CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Today the world is becoming more and more competitive. Quality of performance has become the main goal in all endeavors throughout life. Parents’ expectation on their wards’ performance is as high a level as possible. This desire for a high level of achievement creates a lot of pressure on their wards, teachers, and schools and in general, on the total education system itself. In fact, the whole education system seems to revolve around the academic achievement of students, though various other outcomes are also expected from the system. So, most of the schools spend a lot of time and energy by adapting different strategies to help the students to achieve better in their scholastic performance.

Educational researchers raise a number of questions on the academic achievement namely what are the factors improving the achievement in students? How far these identified factors contribute towards scholastic achievement? Many researches to find out answer to these and similar questions, obtained results at times complementing each other, but at times contradicting each other. A complete clear-cut solution has not been given so far by the researchers.

In the past mostly academic success has been investigated with relation to cognitive processes (including intelligence) and personality factors. A clear understanding of the factors contributing to academic success has extensive possible applications for developing programs for students who are facing academic failure. Recently, the predictive validity of Emotional Intelligence for academic success has received a great deal of attention.
Humphrey et al. (2007) suggested that cognitive and emotional processing cannot be separated, and that emotional processing is an important component of rational thought, as long as the emotions are not in excess.

Much of the research on academic success has focused on the influence of cognitive factors. Cognition is not a unitary construct; it refers to a wide range of mental processes that allow us to interpret information in our environment.

However, these processes are often interdependent, and include perception, attention, memory, learning, language, problem solving, and decision making. When assessing the influence of cognitive ability on academic performance, one of the most common measures used is a standardized intelligence test. Not surprisingly, several researchers have found that intelligence has been found to successfully predict academic success (Busato et al., 2000; Neisser et al., 1996; Ridgell, and Lounsbury, 2004). Neisser et al. (1996) found that intelligence alone could account for 25% of the variance in academic achievement and concluded that intelligence scores were the single best predictor of academic success.

Researchers have also identified learning style as an important predictor of academic success. Hudak and Anderson (1990) found that using an abstract conceptualization learning style led to greater success in statistics and computer science courses, relative to three other learning styles (concrete experience, active experimentation, and reflective observation).
Additionally, **Busato et al. (2000)** found that individuals identified as using an undirected learning style (i.e., the individual has difficulty in distinguishing important from unimportant information) had greater difficulty in academic settings.

Other researchers have measured other aspects of cognitive processes (e.g., verbal ability, working memory, and processing speed) to better understand their influence on academic performance. **Barchard (2003)** found that verbal ability alone accounted for 9.2% of the variance in predicting academic success.

**Colom et al. (2007)** conducted a wide battery of cognitive measures and found that academic success was related to short-term memory, working memory, processing speed, and attention. In spite of the wide array of operational definitions of cognitive ability, it is clear (and not surprising) that cognitive ability is a critical component to academic success, while **Neisser (1996)** suggests that traditional intelligence scores are the best predictor of academic success.

**Duckworth and Seligman (2005)** found that self-discipline was a better predictor than intelligence. Many researchers have found that personality factors play a significant role in predicting academic success (**Colom et al., 2007; Van Der Zee, Thijs, and Schakel, 2002**). Most of personality researches, including how it relates to academic performance, has focused on the Big Five Personality Factors (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness). Of those five factors, research has found that two contribute to predicting academic success: Emotional Stability (opposite of Neuroticism) and Conscientiousness.
**Lauer and Evans (1930)** were among the first researchers to suggest that emotional stability may be related to academic success. The factor of Neuroticism refers to an individual’s tendency to experience negative emotions. Individuals who score high on measures of neuroticism tend to be easily upset and frequently experience negative emotions (e.g., anger, depression, anxiety). Scoring high on measures of neuroticism also makes it more difficult for these individuals to think clearly and to engage in effective decision-making. Individuals at the other end of the spectrum demonstrate high levels of emotional stability. Specifically, these individuals tend to be less emotionally reactive, more calm, and they report lower levels of stress.

