

Teacher Education and Spiritual Intelligence

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Abstract:

Despite scientific and technological advancement and knowledge explosion, something seems to be lacking in the education system that leads to emergence of conflict, discontent and disharmony despite good education and equitable educational opportunities for all in the country. The role of teacher education emerges as crucial in this context as teacher educators are responsible for grooming future teachers who would develop the future citizens of the nation. The paper is a humble attempt at discussing the importance of spiritual intelligence in teacher education for a sustainable harmony and synergy in the society.

Keywords: teacher education, spiritual intelligence, reflection, environment, power, reflection.

Teachers are entrusted with the development of thousands of innocent impressionable young minds developing into the future citizens of the nation that must eschew conflict, violence, regressive dialogues and anarchy at all cost for sustainable development in the long run. Despite scientific and technological advancement and knowledge explosion, something seems to be lacking in the education system that leads to emergence of conflict, discontent and disharmony despite good education and equitable educational opportunities for all in the country. The role of teacher education emerges as crucial in this context as teacher educators are responsible for grooming future teachers who would develop the future citizens of the nation. So spiritual intelligence as a part of teacher education emerges as an undeniable need of the hour.

The term “Spiritual Intelligence” was coined and introduced by Donah Zohar in her book *Rewiring the Corporate Brain: Using the New Science to Rethink How We Structure and Lead Organisations* (1997). In the same year Ken O’Donnell, an Australian writer too introduced the term, “Spiritual Intelligence”. Later, along with Ian Marshall, Donah Zohar developed the concept and in 2000, Danah Zohar and Marshall published the book “SQ: Ultimate Intelligence”. Spiritual intelligence underpins Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

Zohar and Marshall introduced twelve components of spiritual intelligence which are as follows:

1. Self-Awareness: Knowing personal values, motivators and beliefs..
2. Spontaneity: Living in and being responsive to the shifting needs of the moment.
3. Values: Acting from principles and deep beliefs and living accordingly.
4. Holism: Seeing larger patterns, relationships, and connections; having sense of belongingness.
5. Compassion: Having the quality of empathy.
6. Celebration of diversity: Valuing other people for their differences, not despite them.
7. Field independence: Standing against the crowd and having one’s own convictions.
8. Humility: Having sense of being a player in a larger drama of one’s true place in the world.
9. Enquiry: Needing to understand things and get to the bottom of them.
10. Visualization: Standing back from a situation or problem and visualizing the wider context.

11. Positivity: Learning and growing from mistakes, setbacks and suffering.
12. Sense of vocation: Feeling called upon to serve, to give something back.

King(2008) proposed four core abilities or capacities of spiritual intelligence which include the following:

1. Critical Existential Thinking: The capacity to critically contemplate the nature of existence reality, the universe, space, time, and other existential issues and also the capacity to contemplate non-existential issues in relation to one's existence.
2. Personal Meaning Production: The ability to derive personal meaning and purpose from all physical and mental experiences, and the ability to create and strive towards a purpose of life.
3. Transcendental Awareness: The capacity to identify transcendent patterns of the self of others and of the physical world during normal states of consciousness, accompanied by the capacity to identify their relationship to the state of one's inner self and to the physical world.
4. Conscious State Expansion: The ability to enter and exit higher states of consciousness like pure consciousness, unity, synthesis and other states of trance as in deep contemplation, meditation, prayer, etc.

Levin (2000) proposed the development of spiritual intelligence requires a change in perception and intuitive understanding of the events which provides a new basis for behaviour modification. Problem solving and decision-making in variegated life situations are an indicator of spiritual intelligence. Zohar and Marshall (2000) proposed seven practical steps for a better Spiritual Quotient, which are as follows:

1. Become aware of the exact state of mind one has at a given moment.
2. Feel a strong desire for change
3. Reflect on one's deepest level of motivation
4. Discover and dissolve obstacles.
5. Explore many viable options and possibilities.
6. Commit oneself to a chosen path.
7. Remaining aware of the existence of many other paths while selecting and following a viable one.

Tony Buzan (2000) delineated ten ways of enhancing spiritual intelligence. They are:

1. Getting the greater perspective
2. Exploring one's own values and principles that leads to understanding of behaviour and exercises a huge impact on the amount of the success one achieves.
3. Clarity of vision and purpose in life that would give life a comprehensible meaning and direction.
4. Compassion and the ability of understanding oneself and others
5. Charity and Gratitude
6. The power to laugh which is important for spiritual intelligence as it helps in reducing the stress making an individual life healthier.
7. Juvenile innocence and joy increase with increase in spiritual intelligence.
8. The power of ritual that provides stability and opportunity for rejuvenation.
9. Peace and synergy achieved through techniques of contemplation and meditation.

Keeping the above dimensions in mind, teacher education at present may strive to promote the following areas conducive to spiritual intelligence that would, in its turn promote a culture of synergy and conflict

resolution, crucial for teacher trainees to understand if they intend to develop the future citizens of our nation effectively:

1. Fostering a democratic environment in the classroom
2. Spiritual Intelligence has moral and ethical dimensions and so student-teachers must be encouraged to take part in social welfare activities which will in return create the feeling of empathy, compassion, honesty and social welfare in them. In this way the student teachers would become sensitive to the social problems and their own responsibility in resolving the same.
3. Innovation and creativity must be nurtured in teacher education institutions. A highly spiritually intelligent individual has the quality to being creative and innovative in nature and thus the trainees should be given tasks that call for their creative thinking and innovation capacity. The teacher education institutes should develop an environment where there is ample scope for the trainees to brainstorm through any problem-solving activities. The tasks and teaching-learning strategies in the teacher education institutes should also promote critical thinking and decision making. They must be innovative in their approach towards teaching in the classroom making the classroom joyful and interesting for students.
4. A reflective journal to record personal introspection on teaching practices and thoughts lead to self-analysis and greater in-depth spiritual insight. All teacher education institutions should promote the development and use of self-reflective journals by both the teacher educators and the student-teachers. This also facilitates a clarity of perspective and paves the way to synergy and conflict resolution.
5. Fostering a positive working environment with minimal or no conflict. The administrative hierarchy as well as the students and educators must take active and proactive initiative in maintaining the same.
6. Development and promotion of interpersonal skills that pave the way for clear communication and avoidance of misunderstandings and conflicts.
7. Social construction and reconstruction of knowledge is of paramount importance. Collaborative social knowledge generation and reconstruction by all stake holders in a teacher education institute can ultimately promote spiritual intelligence among the the teacher and the taught.
8. Classrooms are essentially subject to a power hierarchy that disrupts or impedes democratic discourse and thus nurtures discontent, sense of privation, inequality and disharmony and rage. Thus dissolution of hierarchical relation and unequal power distribution in class should be avoided especially in teacher education institutions where future teachers to be entrusted with thousands of innocent lives, are groomed. Misuse of abuse of the hierarchical power relation in the teacher student relationship can be avoided if the practice of democratic discourse and dissolution of unjust top heavy power hierarchy is achieved in teacher education institutions.
9. Sharing of power and responsibility through collaborative activity and participatory decision making can promote spiritual intelligence among the teacher educators and future teachers as a whole.
10. The teacher education curriculum should have spiritual intelligence as an essential part.

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