CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problem

Man is a social being. His dependency on others is inevitable. It would be difficult for him to satisfy even his basic needs like food, shelter and clothing in isolation. This interdependence of human beings, in turn necessitates the development and maintenance of healthy interpersonal relationships. Maintaining good relationship with others thus becomes crucial for successful societal functioning.

Social interactions play a major role in relationship building. The kind of relationship one develops with others is determined by their behaviour in interpersonal situations. Though the ability to understand other people – their thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions- and then to interact effectively with them is considered a valuable asset for social living, it is found in people in varying degrees. Some people prosper in a variety of social situations. They seem to be comfortable even under the most awkward social conditions. They can easily interact with other people from different backgrounds, ages, cultures and social strata and are also able to make others around them feel relaxed and comfortable. Whereas some others, though may possess strong intellectual abilities, seem to struggle in situations involving social interactions. They find it very difficult to master social skills which enable them to interact successfully with other people. This ability of an individual to "get along" with others successfully is recognized as a specific type of intelligence called ‘Social Intelligence’.

The idea that Social Intelligence is different from other intellectual process, such as academic skills was first presented by Thorndike in 1920. He depicted human intelligence as consisting of 3 facets: Abstract, Mechanical and Social Intelligence. Thorndike (1920) defined Social Intelligence as the ability to understand others
and act wisely in human relations. His reference to Social Intelligence included three elements—the individual’s attitude towards society such as Politics, Economics, Science and values such as honesty, social knowledge such as well-versed in contemporary issues and general knowledge about the society, and the individual’s capacity for social adjustment such as interpersonal relations and family bonding. Thorndike, thus opened the field of inquiry on Social Intelligence.

Since 1920 research on Social Intelligence has often waxed and waned for various reasons. Difficulties in measuring Social Intelligence and confusions regarding its underlying mechanisms existed. High correlations found between measures of Social Intelligence and measures of IQ made psychologists to think that there may be no real difference between academic and social talents. This was a major reason Social Intelligence research was largely abandoned. But, interest in the construct has recently resurfaced with the pioneering work of Goleman (2006). He stated that Social Intelligence has become ripe for rethinking with the more recent emergence of Social Neuroscience which begins to map the brain areas that regulate interpersonal dynamics. According to Goleman, the high correlation between current tests of Social Intelligence and measures of IQ was due to the skewed definition of Social Intelligence that it is simply cognitive ability applied to social arena. He has suggested that besides the high-road abilities like social cognition, Social Intelligence also calls on low-road functions like synchrony and attunement, social intuition and empathic concern and the impulse for compassion. He argues that what makes a person intelligent in social life encompass these too.

Over the past years, researches on Social Intelligence suggest how it is linked with everything from workplace success and student achievement to general well-being and health (Bar-On, 2005; Druskat, Sala & Mount 2006). Investigations have shown
that persons having high level of Social Intelligence are able to meet the demands of everyday functioning and are equipped to handle participation and responsibility for their own welfare and of others. According to Cantor and Kihlstrom (1987), Social Intelligence is specifically geared to solving the problems of social life, and in particular managing the life tasks, current concerns or personal projects which the person selects for him or herself, or which other people impose on him or her from outside. Goleman (1995) and Jones and Day (1997) consider Social Intelligence as the key element in what makes people succeed in life. Buzan (2002) has stated that Social Intelligence is vital if we are to get on in life and enjoy ourselves.

Even though studies have revealed the importance of nourishing relationships, today's world is witnessing social corrosion. Individuals often fail to develop healthy connections with their fellowmen. It seems as if they don’t care for others. People just walk away even when they see others in danger. Such incidents are being increasingly reported day by day. All these present day trends unravel the fact that it is high time to work on their Social Intelligence.

Today’s society focuses more on personal benefits than the overall social well-being. This outlook has to be changed. Life becomes truly worth living only when there is happiness and satisfaction. Good quality relationships are one of the strongest sources of such feelings. These types of relationships have beneficial impact on one’s health, while toxic ones can act like slow poison in our bodies (Albrecht, 2005). People must learn to develop nourishing relationships, for it is the single most universally agreed-upon feature of good life.