**Goleman (1995)** suggested that Emotional Intelligence can predict academic success better than traditional measures of intelligence. However, **Zeidner et al. (2002)** correctly pointed out that there has been insufficient research conducted to fully understand the impact that Emotional Intelligence may (or may not) have on academic success.

**Petrides et al. (2004)** examined the role of trait Emotional Intelligence on academic performance in individuals with low Intelligence Quotient (IQ) relative to individuals with high Intelligence Quotient. Results suggested that trait Emotional Intelligence was related to academic performance, but only in individuals with low Intelligence Quotient scores. Specifically, high trait Emotional Intelligence was more important for academic success in individuals with low Intelligence Quotient, whereas individuals with high Intelligence Quotient did not benefit academically as a result of high trait emotional intelligence.
Woitaszewski and Aalsma (2004) observed similar findings when assessing Emotional Intelligence and academic success in gifted adolescents. In this population, Emotional Intelligence did not predict academic success. More research is needed before the influence of Emotional Intelligence on academic performance can be fully assessed.

Some research has observed a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic success, above and beyond measures of cognitive ability and personality. However, Emotional Intelligence’s ability to predict academic success is generally weaker than other predictors, such as cognitive ability and personality.

Van Der Zee et al. (2002) observed that Emotional Intelligence was able to account for a small portion of the variance in academic performance. Along a similar vein, Bastian et al. (2005) examined the influence of emotional intelligence, cognitive ability, and personality factors on life skills.

The findings were similar to other research findings; when cognitive and personality factors were statistically controlled, Emotional Intelligence was only able to account for a small part of the variance.

The findings across these studies suggest that measures of Emotional Intelligence may not provide a significant level of predictive validity for academic success when cognitive and personality factors are controlled. It is unclear at this time whether Emotional Intelligence and academic success are not related, or if the lack of predictive validity is the result of measures of Emotional Intelligence that do not adequately assess the construct.
Although one's ability to successfully transit and adapt to new situations is not generally related to cognitive ability, ability to transition has important implications for academic success.

**Austin, Evans, Goldwater, and Potter (2005)** suggested that the ability to successfully adjust to these changes may be related to emotional intelligence.

**Austin et al. (2005)** examined the role of Emotional Intelligence and academic success in first year medical students. Emotional Intelligence scores were positively correlated to performance on the Health and Society examination during the first term, but not during subsequent terms.

However, Emotional Intelligence did not correlate with performance on any of the Biomedical Sciences examinations. These findings suggest that there may be some limited advantage for individuals with high Emotional Intelligence early in the program, but that advantage may quickly dissipate.

One of the potential benefits of developing a better understanding of the role of Emotional Intelligence in academic success is to develop programs to enhance an individual’s Emotional Intelligence. However, the term intelligence suggests that it is a stable and fixed trait (**Humphrey et al., 2007**).

The stability of Emotional Intelligence is further supported by the overlap between Emotional Intelligence and personality traits (**Bastian et al., 2005**), which are relatively stable throughout life. Thus, it is unclear whether Emotional Intelligence skills can be developed or modified.
One of the biggest obstacles with using measures of Emotional Intelligence to predict academic success is the question of the reliability and validity of these measures.

As the research in this area continues to progress and stronger measures of Emotional Intelligence are produced, there is potential to better understand and utilize the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic success.

In addition, current measures of Emotional Intelligence appear to tap into other factors such as personality and cognition. Thus, the existing measures do not accurately measure “pure” emotional intelligence, thus limiting our understanding of the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and academic success.

However, while Emotional Intelligence may contribute to academic success, the research in this area is still in its infancy, making it difficult to draw any strong conclusions. Frequently researchers find that Emotional Intelligence does not add to our ability to predict academic success beyond cognitive and personality factors.

There are two possible explanations for this finding:

a) Emotional Intelligence is not related to academic success, or
b) Emotional Intelligence is related to academic success.

