

Restricting the Attrition with Emotional Intelligence in Defence Services (With reference to Indian Air Force)

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Abstract

Lesser number of promotion opportunities in the higher echelons of hierarchy often leads to discontentment which often paves way for premature retirement of the officer. Camaraderie starts missing among officers as well as Personnel Below Officers Bank (PBOR)s Emotional intelligence of higher authorities with appropriate soft skills becomes pertinent at this crucial juncture as lack of it leads to negated energy. The research paper measures emotional intelligence in air force officers and focuses on its importance. The sample size included 200 personnel [150 officers +50 airmen] of different ranks. The methodology used was interview , observation and questionnaire adapted from Hendrie Weisinger 'Emotional Intelligence at Work'(San Francisco ; jossey-bass, 1998) pp214-215 . Out of 300 questionnaires distributed 200 were returned duly filled between the month from October to December 2015. Data was analyzed using ANNOVA and F test. The results were quite shocking as the graph portrayed a clear picture of rising EI in officers with promotions but downturn with those who missed it. The research paper analyses causes for u turn of EI even after serving for 20 year in service and proposes recommendations based on analysis of primary and secondary data.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Motivation, Soft Skills, Stress

1. Introduction

To enhance the organization effectiveness in the fierce competing world resilient workforce is crucial but ironically only few organization works towards it. The resultant is that only 25% of professionals in India are suitable for employment by organized sector³ out of 1.3 billion of total population (of which 0.8 billion are in working age).The statistics should ring alarm bells as a nation we are marching towards Demographic Dividend⁴ in the year 2020. The scenario further deepens with men in uniform opting for pre-premature retirement. As per the PTI⁵ report 2015, since the year 2012 close to 441 officers have left Indian Air force. On the same wavelength there have been a rising number of court cases related to armed forces. Services are in die hard demand for personnel

who are observant, active listener along with empathetic attitude towards all for effective smooth operations. With changed milieu it's imperative for men in uniform to harness soft skills which calls for an appropriate emotional intelligence level that are critical for success in professional and personal life. Today expectations of both officers and PBOR have to be augmented, valued and honored by superiors. Unfortunately in the armed forces, through training regimes, people learn the finesse and refinement but what remains to be learnt is People's Dimension. Officers, devoid in soft skills, become a liability in the system which rests primarily on people's dimension. The need of the hour is training in soft skills through emotional intelligence which is desirable to work in collaborative manner.

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2. Why Our Best Officers Are Leaving

It is apathy that the organization responsible for country's security has been witness to rising employee turnover. As it is presumed money is not the sole criteria for such a large chunk of officers leaving the uniform. Prominent reasons surfaced in various surveys are leadership issues, growth opportunities, feasibility of higher studies and compensation along with family life. Irony of the policies is that the structure conforms generalist and often merit is ignored. This misses the opportunity to breed the entrepreneurs in uniform. Other prominent reasons are:

2.1 Anti –Entrepreneurial

Officers are not sensitized enough to stay in services. The structure conforms to generalist approach and often blocks the budding entrepreneur who can shine in with their innovative pedagogies. Trio services work in mechanist view of bureaucracy dooming scope for meritocracy.

2.2 Blind to Merit

Services can bask in the myth that officers leave due to better opportunities in civil world but the truth is that organization misses out meritorious officers on promotion. Sometimes officers get the benefit of closeness due to caste and region which leaves the deserving officer blank for promotion. Further lesser number of vacancies and unfortunate circumstances leaves good officers on promotion. To add to their woes they are assigned jobs much lesser to their capability.

2.3 Supersession and Organization's Apathy Hurts

Apathy of the organization traumatizes both the officer and the family. He fails to understand the causes for not making to the higher echelon of the services and instead of being empathetic; the organization treats him irrationally. They are posted to appointments much less to their caliber which further aggravates the loss and potential. Left with no option they often resort to premature retirement.

