Leading with Empathy and Insight: The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Effective Administration

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Administration as a rule-based, structure-based, and rational calculation subject has been taught for a long time. But the work of administrators, whether in the district collectorate, a municipal corporation, a university registry, or a corporate office, is overwhelmingly relational, even though the systems are different. Administrators convince, comfort, compromise, settle disagreements among citizens and colleagues, and carry away citizens' and colleagues' frustrations. In this paper, the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) defined as the ability to perceive, understand, utilize, and manage emotions within oneself and others, is discussed in relation to effective management. The paper combines the ability model of Mayer and Salovey, the competency model of Goleman, and the trait approach of Petrides to review the meta-analytic evidence concerning the link between EI and job performance, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. It then moves on to public administration, focusing on the concept of emotional labour, which emphasizes the emotional requirements of frontline and supervisory staff. Special focus is given to the Indian context, covering the attitude and aptitude aspects of the civil services examination; the competency-building reforms under Mission Karmayogi, part of the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building; and the ongoing problems of redressing citizen complaints.

The secondary data have been gathered and presented in six tables on EI models, meta-analytic effect sizes, competencies aligned with administrative tasks, scope of public complaints lodging, outcomes of EI trainings, and the institutional framework for public complaints and behavioural capacity building in India. Moderate positive relationships between EI and administrative effectiveness are found across all analyses, with the strongest positive relationships found with leadership and employee attitudes, while there is robust evidence that EI can be developed through structured training. It also warns against overemphasizing the importance of EI, such as measurement issues and overlap with personality issues, as well as the possibility of emotional manipulation. The paper ends with recommendations for recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and organisational

culture, both of which say that empathy and insight should be institutionalised and not be left to individual temperament.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, public administration, leadership, empathy, emotional labour, Mission Karmayogi, organisational effectiveness, civil service capacity building

1. Introduction

Rationality was the basis of the classical traditions of administrative thought. Weber's ideal-type bureaucracy valued impersonality, hierarchy and conformity to rules, as did the scientific management movement, which saw the organisation as a machine to be optimized. In this bequest, emotion was granted the status of noise, something to be avoided in the management of affairs due to its ability to generate biases, favouritism and irrationality. While most of the 20th century public administration was content with this assertion, the human relations school that had begun with the Hawthorne studies demonstrated that human relations, feelings, morale affect the actual operation of the work.

The rationalist interpretation was set on a shivering halt by the late 1900's. Salovey and Mayer (1990) coined the term emotional intelligence to refer to a collection of skills that individuals possess to track their emotions, to distinguish between them and to act upon the information. Goleman's (1995) best-selling book took the concept out of psychology and suggested that emotional competencies might be as important as or more important than traditional intelligence in determining job success. Goleman's original claims were subsequently found to have been exaggerated, but his insight stood the test of time. Organisations are social systems, and emotion is read, managed and mobilised, in part, to ensure the success of those who lead them.

The consequences for administration are significant. Administrators don't work alone very often. They organize teams, manage conflicts and negotiate amongst various factions, and they deliver unwelcome news and interact with citizens who are anxious, angry, or desperate. Guy, Newman and Mastracci (2008) claimed such relational work is a form of emotional labour – that is, the process of managing one's own emotions and those of others as a key component of the work – which has been deliberately understated in public personnel systems. No one would ever refer to the emotional skills of a revenue officer resolving a land dispute, a nurse superintendent dealing with a grieving family, and a school headmaster in a post-incident with parents.

The questions have significant bearing in India. The administrative state is at citizens' most susceptible points: when they apply for welfare benefits, register land, file police complaints, land them in hospital, or receive a diagnosis at the hospital. Various reports from the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2009) have cited the lack of approachability and interest on the part of officials. In 2013, the Union Public Service Commission added a paper on Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude to the civil services main examination (Mains), and emotional intelligence is mentioned in the syllabus of the paper. In 2013, the Union Public Service Commission added a new paper on Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude to the civil services main examination (Mains), and emotional intelligence is listed explicitly in the syllabus of the paper. Mission Karmayogi (2020) marked another transition from the traditional capacity building based on rules to role-based capacity building and reinforced the need to complement functional and domain skills with behavioural ones.