It is very essential to assist the young generation to master the skills and competencies of Social Intelligence and is not wise to
expect that children will learn these skills by themselves out of their own personal experiences in social interactions. The relentless technocreep is a barrier for the young generation to have such experiences. They mostly rely on mobile phones and internet facilities for interacting with others. But these facilities restrict face-to-face contact. Technology offers more varieties of nominal communication in actual isolation. These trends signal the slow vanishing of opportunities for people to connect. Goleman (2006) has rightly pointed out that the inexorable technocreep is so insidious that no one has yet calculated its social and emotional costs. Therefore, deliberate efforts have to be put in to help children learn to survive and prosper in the maelstrom of social interactions and life, and the major step towards this goal is to teach them the power of Social Intelligence.

The Institute of Noetic Sciences (IONS) has engaged in a decade of research to document personal and global transformation. Insights and conclusions from their research point out that humans appear to be uniquely endowed with the capacity for large scale cooperation through stable relationships and reciprocity. "The capacity comes from having the brain circuitry to adopt the perspective of another, which can further promote empathy and altruism. We also have a sophisticated lymbic system involved in social bonding and loving one another. As a result humans have a natural capacity to be compassionate, cooperative, loving and altruisc" (IONS, 2007). Hence, it can be concluded that human beings have the innate capacity to make connections with other people and the only task left is its proper nurturance.

It has been deemed that education is the best means to lead forth the hidden talents of man. It involves the process of providing the required knowledge and experiences to an individual so as to develop his inner powers to the maximum possible extent. Therefore, educational institutions can play a major role in the
development of the individual as well as the society.

Schools are one of the key agencies that can help redress society’s most fundamental problems like social corrosion. They are constantly engaged in the task of moulding the character and personality of the future citizens. They can help in developing a sense of social conscience in the young and can provide them opportunities to learn adequate skills and competencies for better social functioning. Thus, efforts at school level can definitely contribute to building of a socially intelligent world.

1.2 Need and Significance

The social nature of human beings exemplifies the importance of a child’s social development. The social world of a child comprises of his home, school and neighbourhood; but as the child grows up his social world becomes more and more wide and complex. If only he acquires necessary social skills and sensitivities essential for the formation of healthy interpersonal relationships, he can lead an active and successful social life in later years. A world where people can effectively handle their relationship with others would be a better place to live. Therefore, we need to nurture a child’s ability to relate successfully with the wider world or simply, their Social Intelligence.

Social Intelligence is the capacity to effectively navigate and negotiate complex social relationships and environments. It requires having the ability to understand the emotional and social cues of others, learning how to regulate one's own emotions, and being able to express adequately to others. According to Reber and Reber (2001) Social Intelligence concerns how individuals perceive, recall, think about and interpret information about the actions of themselves and others. Thus, by increasing social Intelligence it is possible to overcome stagnation and deterioration in a person’s capacity to get along with others.
Researches have shown that Social Intelligence has stunning implications in the life of an individual. In many fields today, emphasis placed on interpersonal relationships in various work environments is itself a reflection of the significance of Social Intelligence. Experimental evidence of the studies conducted by Hooda, Sharma and Yadava (2009) suggested that Social Intelligence bears a significant positive relationship with one's positive psychological health. Gilbert (1995), Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor and Mumford (1991) have stressed the importance of Social Intelligence in enabling leaders to be effective.

A person who has high degrees of Social Intelligence is able to converse readily and easily with all sorts of people in all sorts of situations. Like ripples in a pond, or waves and wavelets in a sea, conflicts are inevitable realities in life situations. Social Intelligence helps an individual in the successful handling of conflicting situations. Hackworth and Brannon (2006) pointed out that Social Intelligence of a person has a positive impact on his social influence effectiveness. Wawra (2009) argued that Social Intelligence is a necessary prerequisite for being a successful intercultural communicator.

The success generated by possessing Social Intelligence skills is also reflected in schools. "The American Psychological Society reported the results of tests done with 1011 children that showed those children who were able to read body language were among the most emotionally stable, did better in academic subjects, and were the most popular" (Buzan, 2002).