3. Repercussions of Losing an Officer

Loss of an officer incurs both monetary and psychological

damage which cannot be quantified. Among many damages few are mentioned below:

- It is approximately loss of close to six months' salary for training and recruitment of new officer to fill the gap of retired officer.
- The new incumbent would require time and space to absorb the organizational values to serve successfully on the board.
- Till the new incumbent joins in, the presently serving officers have to share the job responsibilities of the retired officer which adds pressure to their assigned duties.
- Training and on job hands experience lead men and women in uniform to be able to deal with crisis which goes on untapped with the resignation of an officer.

The implications can be lowered if only our best officers remain in service which is possible by strategically dealing them with soft skills and harboring their sensitivity through emotional intelligence.

4. Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence as a concept inculcates emotional-social intelligence which relates the ability to understand emotions of others, controlling one's emotions, ability to empathize with others and have a positive outlook. Daniel Goleman⁶ credited emotional intelligence to be powerful and sometimes to be more powerful than IQ in his book '*Emotional Intelligence*'. The book describes EI in helping to reduce the attrition rate along with enhancing efficiency and team spirit among members of the group.

5. Daniel Goleman' Emotional Intelligence Components

Self-awareness-It implies the ability of the individual to recognize his /her emotions and influence it creates on others. Self-Regulation-It implies being calm and composed in turbulence and skill to control emotions. One is open to change because of aptitude to rationalize. Motivation -The desire to work for growth and status and not just for money and fame. It is drive to learn continuously with zeal.

Empathy-It relates to ability to put oneself in other's situation and be considerate to others emotions. It helps in bettering relationships.

Social skills- The ability to deal with people and get

work done by them and with them helps in manifesting the goals of the organization.

6. Literature Review on Emotional Intelligence

The credit goes to Peter Salovey and John Mayer to develop the concept of Emotional Intelligence in 1990. As a concept Emotional Intelligence was identified by E.L. Thorndike in 1920. The term became popular with the publishing of the book *Emotional Intelligence* by Goleman in 1995. Goleman (1995) has stated in his book EI that as one raises in the career his success will largely depend upon his emotional quotient of dealing with people. Emotional Intelligence may arise as a result of interaction between emotions and cognitions [Mayer & Salovey 1995; Mayer & Salovey 1997; Mayer et al 2000 c]. Various models of EI have been developed but three models of EI developed by Mayer –Solovey, Bar-On and Goleman model have gained popularity. Ability Model—The first model was developed by Mayer –Solovey. He has based this model on the ability to perceive, understand and manage emotions for rational thinking. Bar-On model—the model is based on personality theory which takes into account 116 behaviors which shapes our competencies and skills.

Mixed Model—this model is developed by Goleman [2001] which is based on the theory of performance. It believes that competencies and skills drive the optimum performance from a manager.

Daniel Goleman model [2001] supports emotional intelligence through the construct of *Emotional Competence*. The term emotional competence describes an array of personal and social skills that drive to optimum performance in one's profession. In essence, our emotions impact our behavioral responses to situational cues [Arvey, Renz & Watson, 1998; Mayer et al, 2000].

7. Emotional Intelligence and Armed Forces

Armed forces have strict discipline to follow. The personnel of the forces are supposed to obey the orders given to them and respect the rank irrespective of the individual holding the position. Strict compliance sometimes means working in odd conditions and with shortage of

officers and airmen it leads to extra work pressure. In this scenario it is necessary that leaders are not arbitrary in giving orders which requires high EI –High, EI leaders naturally influence followers in such a way that they don't require to give orders, their subordinates themselves work towards the goal. Ohio State Leadership⁷ research studies conducted in 1945 emphasized on consideration as one of the main factors of leadership quality. An officer high in emotional intelligence entails following paradigms:

- Acts as brother-in arm.
- Commands respect
- Empowers and provides autonomy to subordinates.
- Facilitates personnel to do their job best.
- Obligates responsibility of failure.
- Takes care of personnel's family

8. Research Methodology

8.1 Problem Statement

Dearth of sensitivity in dealing with rising work pressure, premature retirements and retirement blues is creating void due to lack of trust, empathy among personnel. Senior officers who are often stressed out and have work pressure behave in rude manner which shows their inability to handle emotions. This lack of feeling of oneness is creating a gulf which is difficult to bridge.

