

# Impact of Spiritual Intelligence on Quality of Life

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*“We are not human beings having a spiritual experience. We are spiritual beings having a human experience”.*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

**Abstract-** It was believed in the earlier part of the twentieth century that a person high on rational intelligence (IQ) will succeed in his life. Later, in mid 1990s, a theory was propounded that a person high on emotional intelligence (EQ), IQ being the same, has greater chances of faring well in life, for he is endowed with the capacity to manage his own and others' emotions better. Towards the end of the century, it was highlighted that spiritual intelligence (SI), also SQ for short, is the ultimate intelligence, necessary for effective functioning of IQ and EQ. SQ allows human beings to be creative, to change the rules and to alter situations, giving us the ability to discriminate. Employing SQ one is enabled to differentiate between 'right' and 'not right' in the given framework of a society or a situation, listening to inner voice. Our brains are hard-wired for activation and utilization of SI, but most of the people let it remain dormant, missing out a richer quality of being.

Quality of life (QoL or QQ) is perceived differently by different people, depending on their belief system. Life is infinitely a large canvas, all encompassing, major aspects being health (mental, physical, emotional and spiritual), finances, social well-being, job / occupation, family, reputation and the like. Life and its quality are influenced by application of human intelligences like IQ, EQ and SQ in different degrees.

Supported by the works of several renowned authors on emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence, this paper is aimed at examining the impact of spiritual intelligence on quality of life among the executives serving in government organizations. For the purpose of conducting this study, a sample comprising 303 executives was selected with adequate representation at junior, middle and senior levels. All subjects were administered the questionnaires to assess IQ, EQ SQ and QQ. Detailed implications of this study will be discussed in the paper.

**Index Terms-** IQ, EQ, SQ, QoL or QQ

## I. INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of humanity, a man's endeavour has been to lead a prosperous, happy and peaceful life. In pursuit of improving his quality of life, illusions prompted him to chiefly amass wealth. The belief that materialistic possessions alone will bring happiness and respectability leads to disillusionment albeit, materialistic pursuit is a reality. The world is now moving rapidly towards a newer learning and awakening and beginning to build reliance on spirituality in varying degrees. A satisfying

life can only be led through achieving a balance between materialism and spirituality.

## Multiple Intelligences

Cindy Wigglesworth (2012) defined intelligence as "Intelligence is made up of three parts: nature, nurture and results. Intelligence is an innate potential (nature) that is brought into form through practice (nurture / effort) and results in adeptness or appropriately reasoned behaviour or choice". Howard Gardner defines intelligence as "The ability to create an effective product or offer a service. A set of skills that make it possible to solve problems. The potential for finding or creating solutions for problems, which involve gathering new knowledge".

Howard Gardner proposed that a human being is endowed with multiple intelligences. Each person has a unique combination. The following are the nine intelligences, given in Table 1.

**Table 1 : Multiple Intelligences**

(a)	Bodily / kinesthetic
(b)	Logical / mathematical
(c)	Linguistic
(d)	Musical rhythmic
(e)	Spatial
(f)	Intrapersonal
(g)	Interpersonal
(h)	Naturalist
(i)	Existential

Zohar, Danah (2000) maintains that there are multiple intelligences but all of our possibly infinite intelligences can be linked to one of the three basic neural systems in the brain and all the intelligences are actually variations of the basic rational intelligence (IQ), emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ) and associated neural arrangements.

While cognitive intelligence is about thinking, emotional intelligence is about feeling and spiritual intelligence is about being.

## Rational Intelligence (IQ)

It was discovered in the early 20th century. It is rational, logical, rule-bound, problem-solving intelligence which can be tested with Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scales. IQ was taken as a signpost of people's abilities. It was believed that higher a

person's IQ, higher the abilities but it is true no longer with other intelligences impacting the abilities of a man. Brewer, Mark, Dr (2008) endorses that people who successfully tackle the big issues of life are not always the ones blessed with great mental aptitude. These achievers possess something that is superior to sheer intellect.

### Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Goleman, Daniel (1998) referred to emotional intelligence as "the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well ourselves and in our relationships". It describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to, academic intelligence, the purely cognitive capacities measured by IQ. Many people who are book smart but lack emotional intelligence end up working for people who have lower IQs than they but who excel in emotional intelligence skills.

A comprehensive theory of emotional intelligence was proposed in 1990 by two psychologists, Peter Salovey, at Yale, John Mayer, defining emotional intelligence in terms of being able to monitor and regulate one's own and others' feelings, and to use feelings to guide thought and action.