Goleman (2006) pointed out that socially intelligent children feel more connected to school since they are able to build concrete emotional links with all others at school. It was also revealed that students who feel connected to teachers, to other students and to the school itself do better academically. They are also found to
exhibit lower rates of violence, bullying and vandalism, drug use, suicide and dropping out.

Social Intelligence has a significant influence on many areas of student development. But, now a days children exhibit a low level of Social Intelligence. The rapid growth of population and the advancement of Science and technology have made the social structure and social living more complex than ever before. Today’s children are not getting ample opportunities for learning necessary competencies for effective social interaction. In a world where relations with society and even family are being shrunken in to a molecular form, where a child’s social interaction limits to his parents, Social Intelligence can hardly develop.

Children who fail to develop appropriate Social Intelligence competencies often continue to experience problems in later life. Various studies have demonstrated a link between childhood difficulties with social interaction and later problems in adulthood, such as persistent anxiety and depression. In extreme cases, inappropriate social interactions can lead to complete social rejection. Goleman (1995) pointed out, people who fail to follow the unspoken rules of social harmony “inevitably leave disturbance in their wake”. It has also been reported that a child’s ability to engage in socially skilled interactions is related to the successful development of a range of cognitive processes (Plummer, 2008). Clearly, it is important to help children to enhance their Social Intelligence so that they can negotiate social situations, connect with others and form appropriate friendships in ways that are suitable for their current developmental level and learning abilities.

Middle childhood is a time when children develop competence in interpersonal and social relationships. The years from nine to twelve, mark significant changes in the child’s social relationships (Ranganathan, 2006). Erikson (1968) suggested that during school
age (6 to 11 years) children need to cope with new social and academic demands. Success leads to a sense of competence, while failure results in feelings of inferiority. Emotional and social changes during this period include more independence from parents and family, stronger sense of right and wrong, beginning awareness of the future, growing understanding about one’s place in the world, more attention to friendships and teamwork and growing desire to be liked and accepted by friends. Cognitive changes include rapid development of mental skills, greater ability to describe experiences and talk about thoughts and feelings and less focus on one’s self and more concern for others. Therefore, the investigator felt that this is a critical time for nurturing Social Intelligence of children. Moreover, the social skills learned during this period would provide a necessary foundation for the challenges of adolescence.

India is witnessing incidents of juvenile delinquency. Reports show that the problem of student aggression and crimes like ragging, theft and even murder is increasing day by day among school children. Therefore a study concerning Social Intelligence among school children is highly relevant in India especially in Kerala.

The investigator’s previous experience as a teacher also pointed out the ardent need for enhancing Social Intelligence of students. Students were found to possess low level of social skills. Their behaviour in interpersonal situations was hardly satisfactory. The investigator interacted with some primary school students and found that most of them were unaware of Social Intelligence competencies and its benefits.

The investigator conducted discussions with selected primary school teachers and came to know that at present there is no provision at school level for fostering Social Intelligence of children.
It was also revealed that though teachers are aware of the need and significance of nourishing Social Intelligence of students, they are ignorant of the ways to do so.

Several studies conducted in India as well as abroad have undoubtedly established the significance of Social Intelligence education among children. Babu (2007) recommended the development and implementation of well arranged Social Intelligence oriented packages in schools so as to improve Social Intelligence and reduce Aggression level of the students. Blaise and Elizabeth (1993) have also suggested education and training of this massively important intelligence.

All of the above mentioned factors channeled the investigator to carry out the present study focussing on the enhancement of Social Intelligence—an essential ingredient for the survival of human species.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Education is the process of human enrichment for the achievement of higher and better quality life. Our educational system at present focuses mainly on students’ academic performance and virtually no emphasis is given for their social and emotional development. It is worthy to note that academic achievements alone would not guarantee a quality life for a child. Children need to master necessary social skills and competencies for leading an active and successful social life.

The social set up like the joint family system prevailed during early days greatly contributed to the social and emotional development of the young. Hence in those days, a content oriented curriculum was not a matter of concern. But now the situation has changed. The society follows a nuclear family system within which both the parents are busily engaged in their careers. The number of broken families is also increasing these days. In such a situation, it
is the sole responsibility of our educational system to make provisions for the overall development of the child. Educational institutions should help children to develop an insight into human relationships, attitudes and habits conducive for the all round development of their personality. Therefore, our schools should deliver adequate programs for fostering necessary skills and abilities in children.