In this paper, I will explore three questions. Let's explore the first question first: What is emotional intelligence? Second, what is the evidence from the field on associations between EI and outcomes that are relevant to administrative effectiveness, such as leadership, performance, job attitudes, and service quality? Thirdly, what are the ways to make emotional intelligence a part of administrative systems, specifically in India? The paper is based on secondary data from peer-reviewed meta-analyses, official documents, and published studies, which have been presented in data tables with sources. It ends with a discussion of contrasting the promise of EI with any legitimate criticisms and makes practice recommendations.

2. Conceptual Framework: Models of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is not a single construct but a family of related ideas. Scholars broadly distinguish three streams: ability models, which treat EI as a form of intelligence measured through performance tests; trait models, which treat EI as a constellation of emotional self-perceptions located within personality; and mixed or competency models, which combine emotional abilities with motivational and social skills associated with effective performance (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2005; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Table 1 summarises the principal models.

Table 1: Principal Models of Emotional Intelligence

Model	Key proponents	Conception of EI	Core dimensions	Typical measure
Ability model	Mayer & Salovey (1997)	A cognitive ability to process emotional information	Perceiving emotions; using emotions to facilitate thought; understanding emotions; managing emotions	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)
Competency (mixed) model	Goleman (1998); Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee (2000)	Learned capabilities that produce outstanding performance at work	Self-awareness; self-management; social awareness; relationship management	Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI)
Emotional-social intelligence (mixed) model	Bar-On (1997, 2006)	Interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators	Intrapersonal; interpersonal; stress management; adaptability; general mood	Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i)
Trait model	Petrides & Furnham (2001)	Emotional self-perceptions at the lower levels of personality hierarchies	Well-being; self-control; emotionality; sociability (15 facets)	Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)
Workplace self-report model	Wong & Law (2002)	Ability-based dimensions assessed by self-report, designed for organisational research	Self-emotion appraisal; others' emotion appraisal; use of emotion; regulation of emotion	Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS)

Source: Compiled by the author from Mayer and Salovey (1997), Goleman (1998), Boyatzis et al. (2000), Bar-On (2006), Petrides and Furnham (2001) and Wong and Law (2002).

The ability model is the most rigorous in psychometric terms. By asking respondents to identify emotions in faces, predict how emotions change, or select effective emotion-management strategies, the MSCEIT avoids the self-enhancement bias of questionnaires. From an administrative perspective, its lack is that having information on how to feel does not mean having the will to do it when it is needed.

The impact on management practice has been the greatest for Goleman's competency model. It is neatly divided into four clusters that correspond to administrative work. When an officer becomes aware that he or she is getting irritated, this self-awareness enables him/her to take time to self-reflect and redefine what his/her priorities are. Self-management helps to maintain calm during crisis, integrity when needed. Social awareness, empathy and organisational awareness allow administrators to read people and the informal politics of institutions. Relationship management includes teamwork and developing others, conflict

management, and influence. Some critics have remarked that the model encompasses an array of nice things about a leader, and so risks being a laundry list (Locke, 2005).

The trait approach is a helpful middle ground. It is willing to take self-reported EI as measures of personality-like dispositions and examines them in that way. Within the scope of this paper, the term EI is used in an inclusive sense as: the ability to perceive, understand, use, and regulate one's own and others' emotions, and the evidence examined below is reported by measurement stream as far as possible. This is important because the size of the effect varies widely from one stream to another, with implications for the selection and evaluation of staff within administrative organisations.