Goleman, Daniel has highlighted the following five emotional competencies (the term emotional competency includes both social and emotional competencies):-

(a) **Self-awareness:** Knowing what we are feeling in the moment, and using those preferences to guide our decision making; having a realistic assessment of our own abilities and a well-grounded sense of self-confidence.

(b) **Self-regulation:** Handling our emotions so that they facilitate rather than interfere with the task at hand; being conscientious and delaying gratification to pursue goals; recovering well from emotional distress.

(c) **Motivation:** Using our deepest preferences to move and guide us toward our goals, to help us take initiative and strive to improve, and to persevere in the face of setbacks and frustrations.

(d) **Empathy:** Sensing what people are feeling, being able to take their perspective, and cultivating rapport and attunement with a broad diversity of people.

(e) **Social skills:** Handling emotions in relationships well and accurately reading social situations and networks; interacting smoothly; using these skills to persuade and lead, negotiate and settle disputes, for cooperation and teamwork.

### Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)

Webster's dictionary defines **spirit** as "the animating or vital principle: that which gives life to the physical organism in contrast to its material elements: the breath of life".

Wigglesworth, Cindy (2012) defines **spirituality** as "the innate human need to be connected to something larger than ourselves, something we consider to be divine or of exceptional nobility. This innate desire for that connection transcends any particular faith or tradition. It does not require a belief in a divinity by any description, nor does it preclude belief in God or Spirit or the divine".

Wigglesworth, Cindy (2012) defines **spiritual intelligence** as "the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the situation".

SQ is the central and most fundamental of all the intelligences, because it becomes the source of guidance for others, being an integrating intelligence, linking our rational and emotional intelligences.

A man with high SQ not only responds appropriately in a particular situation or circumstance, but he also analyses as to why he is in that situation and how can better that situation. High SQ enables a person to operate beyond the boundaries. Zohar, Danah (2000) believes that "SQ gives us the ability to discriminate. It gives us our moral sense, an ability to temper rigid rules with understanding and compassion and an equal ability to see when compassion and understanding have their limits".

Brewer, Mark, Dr. (2008) states that "the spiritual intelligence is available to everyone- yet only a handful of people ever take advantage of it.

### SQ and the Brain

Neurologically SQ is distinct from IQ and EQ. Whereas IQ and EQ are localized in opposite hemispheres, SQ is associated with hemispheric synchronization and whole-brain activation. The capability for SQ is hard-wired in the brain, but conscious intention is required to activate it. The processing mode for different Qs is different. IQ is processed in serial mode, EQ in parallel mode, and SQ is processed in synchronous mode. Bowell, Richard A. (2005) reinforces the studies bringing out that IQ is highly linear. One brain cell firing to another to form a neural tract is called synaptic transmission and is the basis for the formal logic of IQ. EQ is different to IQ. It weaves associative patterns. Context, memory, comparison, appropriateness- these are EQ skills. Why is a process of engaging our self with the unlimited fields of intelligence that we call SQ.?

### Working of IQ, EQ and SQ

Ideally, all the three Qs should work together and support one another and the brains are designed so. Each Q has its own area of strength, and they can function separately. A person need not be high or low in all Qs simultaneously. While one person may be high in IQ but low in EQ and SQ, another may be high in EQ but low IQ and SQ. There are many combinations with varying degrees.

### Development of Intelligences

We are born with basic wiring for each of these three intelligences. While rational intelligence is innate, EI and SI need to be developed through training. Though we are born with wiring for emotions and spirituality, but we are not emotionally and spiritually intelligent. In majority of the people, EQ and SQ are strongly correlated with age, meaning these intelligences tend to increase as the person grows older. But there is nothing guaranteed about EQ or SQ development. Not everyone gets better at these intelligences with age. People do have the capacity to enhance EQ and SQ with age but it does not occur by itself and needs efforts to increase these intelligences.

In most cases, SQ takes the longest to develop. One needs to be conscious and dwell on awareness to commence the journey to enhance SQ. As SQ begins to develop, EQ also grows, which in turn supports enhancement of SQ. A certain degree of

EQ is necessary for SQ to develop. SQ boosts EQ and virtuous cycle is formed.

People with high SQ feel more fulfilled, finding deeper meaning and purpose of their lives. They operate from positivism, put in their best efforts, deriving joy in helping others and improving the society by using a higher dimension of intelligence. Since they are able to employ their IQ and EQ better, they are creative, adding value to own others' lives.

