

Lecture Meeting on Multiple Intelligence

by Fr. Dr. K M George at IMA Hall, Kottayam on 13/12/2012

TRAMA hosted its lecture meeting for the first time at IMA hall which was jam packed by the time the lecture started .It was on the subject of **Multiple Intelligence** by Fr. Dr. K M George a philosopher, visionary and orator who prides himself of being a teacher. The subject complimented to what Dr. Radhakrishnan, Chairman PSC took in his last session which ended on an optimistic note on the state of education system and the path it has taken. The theory of Multiple intelligence is perhaps the solution to how we assess the students and structure our pedagogy for the future



Dr George posed the question who had the best brain in the century and the audience unanimously replied that the person who gave us the Theory of Relativity- Albert Einstein had the best brain. In terms of weight or size its a myth that the Einstein brain was more than a lesser mortal, Studies showed that his brain had a higher surface area with greater concentration of neurons at a place. Intelligence quotient tests propounded by French psychologist Alfred Binet in 1905 was the criteria by which intelligence was assessed for decades. The test mainly focussed on the Verbal and mathematical abilities. The IQ scores served as predictors of educational achievements, special needs, job performance and was even used in World war to assess the soldiers. But the greatest problem with the IQ score was that it was just a number which did not represent the factors like the social background of the child.IQ scores also lead to discrimination like in the American society where the whites would have greater access to education and would always have a higher IQ than an African American. Even in the Indian society people belonging to higher castes would have greater access to education and jobs because of their exposure to best of education and thus be higher in the hierarchy.IQ scores also has lead to gender discrimination as women were believed to be incapable of scholastic achievements.

Howard Gardner, a developmental psychologist shattered many a consensus of what intelligence stood For. Einstein and those endowed with big brains were not the most Intelligent and rather than looking at Intelligence as a single entity. In his famous book "**Frames of mind: The theory of multiple Intelligences(1983)**" he states that human beings have several different ways of learning and processing information, but these methods are relatively independent of one another; leading to multiple intelligences..Gardner identified initially 7 types of intelligences to which he later went on to add 2 more based on feedback received.

1) **Linguistic People** with high verbal-linguistic intelligence Display a facility with words and

languages. They are typically good at reading, writing, telling stories, memorizing words along with dates, learning languages and manipulator with words. Politicians, Journalists lawyers fall in the category of people with high verbal linguistic ability.

2) **Logical Mathematical:** This area has to do with logic, abstractions, reasoning and numbers and critical thinking. This also has to do with having the capacity to understand the underlying principles, analytical and logical thinking.

3) **Musical and auditory learning.** This area has to do with sensitivity to sounds, rhythms, tones, and music. They have the ability to discern music and beats and design instruments. He recalled interaction with K J Yesudas who once said that during flight he can hear the changes in the sound of the engine perhaps something people less endowed with this type of intelligence not make out. In tribal societies the members are sensitive to rythms and patterns

4) **Spatial intelligence** deals with spatial judgement and the ability to visualize with the mind's eye. People with high spatial intelligence like good sailors, pilots etc have a great sense of direction and can charter their way out of unfamiliar territory. The game of chess involves high Spatial intelligence with the ability to forecast moves of your competitor in advance.

5) **Bodily-kinesthetic:** The core elements of the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence are control of one's bodily motions, agility and the capacity to handle objects skillfully. Good ballet dancers, people elegant while cooking, Athletes, Surgeons are the ones with high Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence

6) **Interpersonal intelligence or social intelligence** has to do with interaction with others. In theory, individuals who have high interpersonal intelligence are characterized by their sensitivity to others' moods, discern the feelings, temperaments and motivations, and their ability to cooperate in order to work as part of a group. This is important for Management Professionals, Receptionists, Teachers. People with high Interpersonal intelligence have the ability to remember faces. He believed that women are endowed with higher Interpersonal intelligence especially when its needed to protect their young ones

7) **Intrapersonal intelligence** has to do with introspective and self-reflective capacities. This refers to having a deep understanding of the self; what your strengths/ weaknesses are, what makes you unique, tied to own reflections. Philosophers, Thinkers, Scientists, Poets have higher Intrapersonal intelligence

Gardner based on feedback received added 2 more intelligences

8) **Naturalistic Intelligence** has to do with recognizing and classifying natural surroundings, Flora and Fauna. Charles Darwin travelled around the world before formulating the Theory of evolution. Aristotle was also a person with high Naturalistic intelligence with his studies on Taxonomy.

9) **Existential Intelligent** are sensitive to spiritual or the transcendental, The people with higher Existential Intelligence are concerned about aspects like flight of time, questions of immortality

Gardner theory was thus a paradigm shift in the way we understand intelligence. From being single entity ,intelligence was now being looked at by educationists as multiple layers. It will bring a sea change in the way pedagogy is planned if we looked at the ability of the child in a more holistic manner. It has wider implications on society as a whole which marginalizes people on the basis of race, caste and gender

Gardner in his book "Creating minds" talks of 5 types of minds

a) *Disciplined* mind: A Branch of Knowledge is also referred to as discipline. To master a discipline you need 10 years with dedication of mind and body

b) *Synthesizing mind* is the ability to bring intelligence, information, knowledge from different fields of study

c) *Creating minds* is possible if you have a disciplined and synthesizing mind and is about thinking out of the box

d) *Respectful mind* falls under the ethical category where the mind is sensitive to abilities and wisdom of others, Dr. George believed that the oriental Indian and Buddhist philosophies are far more profound than the western world. The European philosophers were very insensitive to teachings from here

e) *Ethical mind* requires one to reflect on ones behavior and the work one undertakes to promote life and welfare of others and not to compromise and cut corners to get ahead

Dr George believed that the research of consciousness being undertaken world over is the most cutting edge of research where intelligence is just a minute part and Indians have contributed a great deal in the study. He then answered a few questions from students. One student asked whether IQ improves as we age where Dr. George replied that depends a lot on the cultural conditioning. But IQ is just a number which does not reflect ones ability and only serves to discriminate.

Member in the audience also talked of a new concept of TQ or technological quotient which is the ability to adapt to technology, internet, social networking.

The lecture perhaps left the audience something deep to ponder upon and how we relate to others. Wishing all the TRAMA members a Merry Christmas and prosperous year ahead

- **Compiled by Nitin Suresh (Assistant Manager, Malayala Manorama)**