3. Review of Literature: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership and Performance

Since the hype of the 1990s, the empirical research on EI in the organisation has come a long way. Popular writing at the outset claimed emotional skills were responsible for the vast majority of the difference between effective and ineffective leaders. These numbers were seldom subject to review. The more reliable indicator is the body of meta-analyses which combine the results from dozens of independent samples and correct for measurement error. The main findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Meta-Analytic Evidence on Emotional Intelligence and Work Outcomes

Outcome	Meta-analysis	Samples (k)	Participants (N)	Corrected correlation (ρ)
Job performance (ability, self-report and mixed EI streams)	O'Boyle et al. (2011)	—	—	0.24 to 0.30
Job performance (overall EI)	Doğru (2022)	68	23,269	0.30
Organisational citizenship behaviour	Doğru (2022)	43	12,779	0.36
Job satisfaction	Doğru (2022)	74	19,869	0.29
Organisational commitment	Doğru (2022)	37	7,865	0.26
Job stress	Doğru (2022)	31	14,377	−0.43
Transformational leadership (same-source ratings)	Harms & Credé (2010)	62 (total)	—	0.59
Transformational leadership (different-source ratings)	Harms & Credé (2010)	62 (total)	—	0.12

Source: Compiled by the author from O'Boyle et al. (2011, p. 788), Doğru (2022, Tables 3–7) and Harms and Credé (2010, p. 5). Note: ρ is the correlation corrected for measurement unreliability. O'Boyle et al. report a range across the three EI streams; for Harms and Credé, k is the total number of independent samples in the meta-analysis.

3.1 Emotional Intelligence and Job Performance

O'Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver and Story (2011) classified studies into the three streams described earlier and found corrected correlations with job performance ranging from 0.24 to 0.30. Most importantly, the self-report and mixed streams had incremental validity above and beyond cognitive ability and the Big Five personality traits, suggesting that EI accounted for variance in performance that was not accounted for by cognitive ability or personality. All three streams were found to have significant relative importance as shown by dominance analysis. A more recent synthesis by Doğru (2022) of studies published from 1990 until 2020 arrived at a similar overall estimate of 0.30.

An important qualification was added by Joseph and Newman's (2010) earlier integrative meta-analysis: the EI–performance relationship is stronger in jobs with high emotional labour requirements, where workers are expected to show or hide emotions frequently as part of their job responsibilities. This is especially significant in the administration field where much of the job is the management of conflict and public expectations, and the management of people.

3.2. Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

The connection between EI and transformational leadership, which is most related to motivating people to buy into a shared vision, has been extensively explored. Harms and Credé (2010) conducted a study of 62 independent samples and discovered a dramatic contrast. The corrected correlation was 0.59 when the same person rated both EI and leadership. If ratings were obtained from different sources, e.g., self-rated EI and employee ratings of leadership, it dropped to 0.12. Validities of trait measures were higher than the ability measures. This outcome is important because much of the apparent relationship between EI and leadership is due to common-method bias. It doesn't imply there is no connection; it's just smaller than the advocates propose.

Building on this, Miao, Humphrey and Qian (2018) explored the case of followers, and confirmed that leader EI has positive links with followers' task performance and citizenship behaviours across cultures. For administrators, the implication is that EI operates less as a personal asset than as a relational resource that shapes the climate in which others work.

3.3 Emotional Intelligence and Employee Attitudes

The strongest and most consistent associations concern attitudes and well-being. Doğru (2022) reports a corrected correlation of 0.36 between EI and organisational citizenship behaviour, 0.29 with job satisfaction and 0.26 with organisational commitment. The largest effect is the negative relationship with job stress ($\rho = -0.43$). Moderator analysis showed that the EI–commitment link was stronger for managers ($\rho = 0.32$) than for non-managerial staff ($\rho = 0.24$), while links with performance and stress were stronger among non-managerial employees. The patterns indicate that EI shields frontline workers from strain and managers from leaving the organisation. In Miao, Humphrey and Qian's (2017) meta-analysis of EI and work attitudes, they came to similar results.