8.2 Objectives of the study

The research study aims to:

- Measure the level of EI of the officers of the Indian Air Force on each 5 parameters (self-awareness, emotion, self-motivation, empathy, social skills) of Emotional Intelligence.
- Find if there is a difference in the level of Emotional Intelligence of the officers of the different ranks.
- Find whether there is a difference between the levels of Emotional Intelligence with respect to years of service in force.
- To measure the level of Emotional Intelligence of the officers of the Indian Air Force.
- As there were only 50 responses of PBOR⁸ the research paper focused on officers responses though their responses were taken into calculation.

8.3 Hypotheses –

Total 6 null hypotheses were framed for each component of EI and EI as a whole.

H 1.1: There is no significant difference in self-awareness of personnel with respect to their service rank.

H 1.2: There is no significant difference in self-awareness of personnel with respect to their service length.

H 2.0: There is no significant difference among personnel in the expression and usage of emotions with respect to their service rank.

H 2.1: There is no significant difference among personnel in the expression and usage of emotions with respect to their length of service.

H 3.0: There is no significant difference among personnel in the realization and application of Self-Motivation of with respect to their service rank.

H 3.1 There is no significant difference among personnel in the realization and application of Self-Motivation of personnel with respect to their length of service.

H 4.0: There is no significant difference among personnel for the expression of empathy towards with respect to their service ranks.

H 4.1: There is no significant difference among personnel for the expression of empathy towards with respect to their length of service.

H 5.0: There is no significant difference among personnel for the expression of social skills with respect to their service rank.

H 5.1: There is no significant difference among personnel for the expression of social skills with respect to their service length.

H 6.0: There is no significant difference among personnel for the expression of emotional intelligence with respect to their ranks.

H 6.1: There is no significant difference among personnel for the expression of emotional intelligence with respect to their service length.

8.4 Significance of the Study

The study of emotional intelligence will help to understand the present level of EI of officers. It will help in developing ways to retain the officers'. Further it can smooth the way for further research and in designing methods for nurturing leaders for tomorrow.

8.5 Data Analysis

Total 20 questions were framed in the questionnaire. These 20 questions were divided into each set of 5 questions to measure self –awareness, emotions, self –motivation, empathy, social skills respectively which were adapted from Hendrie Weisinger '*Emotional Intelligence*

at Work' (san Francisco; jossey-bass, 1998) pp214-215 using Likerts scale. 200 personnel filled the questionnaire out of which 50 were of PBOR.

The result was analyzed using ANNOVA. Each dimension was tested using F test and null hypothesis were framed for each five dimension with respect to rank and total years of service length. Each hypothesis was tested using F test by taking Independent Variable : Service Length.

Dependent Variable: Self –awareness, Emotion, Self –Motivation, Empathy, Social Skill

Table 1A. Mean of Dimensions

Dimension	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Awareness	200	3.637	.668
Emotions	200	3.57	.672
Self-Motivation	200	3.65	.612
Empathy	200	3.89	.531
Social Skill	200	3.89	.543
Emotional Intelligence	200	3.72	.507

Source: Data Analysis

Table 1B. Results of ANOVA Test

Variable	Independent Variable	Hy- pothe- sis	F	Sig.	Result
Self-Aware- ness	Service rank	H 1.1	6.506	.000	Rejected
	Service length	H 1.2	5.599	.001	Rejected
Emotions	Service rank	H 2.1	11.923	.000	Rejected
	Service length	H 2.2	5.887	.001	Rejected
Self-Moti- vation	Service rank	H 3.1	15.223	.000	Rejected
	Service length	H 3.2	3.250	.023	Rejected
Empathy	Service rank	H 4.1	7.723	.000	Rejected
	Service length	H 4.2	3.697	.013	Rejected
Social Skills	Service rank	H 5.1	13.641	.000	Rejected
	Service length	H 5.2	10.327	.000	Rejected
Emotional Intelligence	Service rank	H 6.1	11.464	.000	Rejected
	Service length	H 6.2	7.085	.000	Rejected

Source: Data Analysis

* Critical Value of F at 5% level of Significance for V1 = 3 and V2 = 196 degree of freedom = 2.96

8.5.1. Self-Awareness

Since all the statements reflected the degree of awareness level of personnel towards their knowledge these statements can be combined into one variable i.e. Self-Awareness by taking means of above 5 statements.