To proceed in this direction, by studying emotional intelligence, multiple intelligence, socio economic status and academic achievement of the students at the school level in the Indian context may lead to draw a better conclusion on whether Emotional Intelligence may contribute to academic success and such study has high implications on the whole education system.
1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

School teachers and parents always have been concerned about children’s academic success and social adaptation both in and out of the classroom. The unchallenging classroom activities fail to develop emotionally matured and well behaved adolescents.

Students with emotional disturbances may lack self esteem, display poor social skills and experience troublesome interpersonal relationships with peers and with the administration. Their deficiency in academic performance compounds the problem raising the level of frustration for student and teacher.

The whole child/student has become the center of concern, not only his reasoning capacities, but also his creativity, emotions, and interpersonal skills. On the other hand lack of emotional maturity led to the development of neurotic behavior among the students.

Goleman (1995) claimed that Emotional Intelligence is at least as important as Intelligence Quotient (IQ) in predicting various forms of success and in some cases more important.

Low and Nelson (2004) claimed that Emotional Intelligence is the single most important influencing variable in personal achievement, career success, leadership and life satisfaction. They feel that an emotionally fit person should be able to identify, understand, experience, and express human emotions in a healthy and productive ways.

Thi Lam and Kirby (2002) found that overall Emotional Intelligence was related to performance in that higher Emotional Intelligence was associated with better scores on one measure of
cognitive performance and also emotional perception and emotional regulation uniquely explained individual cognitive-based performance over and beyond the level attributable to general intelligence. The relationship between Emotional Intelligence and individual cognitive performance was the major variable of interest.

Despite cognitive ability as measured by standardized tests, the students can experience as much variation in their performance. Certainly personality and environment factors play a part in this variability, but it is assumed that knowledge of cognitive abilities other than general intelligence (IQ) may also help to predict the successful outcomes of the students. Given mixed results within the available studies of Emotional Intelligence in school level students, it is clear that additional studies are needed to better understand the success and failures in the scholastic achievement of students other than Intelligence Quotient.

The Multiple Intelligences theory has been introduced by Howard Gardner (1983) and the Emotional Intelligence theory by Mayer and Salovey (1990) then by Goleman (1995). Intelligence Quotient (IQ) alone is no more the only measure for success; Emotional Intelligence, Social Intelligence, and luck also play a big role in a person’s success (Goleman, 1995).

The theory of Multiple Intelligences is not designed to fix problems on education but rather to support the implementation of goals for school improvements. A school based on this theory is never complete and it constantly needs to change to keep up with new challenges. The theory explains the need for cooperative learning and a performance-based curriculum to achieve levels of Multiple Intelligence.
It provides opportunities for the satisfying interplay among researchers and education leaders involved in the field. Educators who thoughtfully use the theory to support their larger educational goals find that it is a worthy partner in creating schools of excellence. Therefore, there is a great need to study the Emotional Intelligence and the multiple intelligence affect at the school level.

After reviewing the literature, it has been found that less work has been done in this field in India on Emotional Intelligence and multiple intelligence affect at the school level.

This study would reveal significant trend as to the degree and extent of predictability and relationship of Emotional Intelligence and multiple intelligence at the school level with other variables and will motivate the educationists and curriculum framers to design academic as well as other activities in a way that these will help the students to poster the ability to face challenges of life right from the school stage.

With this view, the present study aims at exploring the interrelationships among emotional intelligence, multiple intelligence, socio economic status and academic performance of higher secondary students.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study has been worded as: “A STUDY ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE, SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS”.
1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The key terms used in the study have been defined to attain greater precision and clarity. The operational definitions of such terms are given below:

1.4.1 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE


1.4.2 MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE

Multiple Intelligence in this study is defined in terms of the score of the students in the Armstrong, Thomas. (2000). Multiple Intelligence in the Classroom: *Child’s Multiple intelligence Quotient Inventory*. Alexandria, Va. Association for Supervision and Curriculum development.