All of the evidence leads to a sensible conclusion. EI has been identified as a moderate and stable predictor of outcomes that are important to administrative effectiveness. Although not as significant as its early advocates suggested, it paves the way and provides explanatory value in addition to intelligence and personality, and is most pronounced in roles that are most emotionally demanding, which are the ones that typify public service.

4. Emotional Intelligence in Public Administration

4.1 Emotional Labour and the Public Servant

Emotional labour is a term coined by Hochschild (1983), who studied flight attendants who manage their emotions to allow them to be felt by others. Public administration scholars took the concept and concluded that "there are emotional pressures in government work. Guy, Newman and Mastracci (2008) noted that caseworkers, dispatchers and correctional officers have to be calm, compassionate or authoritative in the way they act, despite what they are feeling. These are skilled labourers, they said, but they have not been recognised in the classifications and pay for their jobs.

Another lens is provided by Lipsky's (1980) description of street-level bureaucracy. But, policymaking under chronic resource conditions can leave frontline officials with great discretion, and interactions between frontline officials and citizens can make the difference between a fair and non-arbitrary experience of the policy. A high emotional intelligence officer can better identify distress, defuse and de-escalate conflict, and convey decision-making in a manner that maintains the citizen's dignity even when the decision is no.

These propositions are supported by empirical research in Government. Emotional intelligence was linked to more positive work outcomes and workers' coping with perceived organisational politics in Israeli public employees (Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler, 2010). Levitats and Vigoda-Gadot (2020) created a multilevel model that demonstrated that the emotional engagement of civil servants was influenced by individual EI and the emotional climate of their units, and that this emotional engagement was related to service outcomes. The results are in line with those of Joseph and Newman which stated that EI is most important in jobs with high emotional labour requirements.

4.2 Mapping EI Competencies to Administrative Functions

The practical value of EI becomes clearer when its components are linked to specific administrative tasks. Table 3 maps the four clusters of the competency model to core functions of administration.

Table 3: Emotional Intelligence Competencies Mapped to Administrative Functions

EI cluster	Constituent competencies	Administrative function	Illustrative application
Self-awareness	Emotional self-awareness; accurate self-assessment	Decision-making under pressure	A district collector recognises personal frustration before responding to a flood-relief complaint.
Self-management	Emotional self-control; adaptability; achievement orientation; integrity	Crisis management; ethical conduct	A health official remains composed and transparent during an outbreak briefing.
Social awareness	Empathy; organisational awareness; service orientation	Citizen interface; policy implementation	A welfare officer identifies why eligible beneficiaries avoid enrolment
Relationship management	Influence; conflict management; teamwork; coaching and mentoring; inspirational leadership	Staff supervision; inter-departmental coordination; stakeholder negotiation	A municipal commissioner mediates between traders and residents over a road-widening project.

Source: Constructed by the author based on the competency framework of Boyatzis, Goleman and Rhee (2000) and Goleman (1998), applied to administrative functions discussed in Guy et al. (2008).

The mapping shows that EI is not confined to leadership positions. Social awareness and self-management are central to the citizen interface, which in India is overwhelmingly staffed by clerks, revenue inspectors, police constables, nurses and teachers rather than senior officers.

4.3 The Indian Context: Scale of the Citizen Interface

The scale of the citizen interface in India makes emotional competence a structural concern rather than a matter of individual style. The Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS), administered by the Department of Administrative Reforms

and Public Grievances (DARPG), offers one measurable window into this interface. Table 4 presents recent figures.