H 1.1: There is no significant difference in self-awareness of personnel with respect to their service rank.

An assumption has been made for possible rejection that personnel have similar emotional intelligence irrespective of their service rank. To test the hypothesis

the effect of service rank of personnel (Independent Variable) was judged on their responses towards self-awareness (Dependent Variable). For this purpose One-way ANOVA has been used. In ANOVA we conduct an F – test under the assumption to test the null hypothesis that the mean values of the dependent variable (Self-Awareness) are not significantly different from each other at different levels of independent variable (Service Ranks).

From Table 1 B it can be clearly observed that the significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .000 which is less than 0.05(α value) at 5 % level of significance. Since result of the test ($p < \alpha$) does not supports the assumption hence the null hypothesis (H1.1) is rejected.

Thus, there is no significant difference in self-awareness of personnel (Mean) with respect to their service rank (Between groups).

H 1.2: There is no significant difference in self-awareness of personnel with respect to their service length.

A null hypothesis is proposed with the intent of receiving a rejection that personnel belonging to any of the service length have same type of attitude towards self-awareness. For this purpose One-way ANOVA has been used to test the impact of length of service of employees (independent variable) on their knowledge and usage of self-awareness (Dependent variable). From the result of Table 1 B it can be observed that significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .001 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance hence the null hypothesis (H1.2) is rejected.

8.5.2. Emotions

H 2.1: There is no significant difference among the personnel in the expression and usage of emotions with respect to their service rank.

Table 1B above shows that the significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .000 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance and hence the null hypothesis (H 2.1) is rejected.

H 2.2: There is no significant difference among the army personnel in the expression and usage of emotions with respect to their length of service.

Table 1 B above show that the significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .001 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance and hence the null hypothesis (H 2.2) is rejected.

8.5.3. Self-Motivation

H 3.1: There is no significant difference in the realization and application of Self-Motivation of personnel w r t their service rank.

From the result of Table 1 B it can be observed that significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .000 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance hence the null hypothesis (H 3.1) is rejected.

H 3.2: There is no significant difference in the realization and application of Self-Motivation personnel with reference to their length of service.

From Table 1 B it can be clearly observed that the significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .023 which is less than 0.05(α value) at 5 % level of significance. Since result of the test ($p < \alpha$) does not supports the assumption hence the null hypothesis (H3.2) is rejected.

8.5.4. Empathy

H 4.1: There is no significant difference among the personnel for the expression of empathy with reference to their service ranks. From the result of Table 1 B it can be observed that significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .000 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance hence the null hypothesis (H4.1) is rejected.

H 4.2: There is no significant difference among the personnel for the expression of empathy with reference to Their length of service.

From Table 1 B it can be clearly observed that the significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .013 which is less than 0.05(α value) at 5 % level of significance. Since result of the test ($p < \alpha$) does not supports the assumption hence the null hypothesis (H4.2) is rejected.

8.5.5. Social Skills

The role of Social skills of air force personnel has been leaving impact on their socialization with other personnel and with the society at large. The social skills are assessed on the basis of statements given in table at annexure.

From Table 1 A as the mean of social skill is 3.89, which is almost on the agree side of the 5 point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Thus it can be inferred that these people not only try to socialize themselves but are also willing to cooperate with others whenever such situation arises.

H 5.1: There is no significant difference among the personnel for the expression of social skills with reference to their rank.

Result of the study portrays that there are differences in the opinion of these officers towards the knowledge and need of social skill. In case of Air Commodore it is highest with mean 4.60.

