Leadership roles today are challenging particularly because we live in a knowledge economy and operate in the era of knowledge workers. Leadership success therefore depends largely on how the leader influences and mobilizes his people. The leader needs to touch hearts and channelize emotions to achieve extraordinary results.

In the context of effective human resource management, Emotional Intelligence (EI) is very essential to be a successful leader in the corporate world. This is also emphasized by leading authors and literature (e.g. Goleman, 1998b; Cherniss, 2000). For the purpose of the study on “EI and Leadership Styles” the researcher has selected Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited, Tiruchirapalli - one of India’s leading Public Sector Engineering Organizations located in Southern part of India. The population for the research is executives (N=1056) of the Unit. The thirty percent of sample (n=317) was drawn from the population using simple random sampling. The study is descriptive in nature. While EQ Map Questionnaire (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997) is used to measure EI, Leadership Profile Indicator (Pareek, 2002) is used to measure Leadership Styles and effectiveness. The EI Factors of the participants are presented in four levels – Proficient, Optimum, Vulnerable and Caution. The dominant and backup leadership styles and leadership effectiveness is presented. The relationship between the various demographic and the study variables is also described in detail.

The researcher has applied the statistical applications such as descriptive analysis, correlation, Chi-square, ANOVA, post-hoc and regression. Among the participants eighty
one per cent are male and nineteen per cent are female. The mean age of respondents is 45.57 years. Almost half of the respondents’ level of Total EI was at moderate level. Supportive and consulting are the dominant leadership styles of the participants. The mean Leadership Effectiveness Index is at 65.07. The dominant leadership style of the participants has significant association with several EI factors. Leadership Effectiveness of the respondents has significant association with several EI factors. Multiple regression analysis revealed that thirty seven percent of the variation in Leadership Effectiveness is explained by EI factors.

The results of the study have important ramifications for the theory and practice of emotional intelligence and leadership in the corporate sector. The findings confirm that supportive leadership style is an accepted and effective style for achieving the goals in the organization under study. The organization can plan to reinforce this finding in their training and development programmes. Since most of the EI factors have significant association with leadership effectiveness, it is assumed that EI is very essential for executives in the industrial world and knowledge economy. The contribution of EI to leadership effectiveness was thirty seven percent. Many EI Factors, leadership style and effectiveness have significant association with age, experience, sex and marital status. Among other things, the study suggests a robust and dynamic approach and guidelines for development of emotional intelligence for corporate executives.