Table 4: Scale of Public Grievance Handling through CPGRAMS, India

Indicator	Value	Reference period
Grievances received on CPGRAMS	More than 24 lakh (2.4 million)	Calendar year 2024
Share of grievances disposed	98 per cent	Calendar year 2024
Average disposal time (all grievances)	12 days	Calendar year 2024
Grievances received	More than 20 lakh (2 million)	January to November 2025
Registered Grievance Redressal Officers (GROs)	More than 1.1 lakh (110,000)	2025
Average disposal time, Central Ministries	22 days in 2022; 15 days in 2025	2022 to 2025
Citizens providing feedback	More than 10.7 lakh (1.07 million)	2025

Source: National Informatics Centre (2024) for 2024 figures; Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (2025), CPGRAMS Annual Report 2025, as summarised in The Policy Edge (2025).

These figures show substantial gains in speed. Speed, however, is not the same as satisfaction. A grievance can be closed quickly with a formulaic reply that leaves the citizen feeling unheard. Recognising this, DARPG developed a model curriculum with the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI), Hyderabad, in 2025 to train Grievance Redressal Officers in behavioural skills and the Karmayogi competency framework, to ensure that grievances are handled with sensitivity as well as accountability (The Policy Edge, 2025). This is an explicit institutional acknowledgement that the quality of grievance redressal depends on emotional and relational competence, not only on process efficiency.

The Indian civil service has also formally recognised EI at the point of entry. Since 2013, the Union Public Service Commission's General Studies Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude) has included emotional intelligence, its concepts and its uses in administration and governance. Aspirants must therefore study EI, although a written examination can test knowledge about emotions far more easily than the ability to manage them.

5. Developing Emotional Intelligence in Administrators

5.1 Can Emotional Intelligence Be Trained?

If emotional intelligence were a fixed endowment, its administrative relevance would be limited to selection. The evidence indicates otherwise. Table 5 summarises the principal syntheses of EI training research.

Table 5: Meta-Analytic Evidence on Emotional Intelligence Training

Study	Studies included	Design	Principal finding
Hodzic et al. (2018)	28 interventions (N = 1,986)	Treatment–control and pre–post	Moderate improvement in EI; gains largely retained at follow-up
Mattingly & Kraiger (2019)	58 published and unpublished studies	Pre–post and treatment–control	Moderate positive training effect regardless of design; robust across gender and across ability and mixed measures; larger effects in published studies
Mehler et al. (2024)	50 workplace studies (primary analysis)	Pre–post change; treatment–control subset	Emotional competencies (EI, empathy, emotion regulation) improved at work; some effect persisted more than three months after training.

Source: Compiled by the author from Hodzic et al. (2018), Mattingly and Kraiger (2019) and Mehler et al. (2024). Sample details for Hodzic et al. are reported in subsequent reviews of the training literature.

Three conclusions follow. First, training produces moderate and reasonably durable gains. Second, gains appear across different measurement approaches, which reduces the concern that they merely reflect participants learning to answer questionnaires more favourably. Third, Mehler et al. (2024) examined differences by profession, including managers, teachers and health professionals, and the workplace focus of their review makes it especially relevant to public organisations. Mattingly and Kraiger (2019) also note that training design matters: programmes involving practice, feedback and active learning tend to outperform lectures alone.

For administrative training institutes, this implies a shift in pedagogy. EI cannot be taught effectively as a syllabus topic to be memorised. It is better developed through role-play of difficult citizen encounters, structured reflection on real cases, 360-degree feedback and coaching, spaced over time rather than compressed into a single session.

5.2 The Indian Institutional Framework

India has built a substantial institutional architecture for behavioural capacity building in the civil service. Table 6 summarises its main components.