1.4.3 SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS (SES)

Socio Economic Status (SES) is a measure of an individual or family's relative economic and social ranking. SES is constructed based on father’s education level, mother’s education level, father’s occupation, mother’s occupation, family income, religion, community, and size of the family.
1.4.4 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Dictionary of Education (Good, 1959), defines academic achievement as” The knowledge attained or skills developed in school subject, usually determined by test scores or by marks assigned by teacher or both”

Academic achievement is defined in this study as the percentage of the marks attained by students in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examination (2006-2007).

1.4.5 HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

Higher Secondary Students in the TamilNadu school system are students attending standards XI and XII in the schools recognized by the Government of TamilNadu from 1978-80 onwards. In the context of the present study, students of standard XI of selected Higher Secondary Schools following the state syllabus in the Namakkal District are considered as higher secondary students.

1.5 INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

1.5.1 INDEPENDENT VARIABLES IN THE STUDY

The independent variables in this study are Emotional Intelligence, Multiple Intelligence and Socio Economic Status of the students.
Emotional Intelligence is studied with reference to its following dimensions.

a) Self regard  
b) Interpersonal Relationship  
c) Impulse Control  
d) Problem Solving  
e) Emotional Self Awareness  
f) Flexibility  
g) Reality Testing  
h) Stress tolerance  
i) Assertiveness and  
j) Empathy

Multiple Intelligence is measured in the following dimensions.

a) Verbal / Linguistic Intelligence  
b) Logical / Mathematical Intelligence  
c) Visual / Spatial Intelligence  
d) Bodily / Kinesthetic Intelligence  
e) Musical / Rhythmic Intelligence  
f) Interpersonal Intelligence  
g) Intrapersonal Intelligence and  
h) Naturalist Intelligence

The independent variables in this study also include the following personological variables

a) Sex  
b) Family Size  
c) Types of School
d) Locality  
e) Group of Study  
f) Father’s Education  
g) Mother’s Education  
h) Monthly Income of the Family  
i) Community  
j) Birth order and  
k) Compositions of Children  

1.5.2 DEPENDENT VARIABLE IN THE STUDY

The dependent variable in this study is academic achievement in the Secondary School Leaving Certificate (SSLC) examination (2006-2007).

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to investigate the possible association between each of the independent variables selected for the study and the dependent variable. The main objective is spelt out as given below.

a) To Study the Emotional Intelligence of the Higher Secondary Students.

b) To Study the Multiple Intelligence of the Higher Secondary Students.

c) To Study the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Multiple Intelligence of the Higher Secondary Students.

d) To find out if there is any significant difference in Emotional Intelligence among the sub samples based on the selected variables.
1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The elaboration of the objective has lead to the following research questions, answers to which will help achieve the objective of the study.

a) Is there any difference between boys and girls in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

b) Is there any difference between Rural, Urban and Hill area students in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

c) Is there any difference between students studying in Government, Aided and Unaided schools in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

d) Is there any difference between students belonging to different communities namely Backward Class, Most Backward Class, Scheduled Caste, and Scheduled Tribes in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

e) Is there any influence of family size of the subject (less than or equal to 4 and above 4 members) in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

f) Is there any difference between students belonging to different groups of study (Mathematics / Science / Arts / Vocational) in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

g) Is there any influence of the educational level of father (Illiterate / School / College) on Emotional Intelligence and also on Multiple Intelligence of the students?
h) Is there any influence of the educational level of mother (Illiterate/School/College) on Emotional Intelligence and also on Multiple Intelligence of the students?

i) Is there any influence of family income of the subjects (less than Rupees 2000, from Rupees 2000 to Rupees 5000, greater than Rupees 5000) in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

j) Is there any influence of the birth order of the subjects in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

k) Is there any influence of different composition of children of the subjects (all boys/all girls/both) in the family of the subject in their Emotional Intelligence and also in Multiple Intelligence?

1.8 ASSUMPTIONS

For this study, the following assumptions are made

a) The sample selected for the study responded accurately to all measures used in this study.

b) The data were accurately recorded and analyzed

c) The sample selected for this study represents the population.

1.9 HYPOTHESES

Answers to the research questions are sought through the tenability of the following hypotheses based on empirical evidences obtained through the administration of the relevant tools to measure the variables.