From the result of Table 1 B it can be observed that significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .000 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance hence the null hypothesis (H 5.1) is rejected.

H 5.2: There is no significant difference among the personnel for the expression of social skills with reference to their service length.

From the result of Table 1 B it can be observed that significance value (p value) of ANOVA test is .000 which is less than 0.05 (α value) at 5 % level of significance hence the null hypothesis (H 5.2) is rejected.

8.5.6. Emotional Intelligence

H 6.1: There is no significant difference among the personnel for the expression of emotional intelligence with reference to their ranks.

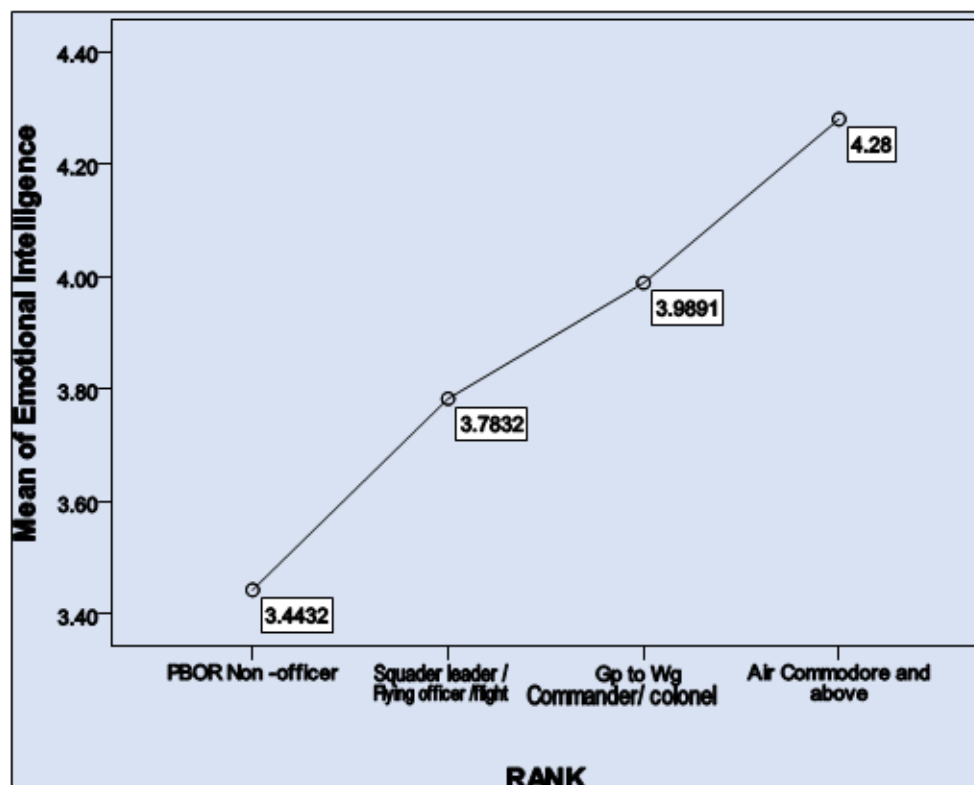
A null hypothesis was proposed that there is no significant difference in the level of EI among different rank of officers. But the result of hypothesis testing (from table 1 B) shows that the Calculated Value of P value (sig) = .000 which is less than α value at 5 % level of significance for one tail test = 0.05 hence null hypothesis (H 6.1) is rejected.

Thus it can be implied from the test that level of EI among different rank of officers are different and not same.

Figure 1 depicts that air warrior enters the force with motivation and zeal and has the highest mean of 3.9. As their length of service increases due to lack of training, monotonous job, frequent transfer, lack of promotional opportunities midlevel career crisis creeps in and the mean drops to 3.7. Officers who make it to the next rank again regain motivation and resurface their EI which comes to 4.28

H 6.2: There is no significant difference among the personnel for the expression of emotional intelligence with reference to their service length.