### Misconception on Spirituality

Most of the people are overwhelmed with the notion that embracing spirituality would impel us to denounce the material world, near and dear ones, and proceed to mountains or jungles and engage in rigorous routine of praying and meditating the whole day long. It is far from truth. Nothing precludes a man from embracing spirituality while leading a normal life of a house holder.

### Embarking on a Spiritual Journey

Awareness to awakening kindles the desire to engender a shift in our thoughts. People may surely and gradually move from mundane way of life to a spiritual one. Draper, Brian (2009) states that "when it comes to embarking on a spiritual journey towards becoming more fully human, it is tempting to dream 'big' and it is good to want to change the world single-handedly; and change will only come about when we begin to demonstrate the positive benefits in our own lives. So we need to change our own world first. It is better to start small and change something - than to dream so big that you change nothing".

### Spiritual Values

Buzan, Tony (2001) and Switzer, Bob (2011) emphasise that certain spiritual values are manifested in the behaviour of people who develop their SQ, in varying degrees. Certain salient spiritual values are compassion, humility, forgiveness, gratitude, etc. If a person adopts and practises these spiritual values or qualities, transition can be made to higher consciousness of personal living and other spheres, leading to development of spiritual intelligence.

### Religion and Spirituality

Wigglesworth, Cindy (2012), defines **religion** as "a specific set of beliefs and practices, usually based on sacred text, and represented by a community of people".

Some people may high on SQ through following a religious beliefs and practices, others may be high on SQ being atheists. Contrarily, many people, though religious, are low on SQ. Draper, Brian. (2009) believes that "overly religious people are not always the most spiritual." There may or may not be a positive correlation between SQ and religion.

Zohar, Danah (2000) professes that "conventional religion is an externally imposed set of rules and beliefs. It is inherited from priests and prophets and holy books, or absorbed through the family and tradition. SQ is an internal, innate ability of the human brain and psyche, drawing its deepest resources from the heart of the universe itself.

Spiritual intelligence is the soul's intelligence. It is the intelligence with which we heal ourselves and with which we make ourselves whole. SQ is not culture-dependent or value –

dependent. SQ is prior to all specific value and to any given culture. It is prior to any form of religious expression that it might take. SQ makes religion possible (perhaps even necessary), but SQ does not depend upon religion".

Sponville, Andre Comte (2006) has logically argued that "People can do without religion but they cannot do without communion, fidelity and love. Nor can they do without spirituality. Atheists have as much spirit as everyone else; why would they be less interested in spiritual life? Being an atheist by no means entails being amnesiac. Humanity is one: both religion and irreligion are part of it; neither is sufficient unto themselves. Spirituality is far too important a matter to be left to fundamentalists".

Bowell, Richard A. (2005) has drawn a distinction among the three Qs stating that "IQ is the intelligence that seeks to understand the "what", EQ is the intelligence that seeks to understand the "how", and SQ is the intelligence that seeks to understand the "why" of things.

### Quality of Life (QoL)

As per Wikipedia ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quality\\_of\\_life](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quality_of_life)), the quality of life refers to general wellbeing of individuals and societies. The term is used in a wide range of contexts. Quality of life should not be confused with the concept of [standard of living](#), which is based primarily on income. Instead, standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment, but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging.

Quality of Life (QoL) is relatively a newer concept in the field of Organisational Behaviour (OB). It is yet to receive due care and attention. QoL is a difficult area to define, as it is impacted by a number of factors which themselves may be ill-defined, inter-related and to some extent overlapping and interdependent. Also QoL means degree of excellence of one's life that contributes to benefit to the person himself and the society at large.

Motives are arranged along a hierarchy. Those needs which have the greatest potency at any given time dominate behavior, affect quality of one's life and demand satisfaction. The behavior and QoL of a person depends upon the fulfillment of needs and motives throughout one's life.

QoL can be categorized into two factors and both these factors directly or indirectly affect the QoL of a person :-

(a) Satisfactory conditions include aspects such as:-

- (i) Group cohesiveness.
- (ii) Sharing of each other's experiences.
- (iii) Helping attitude.
- (iv) Understanding and sharing each other's problems.
- (v) Absence of conflict among members or type of relationship among members e.g. husband-wife, mother-father, parent-children, siblings etc;
- (vi) Absence of mental and physical illness.

(b) Satisfying conditions. Include factors such as:-

- (i) A sense of belongingness.
- (ii) Presence of positive attitude.
- (iii) Subjective feelings of physical, mental, psychological, social and spiritual well-being.