Table 6: Institutional Framework for Behavioural Competency Development in Indian Public Administration

Component	Year	Relevance to emotional intelligence	Key figures
UPSC Civil Services Main Examination, General Studies Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude)	2013	EI concepts and their application in administration are part of the syllabus.	Compulsory for all candidates

Component	Year	Relevance to emotional intelligence	Key figures
National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (Mission Karmayogi)	Approved 2 September 2020	Shift from rule-based to role-based capacity building; behavioural competencies alongside functional and domain competencies	—
iGOT Karmayogi digital learning platform	Scaled from 2023	Courses aligned to the Karmayogi Competency Model	About 3 lakh users (January 2023); 1 crore (May 2025); over 1.7 crore (August 2026)
iGOT course catalogue	2025	Includes behavioural and soft-skill modules	Over 2,400 courses in 16 languages from 200+ providers (May 2025)
Karmayogi Saptah (National Learning Week)	October 2024	Large-scale learning drive for civil servants	Over 32 lakh course completions
Annual iGOT learning linked to Annual Performance Appraisal Reports (APAR)	From reporting year 2025–26	Links competency development to career management	Applies to all Central Government employees and All India Services officers
Sevottam model curriculum for Grievance Redressal Officers, with ASCI Hyderabad	2025	Behavioural skills training for officials handling citizen grievances	Over 1.1 lakh registered GROs

Source: Compiled by the author from Press Information Bureau (2020, 2025), ANI (2026), The Policy Edge (2025) and the UPSC Civil Services Examination syllabus.

This framework is impressive in reach. Mission Karmayogi's emphasis on role-based competencies creates, in principle, a place for emotional intelligence in how officials are trained, posted, and assessed. The linking of iGOT learning to APARs from 2025–26 gives capacity building a direct connection to career management. The ASCI curriculum for grievance officers is a targeted intervention at the most emotionally demanding point of the citizen interface.

Two cautions are warranted. First, the evidence in Table 5 suggests that self-paced digital modules alone are unlikely to build emotional skills; practice, feedback and supervised application matter. Course completions are not an indicator of behaviour change. Secondly, the evidence of the effectiveness of behavioural training in Indian public administration is limited. This could be assessed with pre- and post-training EI measures, and with citizen satisfaction and grievance recurrence measures, to determine whether the country's investment is improving counter behaviour.

6. Discussion: Promise, Limits and Critiques

Evidence reviewed provides a definite, but limited claim. There is moderate and consistent evidence of a link between emotional intelligence and performance, citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, commitment and lower stress. It is particularly significant in jobs involving high levels of emotional labour, and can be trained and nurtured. These findings are worthy of institutional consideration for administration, a relational activity by nature, and frequently public. A number of limitations, however, should be noted.

Validity of measurement and construct. The three streams of EI research are based on different concepts. Self-report and mixed measures are highly correlated with personality traits like emotional stability, extraversion and conscientiousness. Locke (2005) suggested that the concept is so general it loses its significance, and Antonakis, Ashkanasy and Dasborough (2009) questioned whether EI in leadership is needed when intelligence and personality are taken into consideration. Part of this criticism is addressed by the incremental validity reported by O'Boyle et al. (2011), but administrators in designing selection systems must not depend on any one EI instrument.

Common-method inflation. The difference between same-source (0.59) and different-source (0.12) correlations found in Harms and Credé (2010) is a warning. Any study that involves the administrator's self-ratings of his or her own EI and self-ratings of his or her own leadership will overestimate the relationship. Multi-source designs with both supervisor, peer, subordinate and citizen ratings should be used in future studies in Indian public administration.

The negative side of EQ. Emotional skills are value-neutral tools. Kilduff, Chiaburu and Menges (2010) found that emotionally intelligent people have the skills to conceal their intentions and further their own agenda. Côté et al. (2011) discovered that, when considering moral identity, emotion-regulation knowledge increased both prosocial behaviour and deviant behaviour. In administration, a good reader of faces, but one who is lacking in integrity, is able to handle citizens, colleagues or a political ruler. This is why conceptually, the UPSC's decision to include emotional intelligence and ethics/ integrity together in the same question paper is justified: EI should be based on public service values.