The impact of service length on the EI of Air Force personnel was also seen and tested through. The result of



Source: Data Analysis

Figure 1. Mean of EI in relation to service rank.

test (from Table 1 B) shows that the Calculated Value of P value (sig) = .000 which is less than α value at 5 % level of significance for one tail test = 0.05 hence the null hypothesis (H 6.2) is rejected.

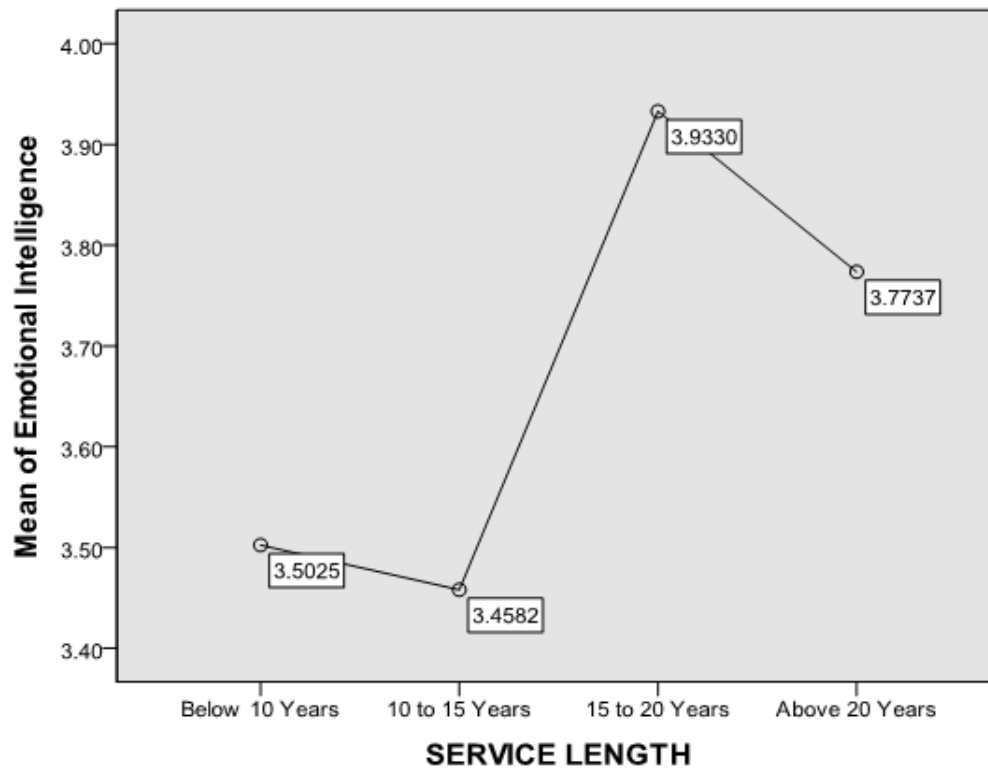
Figure 2 depicts the status of EI with respect to service length. In the initial years of service EI has the highest mean of 3.5 The personnel tries to adapt to the new scenario and looks forward to new assignments . It dips in the middle what is popularly denoted as mid-level crisis due to factors like monotonous job, work pressure, family cliches level which comes to 3.4 .But due to age and progression of maturity in hope of having better avenues and promotion the officer again regains EI and it increases to 3.9 and reaches to plateau. Those who couldn't make it to promotion loose the vigour of working and again the mean dips to 3.7.

9. Inference

The statistical analysis of the data presents a mix picture of air force personnel. It clearly portrays that the current

system of working pattern needs to be changed .Officers dealing with mid-level crisis need to be dealt sensitively. Officers who couldn't make it to the promotions need challenging jobs to keep them updated and motivated .The data analysis puts forth a U turn EI for offices who have put in 20 year of service. In contrast the officers who made it to the next level continue to have rising EI. This contrasting picture of rank and service length shows a dichotomy in dealing with loss of promotion and questions the inability of air force as an organization in dealing with these officers. Based on the analysis, interview and observation the reasons are:

- The first prominent promotion comes after 18 years of services. By this time officer is already far behind his civil counterparts and if he missed the promotion he has nothing left to cherish about .The retirement option too comes after 20 years of service which again puts back the officer in relation to his peers.
- Officers are given assignment by senior officers in lackluster manner without considering the sustainability skills of officers. Sometimes the task



Source: Data Analysis

Figure 2. Mean of EI in relation to service length.

