Research Paper

Volume : 5 | Issue : 3 | March 2016 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179 | IF : 3.508 | IC Value : 69.48

Emotional Intelligenge and Women in Mahabharatha

Social Science

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

The Indian woman of today is no longer reconciled to her traditional role as a mere housewife, a mother or a daughter. They are now fiercely ambitious and are proving themselves not only on the home front, but also in their respective careers, education and in the society. Though the women are efficient multitaskers and posses impressive skills, they have to struggle physically, intellectually and emotionally to fulfill various needs and activities. Many working women aren't prepared to anticipate or handle the difficult challenges that are part of being working women. Each stage of working women- joining the job, marriage, preparing for the family way, raising children, taking care of elders at home brings in new set of difficulties and challenges. Many working women are surprised by the intensity of their emotions, bouts of frustrations & anger. If women is going to let her emotions get better of her, it will have a crushing impact on herself, people around her as well as on the organization. She should remember that she wield enough power in her hands to bring in lots of changes as emotions can be managed and dealt with effectively.

The concept of Emotional intelligence was popularized by Daniel Goleman but we Indians failed to see that emotional intelligence has been stressed in our epics. Bagavat gita , an intrinsic part of Mahabharatha teaches and imbibes several concepts of management and one such concept is Emotional Intelligence. Emotional intelligence is embedded in women characters of these Indian epics. This paper focuses on the emotional intelligence of only three women charecters of Mahabharata namely Satyavati, Kunti and Draupadi .

The Mahabharata , the Battle of Kurukshetra were the Pandavas and the Kauravas, and the people related to them, fight each other to death, brutally and cruelly, until the entire race is almost wiped out. It is a mega saga which comprises the essence of war, politics, religion, parenting, ethics and *Dharma.* The characters in the epic depict with the vitality of real life. Each character is an example of how the emotions can be constructive and destructive in the success of one's life. In Mahabharata the men waged war to exhibit jealousy, anger and power but it is the women who played vital role in decision making and also wielded power and influence. One gets an insight into the Emotional Intelligence of the women in Mahabharata especially Satyavati, Kunti and Draupadi as they with remarkable sagacity exercised their leadership skills and power.

Daniel Goleman who is said to be the founder of **Emotional Intelligence** defines it as "The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships."

Emotions can:

1).Help in generating multiple future plans (flexible planning);.
2).Improve the decision-making process due to a better understanding one's emotional responses (creative thinking);
3).Facilitate cognitive processes such as creativity on the one hand and punctuality on the other hand (mood redirected attention); and
4).Enhance persistence regarding challenging tasks (motivating emotions) (Salovey &Mayer, 1990).

Emotional Competencies are:

Personal Competence : Self Awareness and Self Management
Social Competence : Social Awareness and Relationship Management.

Women in Mahabharata exhibit emotional competencies which enumerate their complete control over their impulses and ability to think analyze and behave rationally in any adverse situations.

SATYAVATI

SELF MANAGEMENT

As a young maiden Satyavati illustrated evidence of high emotional intelligence. One day Sage Parashar asked her to ferry him to the other side of the river. While they were midstream, Parashar overcome with lust for Satyavati, expressed his desire to make love to her. She tried to dissuade him by giving logic arguments. But Parashar could not be persuaded. She was not afraid of the sage or what he had proposed for them to do. She displays an exceptional presence of mind in turning a horrific situation into an opportunity for herself. What lay before her was an opportunity to get what she wanted and man who could make it happen. She now started putting forth demands of increasingly ambitious nature. She consented to the demands of the Sage and exchanges sexual favor for eternal youth, a fragrance of her own, unimpaired virginity and an illustrious son, all the while making sure that the encounter between them remains a secret. Once the act is consummated both Parashar and Satyavati part ways never to meet again. Satyavati gives birth immediately and the baby grows to a fully grown man almost immediately. This man was Ved Vyas, the author of Mahabharat. Before he leaves, he tells his mother that should she ever need him, all she has to do is to think of him and he would come to help her with whatever she needed. So through this single rendezvous, Satyavati managed to turn her entire life around.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Later King Shantanu smitten by her beauty wanted to marry her. She insisted her blood alone to be the heir to the throne of Hastinapur as king already had a son called Devaratha. With that she became the cause for Prince Devaratha to turn to Bhishma. King Shantanu died leaving behind two sons. Unfortunately both the sons died in their youth without producing an heir to the throne. Satyavati was forced to push her grief to the side in order to find a new heir to the throne. She summoned her son Vyasa and ordered him to father a child through each of the two young widows. She displays a rare courage to accept to a mistake that she had made before marriage and the son she had abandoned many years ago that could salvage their situation now and secure the future heir of Hastinapur.

Satyavati to an extent succeeded in using her manipulative power and accomplished her objective. She never succumbed down to the pressure and emotions and like any man thought only of the welfare of the kingdom. Even under stressful situations she displayed stable mind.

KUNTI

SELF AWARENESS

Sage Durvasa, pleased with Kunti's(Daughter of king Sura) ser-

vice, taught her a mantra that will enable her to invoke any God of her choice and have a son born out of him. The unwed Kunti with a typical curious mind could not resist the temptation and invoked Sun God. Sun God blessed her with a son who later came to be known as Karna. Unwed Kunti took the heart breaking yet bold decision to set her new born child afloat in the river.