(iv) Absence of unhappy experiences.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### Objective of Study

The objective is to establish a relationship between SQ and QoL.

### Rationale of study

Rationale of this study is twofold; one, to explore if QoL can be improved by enhancing SQ, and second, there is gap in knowledge in this sphere in the government organisations.

### Hypothesis

The hypothesis is that SQ will positively relate to QoL.

### Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is confined to the officers of the government organisations.

### Sample

The sample constitutes 303 officers from the government organisations, given in **Table 2**, as under:-

**Table 2 : Sample**

Level	Males	Females	Total
Senior	81	0	81
Middle	159	27	186
Junior	33	3	36
Total	273	30	303

**Table 3 : ScalesTools**

The questionnaires to scale EQ, SQ and QoL, as depicted in Table 3 below have been utilised:-

Questionnaire	SQ scale	EQ scale	QoL scale
Developed by	Husain, Akbar (2011)	Sharma, Ekta (2011)	Dubey, BL (2011)
Items	31	60	20
Factors	2	5	2
Scale	Likert (5 to 1)	Likert (5 to 1)	Likert (5 to 1)
Reliability	.84 & .82	Highly reliable	.58 & .87

### Procedure

The questionnaires were administered to the participants and responses quantified.

### Statistical Tools

SPSS software was applied to the following data for analyzing the data, given in Table 4:-.

**Table 4 : Parameters**

Parameter	N	Minimu	Maximu	Mea
Age (years)	300	23	56	39.6
Service (years)	300	0.3	34	16.3
QQ	303	58	97	82.3
SQ	303	70	126	91.2
Valid N (listwise)	300			

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Inter alia, three findings are discussed below:-

(a) **SQ and Age.** Not in all, but in most of the cases, it was found that officers in higher age brackets had relatively higher SQ as compared the younger group. This fact has also been substantiated by Wigglesworth, Cindy (2012). It may be positively reasoned that with age, job requirements and rigours of life, the officers in the higher age bracket are able to develop better EQ which supports development of SQ. Also, they begin to indulge in certain spiritual practices, leading to better SQ.

(b) **Gender Comparison : SQ.** It was observed that SQ was comparable for both, male and the lady officers, with that of the males being very slightly higher. It is probably because males generally go through more rigours in the government organisations than their counterparts. Loss and adverse situations bring a man closer to Higher Powers controlling the universe.

(c) **SQ and QoL.** QoL was higher in most of the cases where SQ was high. It can be pragmatically discussed that officers with higher SQ view life in a broader perspective, not relating to physical comforts alone. They relate to the entire spectrum of human experience with the backdrop of pleasant and difficult moments.

### Recommendations to Improve SQ

Since SQ positively impacts QoL, it is imperative that we live a fulfilling and satisfying life by enhancing SQ because that is the underpinning factor. The brain is wired for SQ but it remains dormant and needs to be activated. It takes effort and time to develop SQ but it is worth the effort realizing its benefits. Some of the methods available are discussed in the succeeding text.

(a) **Meditation.** Several methods are available for meditation. One may choose that suits him the best. If much time cannot be invested in meditation, duration of 20 minutes is considered to be optimal. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar asserts that meditation improves and balances physical, mental, emotional and spiritual spheres of a man.

(b) **Prayers.** For those who believe in God, prayer includes respect, love, pleading and faith. Through a prayer a

devotee endows the doer ship of the task to God. Giving the doer ship to God means that we acknowledge that God is helping us and getting the task done. Prayer is an important tool of spiritual practice in the generic spiritual path of devotion. Prayer reduces worry and enhances contemplation.

**(c) Tools to Empower.** One may choose any tool to enhance his SQ and QoL, for it will lead him to satisfying and purposeful life. Among others, **Reiki** is a simple and easy - to - learn technique for better life and pleasant experiences.

**(d) Observance of Spiritual Values / Qualities.** A dual approach may be of enormous benefit for spiritual seekers. One, SQ may be enhanced by the techniques stated above and then manifest the spiritual values in day to day behaviour. Second, consciously, practise the spiritual values / qualities in everyday life and increase the SQ, leading to a positive virtuous spiral.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Human life is the greatest gift that the God or that Infinite Energy bestows upon us. We ought to respect and love it, making the most of it. We being spiritual beings going through human experience, are obliged to develop our spiritual intelligence (SQ), living the highest quality of life (QoL).

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