Emotional labour and burnout. EI can be promoted without employees knowing it and not be rewarded or recognised. Emotional labour is mainly done by women and by frontline workers and is not well acknowledged in terms of pay or promotion criteria (Guy et al., 2008). Having staff remind themselves to be more empathetic when caseloads increase might lead to

staff being exhausted, not better served. Such a conclusion that EI promotes less stress in children should not be interpreted as a license to assume that the individual is responsible for their own systemic overload.

The context of structure and culture. Indian culture is very hierarchical, and respecting seniority may hinder the candid and forthright expression of emotion, dissent and feedback that is essential to EI-oriented leadership. Rigid procedures, inadequate staff, and pressure from political lines will limit the role of an empathetic district officer. Emotional intelligence is a necessary but not sufficient element to complement but not replace sound systems and appropriate resources and accountability.

Evidence gaps. The overwhelming majority of the evidence from the meta-analysis is from private-sector and Western samples. While there are also studies in the public sector, these tend to be small-scale, cross-sectional, and self-reported. Mission Karmayogi (MK) has grown rapidly, and can now begin to produce more robust evidence through evaluation designs that are embedded in programme implementation.

These critiques do not detract from the argument for emotional intelligence in administration. They clarify it. In EI, understanding the resource is most useful when it is seen as one tool among a number of tools, and the value of that tool is dependent on the ethical commitments of the individual who is using the tool, and the institutional factors that are operating within which EI is being utilized.

7. Recommendations

The analysis suggests six practical measures for strengthening emotional intelligence in administrative systems, with particular reference to India.

1. **Integrate EI into competency frameworks and appraisal.** Behavioural competencies such as empathy, composure and conflict management should be defined with observable indicators within the Karmayogi Competency Model and assessed through multi-source feedback, not self-assessment alone, as part of APARs.
2. **Redesign training pedagogy.** Civil services training institutes and state administrative training institutes should complement iGOT modules with experiential sessions: role-play of difficult citizen encounters, case-based reflection, coaching and spaced follow-up.

3. **Prioritise the frontline.** Training investment should reach revenue, police, health, education and welfare staff who handle the majority of citizen contact, extending the ASCI model for grievance officers to other high-contact roles.
4. **Anchor EI in ethics.** EI training should be delivered alongside public service values and integrity education, so that emotional skills are directed toward service rather than manipulation.
5. **Recognise and support emotional labour.** Organisations should monitor workload and burnout, provide debriefing and counselling after traumatic incidents, and acknowledge emotional labour in job design and rewards.
6. **Build the evidence base.** There is a need to have independent assessments on behavioural training and the achievement of measurable outcomes like citizen satisfaction, recurrence of grievances, employee well-being to be commissioned by Mission Karmayogi and DARPG.

8. Conclusion

This paper started with the classical opinion that emotion is noise in the mechanism of administration. All of the evidence suggests otherwise. Numerous studies spanning tens of thousands of employees demonstrate that emotional intelligence is positively related to job performance ($\rho \approx 0.24$ to 0.30), organisational citizenship behaviour (0.36), job satisfaction (0.29) and organisational commitment (0.26), and negatively related to job stress (-0.43). Its relationship to leadership is real, albeit less than what is often reported, after taking into account common method bias. Training results in moderate and long-term improvements, particularly if it includes practice and feedback.

These findings are important for public administration, as the state is experienced by citizens through their encounters with the state officials. India's grievance system has been able to process more than two million complaints per year with increasingly shorter disposal times and Mission Karmayogi has registered more than 1.7 crore officials on a common learning platform. These are important "big things". Quality comes next: that the official at the counter can listen, understand, and respond fairly and respectfully.

So it is not a "soft" complement to hard administration skills to lead by empathy and insight. It is one of the reasons for the legitimacy of administration in a democracy. However, no one can carry this weight alone, and it's not emotional intelligence. It needs to be based on

ethical commitment, have sufficient resources, and be placed within institutions that value the emotional work of public service. In situations like these, an emotionally intelligent administration is a feasible route to governing efficiently and humanely.

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