SELF MANAGEMENT

Kunti married king Pandu but at a very young age she became widow. Responsibility of bringing up the five Pandavas fell on Kunti. She stayed calm and humble while her children were growing up and lived in the shadow of caretaker turned King Dhirtrashtra and his bullying sons. She waited with patience and perseverance for the right moment for her sons to get the rightful inheritance.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

After the escape from lakshgriha Kunti and the Padavas came to the part of forest were a demon named Hidimb and her sister Hidimba lived. The infatuated Hidimba wanted to marry Bhima and when Bhima was about to go away, forever, Kunti had the presence of mind and foresight to spot an opportunity that came her way for forging a new alliance and, she grasped it by advising Bhima to marry her. She realized that her helpless, friendless, indigent sons are in need of supporters and allies to fight back the Kauravas and regain the lost kingdom and honor. She also advised Arjuna to forge alliance with Nagas , Manipuris and Yadavas of Dwaraka(through Subadra). She had the foresight and sagacity to calculate that a fight with the Kauravas would at sometime is inevitable so she build alliances that would someday come in handy.

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Kunti always wanted her sons to share everything in life so that they are bonded to each other forever. After Arjuna's swayamvar to Draupadi, Kunti unknowingly said, "whatever it is divide among yourself." If Kunti wanted she could have apologized and taken back her words. But she showed no signs of regret of her slip of tongue. She did so to bind her five sons together even more firmly as she was wise enough to anticipate the forthcoming war and the need for all the Pandavas to stay together to fight the enemy.

Kunti's anguish and empathy were with her daughter-in-law Draupadi when she was insulted by Duryodhan and Dushshasan. She chided and provoked her sons to fight for justice and revenge and claim their rightful inheritance even if it meant declaring war on close kith and kin and gurus.

Kunti was never really blinded by rage or behaved in a thoughtless or unreasonable fashion. She faced troubles bravely and she wanted her children to do the same. When her mission was accomplished she had the detachment and strength of mind to renounce the fruits of her efforts and to walk away into forest and into fire.

DRAUPADI

Draupadi , daughter of Draupad is seen as early feminist because of her endurance ,unwavering mind, courage, presence of mind , fearless approach, soft and harsh as per the situation and endowed with a single minded determination. She belonged to an era when women were obedient and subservient.

Draupadi's story is a saga of suffering, disgrace, humiliation and agony. In each adverse situations she didn't surrender to her emotions rather she fought with matchless courage, skill, presence of mind and with a fiery vengeance vanquished each one of her enemies.

SELF CONTROL AND ADAPTABILITY

After her swayamvar with Arjuna, he announced to his mother that he had skillfully won a prize. Kunti without seeing asked him to share with his brothers. Thus Draupadi became the victim of circumstances and had no control over the situation. Arjuna degraded her by claiming her as a prize and Yudishtra, further insulted her by carrying out Kunti's wish as if she were an inanimate thing won in a contest. Though Draupadi was insulted by her own husband Arjuna , she acted according to the circumstance and accepted the challenge to be the wife of all Pandavas. She was expected to love all her husbands equally, which indeed is a difficult thing to do. She was afraid of the kind of sexual commitment she was being asked to make. Her conjugal life required tremendous self control. According to each of her husbands' lifestyle she adjusted her emotions and sentiments.

Once Satyabhama out of curiosity asked Draupadi about the tricks and mantras employed by her to keep the trust of her husbands. Though Draupadi was offended she answered that how she stays away from jealousy (negative destructive emotion) and does not do things merely to impress. Though Draupadi lived with five husbands, she was able to stand with dignity when honour of a woman was at stake.

SELF CONFIDENCE, SELF CONTROL AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

When Yudhishtra lost Draupadi in the game of dice, Duryodhana ordered that Draupadi be dragged to the court. When Draupadi heard the news she was stunned. But instead of meekly obeying, she questioned whether her husband Yudhishthira had pledged her before or after he had lost himself in the gamble. She argued that if he had pledged himself first, he had no right over her as he was already a slave. When Dusshasana dragged her by the hair to the court she mocked him to show his powers against her husbands. She boldly reprimanded the elders in the court for being a part this wickedness and asked them for justice. Finding no response with quick presence of mind prayed to Krishna to save her from humiliation. Dhritharashtra listened to Vidura and asked Draupadi for any three boons. She simply asked for her husbands freedom and their weapons and with remarkable dignity and self-respect, she also refused the third boon as she said that her husbands were strong and capable to win all the rest that they had lost.

While in forest Jayadrath , the king of Sindhudesha tried to seize Draupadi as she was leaning against a tree. She pushed him so hard that he fell to the ground. Retaining full control of herself, she mounted his chariot and drove away. No shrill outcries for assistance.

EMPATHY

When Aswathama (son of Dronacharya) who killed the sons of Draupadi, came to meet the Pandavas , inspite of her great grief at the loss of her children, Draupadi moved forward and touched his feet and paid him his due respect. Bhima wanted to kill Aswathama with his bare hands .Draupadi had a fabulous combination of intensity and forgiveness. She showed such a forbearance when the person who killed her sons was standing before her.

Although Draupadi was desperate for revenge on those who harmed her, her distinction between right and wrong was rarely clouded and she was often in pursuit of justice. Draupadi was not invincible; she was greatly affected by the conflict and was also emotional. But she had the ability to overcome adversity in an esteemed manner and proves that no situation is insurmountable that sets her apart from other women. Throughout the epic the true character of Draupadi, displays her individuality, strength, and unyielding determination for both justice and vengeance.

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CONCLUSION

In Mahabharata, the three women i.e SATYAVATI, KUNTI AND DRAUPADI, flaunt high emotional intelligence. They were able to control and manage their emotions in adverse situations and behaved in a manner that was appropriate for the circumstances. They trusted their perception and intuitions, expressed assertively, were logical and rational in thinking which in turn helped in better decision making. These women were courageous and who spoke their mind in a world of men. They were able to have a clear understanding of their emotions when it arose in response to an action or situation. They were able to regulate themselves and stay in control. They did not rush headlong into hasty decisions or let their emotions take over their behavior. They conveyed directions clearly and handled adverse situations with unambiguous and calm mind.

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