- may be too impoverished for calibre of officer at certain level of seniority.
- The criteria for judgement of promotion are not transparent. Feedback is rarely given for improvement.
 - The board setup for promotion often lacks the detail description and within 2 to 3 day fate of an officer is decided. No feedback is given to the particular officer who has missed promotion and ways to enhance his performance.
 - Officers have to bear system bias towards few branches like flying. These branches have more vacancies in higher echelons of pyramid. Officers of these branches are given promotion superseding other branch officers like technical. Reporting to them subdues the ego of the officer.
 - The pattern of working is top down approach which mandates an officer to seek sanction from various commanders. It has also been observed that few promoted officers do not welcome the idea given by an officer who has missed the opportunity of promotion.
 - Most of the time the wife gets secondary grade citizen if her husband is not top ranker. There is discrepancy in treatment in comparison to flag officers wife who gets a royal treatment. The discrepancy and conflict leads to further lowering of morale.
 - Timely feedback should be given to enhance the chances of promotion. Usually the officer is left to ponder the reasons for missing the bus of promotion and continues to grapple in the dark.
 - Empathy in Officers Wives – Wives of senior officers need to be much more sensitive to junior officers and airmen. Wives should be treated equally irrespective of the rank of the officers. In this regard Air Force Wives Welfare Association (AFWWA)⁹ can play vital role by conducting sessions on grooming, etiquette and manners.
 - Setting training Institutes- Trio services have very few training centre like *The Defence Services Staff College in Wellington*, Tamil Nadu, which imparts training to trio services officers. Challenging job with regular training and development in EI and soft skills is essential. More training institutes need to be set up.
 - Annual Performance appraisal should also rank the person's EI which should be considered as one of the major factors in promotion.
 - At only early level officers with high emotional intelligence should be identified who act can as mentors to junior officers and should be trained in further to fill in the leadership positions in future.
 - To retain talented officers more EI workshops should be imparted to personnel at regular intervals. Along with this corporate trainers in EI should be called to train senior officers. This will help them in combating service dilemmas as well as ease out the retirement blues.

10. Conclusion

Emotional Intelligence no longer remains a luxury. It has become a necessity to thrive in life especially in air force where at each level leadership is required, as they have to work under different parameters which range from high sensitive assignments to natural calamities. A well-groomed high EI leader will cascade his positive effect down the chain which can lower the attrition of talented personnel in uniform.

11. Recommendations

- Based on the study as a whole some suggestion to retain the personnel.
- Promotion system needs to be made objective. The criteria for selection and rejection should be crystal clear and known to officers.
- Branch bias should be reduced for promotion criteria to have fair and just promotion.

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Annexure:

SN	DIMENSION	MEASURES
1	Self-Awareness	I calm myself quickly when angry
		I know what senses I am currently using
		I identify when I experience mood shifts
		I know when I become defensive
		I relax when under pressure in situations
2	Emotion	I know when I am becoming angry
		I talk with self to change my emotional state
		I stay calm when I am the target of anger from others
		I know when I am are thinking negatively and head it off
3	Self-Motivation	I motivate myself willingly for a task
		I Associate different internal physiological cues with different emotions
		I Regroup quickly after a setback
		I charge myself when doing uninteresting work
4	Empathy	I change a habit which is ineffective
		I follow my words with action
		I am aware of the impact my behaviour has on others
		I can recognize when others are in distress
5	Social Skills	I help others manage their emotions
		I show empathy to others
		I have intimate conversations with others
		I initiate successful conflict resolution with others
6	Emotional Intelligence	I Build consensus with others
		I make others feel good
		I provide advice and emotional support to others as needed
		I accurately reflect people's feelings back to them
		Self-Awareness
Emotions		
Self-Motivation		
Empathy		
Social Skills		