The present study focuses on strategies for improving Social Intelligence of primary school students. Here the problem under investigation is entitled as ‘DEVELOPING A PACKAGE FOR ENHANCING SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE OF STUDENTS AT PRIMARY LEVEL’.

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms used in this study are briefly explained below.

Package

Package refers to a set of related programs for a particular task. For the present study, it means properly planned instructions and activities intended to enhance Social Intelligence of students.

Social Intelligence

Social Intelligence is defined as the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts and behaviours of persons in social or interpersonal situations and to act appropriately based on that understanding (Marlowe, 1986). For the present study, Social Intelligence is defined as the ability to handle social relationships wisely and effectively and includes 5 dimensions – social knowledge, social understanding, social memory, prosocial attitude and social skills.

Students at Primary Level

Students at primary level include those attending any one of the educational standards ranging from I to VII. Standards I to IV
come under the lower primary category and V to VII come under the upper primary category. For the present study, students from upper primary level are considered. As a representative of the students from upper primary level, VI$^{th}$ Standard students are selected for this study.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

The hypotheses set for the study are,

1. There is no significant difference in the existing level of Social Intelligence of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of School (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of Management of School (Aided/Govt)

2. The level of Social Intelligence of primary school students after the implementation of the prepared package will be significantly higher than that of before.

3. The level of Study Skills of primary school students after the implementation of the prepared package will be significantly higher than that of before.

4. The level of Aggression of primary school students after the implementation of the prepared package will be significantly lower than that of before.

5. There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of Social Intelligence Enhancement Package (SIEP) on enhancing Social Intelligence of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of School (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of Management of School (Aided/Govt)
6. There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of Social Intelligence Enhancement Package (SIEP) on enhancing Study Skills of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of School (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of Management of School (Aided/Govt)

7. There is no significant difference in the effectiveness of Social Intelligence Enhancement Package (SIEP) on reducing Aggression of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of School (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of Management of School (Aided/Govt)

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are,

1. To analyse the perception of teachers on
   a) the existing level of Social Intelligence of primary school students.
   b) the need for enhancing Social Intelligence of primary school students.

2. To identify the existing level of Social Intelligence of primary school students.

3. To compare the existing level of Social Intelligence of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of school (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of management of school (Aided/Government)
4. To develop a package for enhancing Social Intelligence of primary school students.

5. To find out the effect of the prepared package on Social Intelligence of primary school students.

6. To find out the effect of the prepared package on Study Skills of primary school students

7. To find out the effect of the prepared package on Aggression of primary school students.

8. To compare the effectiveness of the prepared package on enhancing Social Intelligence of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of school (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of management of school (Aided/Govt)

9. To compare the effectiveness of the prepared package on enhancing Study Skills of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
   a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
   b) Locale of school (Rural/Urban)
   c) Type of management of school (Aided/Govt)

10. To compare the effectiveness of the prepared package on reducing Aggression of primary school students belonging to different subgroups based on
    a) Gender (Boys/Girls)
    b) Locale of school (Rural/Urban)
    c) Type of management of school (Aided/Govt)

1.7 Methodology in Brief

Methodology involves the procedure adopted for the
realization of the objectives of the study. It is briefly described below.

For the study, both survey and experimental methods were used. Using survey method, the perception of primary school teachers on the existing level of Social Intelligence of primary school students and their perception on the necessity of enhancing Social Intelligence of students were found out. The data was collected randomly from a sample of 150 primary school teachers from different districts of Kerala, using Teacher Perception Questionnaire (Prepared by the investigator). Survey method was also used to find out the existing level of Social Intelligence of primary school students. For this a sample of 800 primary school students were selected based on gender, locale and type of management of schools from different districts of Kerala using stratified random sampling technique. Social Intelligence Test (Prepared and Standardised by the investigator) was the tool employed for this purpose.

