, experience of writers is quoted. Such emotional enrichment through nature is called Eco therapy. In this therapy, a patient is self-healed in the company of nature. Smelling aroma of flowers, hearing the water streams and chirping birds, touching the tender petals savouring honey and juicy fruits and watching beautiful rainbow are great stress busters. But far away from nature, emotional vacuum created has ill effects in the present generation. It is a time to reconnect with outdoors and

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socialize to create harmony of emotions. They can be digital detox only in the presence of nature. For this unwinding exercise at least a few days in a month I recall fondly "These much-needed breaks help me truly switch off, and help me remind myself that I'm not as indispensable as I might flatter myself into believing." (The Hindu, 13 April 2017) Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine states, "Nature cures-not the physician" (A Healing Place).This is the main cause why so many writers have written on the subject of nature. Right from Chucer to Wordsworth and from Ruskin Bond to Margaret Atwood expressed their emotional disturbance and confessed the healing power only in the lap of nature they were all traumatized by the adversities of life and were healed in the company of nature as they found peace and solace in the company of nature. To support this, award winning Margaret Atwood, a Canadian writer, in her novel *Surfacing* can be quoted. The unnamed protagonist is brought back by nature from her traumatic phase. She regains her identity and submerges herself in the lake. Few lines are significant in this context from the novel, "When I am clean, I come out of the lake, leaving my false body floating on the surface, a cloth decoy; it jiggles in the waves I make, nudges gently against the dock." (231) In her final apotheosis, the narrator merges completely with nature when she says, "I lean against a tree, I am a tree leaning I break out again into the bright sun and crumple, head against the ground I am not an animal or a tree, I am the thing in which the trees and animals move and grow, I am a place I have to get up, I get up." (236) To support this view further Wordsworth, a lover of mountains, woods, and meadows is quoted as he expressed his emotions in the poem *Tintern Abbey*:

A lover of the meadows and the woods,

And mountain; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world.
Of eye, ear,-both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being. (103-111)

The Foundation of Ayurveda is based on nature. Space, air, fire, water and earth are building blocks of all material existence. We feel harmonious when we are connected with these elements however, disconnection makes us anxious. We must agree with the words of Sivaramkrishnan: Right from William Wordsworth onwards, nature poets have expressed their desire to go away from the hubbub and crowds of urban settings as they rightly felt that urban life disturbed a man's peace of mind, unnecessarily filled a man with fatal tensions and worries and hence one wants to have a break from all these and get back his pristine peace of mind. The poets and sensitive-minded people have suggested that this peace of mind can be achieved in the company of nature only. (qtd. in Jana's Ecological Criticism for Our Times: Literature, Nature and Critical Inquiry 117)

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II. CONCLUSION

Emotions are an integral and inseparable part of us. Suppression of emotions or avoiding emotion is callous and insensitive. One should own the concern of thoughts, feelings and actions to become emotionally intelligent. At the same time one should look at the world not to master it but to understand it and share the understanding with others in appropriate contexts. As emotions deserve a roost, emotional intelligence should be the part of curriculum where students should be helped to understand and handle their emotions adroitly. Proper deploying of story method leads to the manifestation of emotional intelligence. We can channelize the weird emotions of adolescents by telling a motivational story. The work culture should provide personal space to employees to enhance their productivity. After hectic schedule, some team building activities must be arranged so that they can get comfortable environment to share their real-life stories. To excel the work satisfaction, the day at workplace can start and end with some motivating stories. Apart from perfect collaboration the work place must be eco-friendly. The challenges for IT companies is how they can create eco-friendly work space for employees. Stand and Work is initiated by Apple Company. In 2015, Apple CEO Tim Cook had quoted doctors while describing sitting culture as "the new cancer" and continued, "We have given all of our employees, 100%, standing desks. If you can stand for a while, then sit, and so on and so forth, it's much better for your lifestyle." Healthy environment will certainly lead to emotional intelligence. So this is the necessity that there must be nature friendly infrastructure along with good amiable social environment in corporate culture for emotional and physical health. They can be digitally detoxicated only in the company of nature. At least few days in a month "These much-needed breaks help me truly switch off, and help me remind myself that I'm not as indispensable as I might flatter myself into believing." (The Hindu, 13 April 2017)The mastery over emotions and

fitness can lead us to the very quality of life and upholds the worthiness of human existence. Victims or Agents: Self-perception of Dalit Women in Pan on Fire

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