Experimental method was utilised for testing the effectiveness of the prepared Social Intelligence Enhancement Package (SIEP). The investigator tested the effectiveness of SIEP with respect to Social Intelligence, Study Skills and Aggression of primary school students. The experimental design adopted was single group pretest posttest design. Exposure to SIEP was the independent variable and Social Intelligence, Study Skills and Aggression were the dependent variables selected for the study.

For experimentation, the investigator selected a random sample of 160 primary school students from selected schools of Alapuzha, Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts of Kerala. The tools and materials used for the experimental part were the Social Intelligence Enhancement Package (developed and validated by the investigator), Social Intelligence Test (Prepared and standardised by the investigator), Study Skills Inventory (Prepared and standardised
by the investigator) and Aggression Scale (Bhardwaj, 2008).

The major statistical techniques employed for the study were the following.

1. Descriptive statistics like mean, median, standard deviation, quartile deviation, skewness and kurtosis
2. Percentages
3. Standard error and confidence interval of the sample statistics
4. Chi-square test
5. Test of significance of difference between the means of two independent groups
6. Test of significance of difference between two correlated means (Single Group)
7. Analysis of co-variance

1.8 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The present study is an earnest attempt in the field of educational psychology to analyse the theoretical and practical significance of the construct ‘Social Intelligence’ among school children. The study enriches existing knowledge in the area.

The major aim of the present investigation was to develop a package for enhancing Social Intelligence of primary school students. Though many studies have been conducted on various aspects of Social Intelligence, studies focussing on its enrichment have been found very less in number. The package developed covers a broad range of enjoyable activities including games, discussions and stories for children aged 10-12. SIEP is beneficial for children in nourishing qualities that make them socially effective. Besides fostering successful social strategies for children, it is also helpful for adults to understand and encourage children’s social skills. It is
an ideal resource for teachers and all those working to improve the behaviour of children in interpersonal situations.

The activities included in SIEP assist students in enhancing their Study Skills. Moreover, the package is effective in reducing the level of student Aggression. Thus, SIEP enables students to become both “school smarts” and “people smarts”.

The Social Intelligence Test (SIT) developed for the present study is a reliable tool for assessing the Social Quotient of the primary school students of Kerala. The study reveals the present status of Social Intelligence of primary school students. It also indicates the opinion of primary school teachers with regard to the need for intervention programmes for increasing Social Intelligence of their students. The investigator hopes that the findings of the study would be much helpful for the concerned authorities for making refinements in the present educational system. It would provide adequate guidelines for teachers, parents, curriculum planners and policy makers in the field of education for improving the quality of education.

Despite the sincere efforts of the investigator to make the study flawless, constraints of time and resources have caused some inevitable limitations to creep in to the study.

The sample for the study is not a state-wide one. It is confined only to 3 districts of Kerala namely Alapuzha, Pathanamthitta and Kottayam. Also, the sample size of teachers and students selected for survey were limited to 150 and 800 respectively. If the sample size were bigger and selected from many more districts, the study would have produced more generalized results.

For the present study, the sample was delimited to upper primary school students. Nevertheless, the study included only VI\textsuperscript{th} standard students. It was presumed that standard VI being the
middle stage of upper primary education would adequately represent the characteristics of upper primary school students.

In order to study the group differences in the level of Social Intelligence, only gender, locale of school and type of management of school were considered. Other relevant factors like type of family and Socio economic status of parents were excluded.

In spite of the limitations mentioned above, all possible measures have been taken to evolve a study which is to a greater extent generalisable and comprehensive.

1.9 Organization of the Report

The report is presented in five chapters, the details are as follows.

Chapter 1 contains a brief introduction, need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, definition of key terms, hypotheses formulated, objectives, methodology in brief and scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a detailed theoretical overview of the study.

Chapter 3 gives a survey of related studies pertaining to the area under investigation.

Chapter 4 offers a detailed description of the methodology of the study. It includes the research design, variables used, sample selected, tools and materials employed and the statistical techniques adopted for analyzing the data.

Chapter 5 deals with analysis of data and interpretation of test results.

Chapter 6 provides the summary of procedures adopted for the study, conclusions based on major findings, educational implications and suggestions for further research.
**References**


