

**Analysing the Character of Peyathdevar in *Kallikaatu Ithigasam* With
Daniel Goleman's *Five Elements of Emotional Intelligence***

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Vairamutthu is a Tamil poet, writer and lyricist who has written the novel *Kallikaatu Ithigasam*. He was born to Rangasamy Devar and Angammal on 13th July 1953 in Mettur village, Madurai. He has been writing since the age of fourteen. Vairamuthu has been deeply influenced by Periyar's thoughts, Kalaingar Karunathi's language and Aringar Anna's simple language style, and was also inspired by Bharathiar, Bharathidhasan and Kannadasan's poems. The inspiration he has gained from the works of these people has helped him become a successful writer. He has written many novels, poems, short stories, and songs for Tamil movies. He is also called Kaviperarasu, Kaviyarasu, Kaapiyasamarat and Kappiyapeararingar. He has won many awards like Padma Sree, Padma Bhushan, Sahitya Academy, Kalaimamani and other National Awards for his works and songs. He is praised for his elegant stylistic language.

The novel *Kallikaatu Ithigasam* talks about the pain and sufferings of the people who are forced by the government to leave their own land in order to sustain the water of the Vaigai River by building a dam. Fourteen villages in Madurai are in the location of the dam which is constructed to sustain water of the Vaigai River. The writer is five years old when he encounters this situation and this novel is based on his personal experiences. He uses fictional characters to express his pain and emotions to the readers. The main character, Peyathdevar, possesses the characteristic traits of his mother's and father's father. The major characters of the novel are Peyathdevar, Mokkarasu, Murugayu, Sellaathal, Vandinayakkar and Chinnu. This novel is about both social issues and the feelings and emotions of the people who have become refugees in their own country.

The author has created and portrayed each character with a soulful essence which the readers find highly relatable. The most important character which has a huge impact on the readers is Peyathdevar. He is an old farmer who loves his land more than anything else in the world. His honest and loving nature earns him the respect of his village people. He showers his love on all things in his life including his land, cattle, people, plants, trees, etc. He even gives life to non-living things through his emotions. He is a man of emotions but at the same time he knows the art of controlling his own emotions.

Human life is filled with emotions and feelings. Emotions and feelings have become both the greatest strength and weakness of human beings. The people who know the art of controlling their emotions are capable of effectively surviving in this world. The people who become slaves to their emotions end up destroying their lives. In the modern world, people with the ability to manage their emotions and the emotions of the others around them are wanted by people in the business circle. Psychologists state that such people possess high levels of Emotional Intelligence.

The term *emotional intelligence* was first coined by psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990. They have divided the term emotional intelligence into four branches as follows:

1. Identifying emotions in a non-verbal level
2. Using emotions to guide cognitive thinking
3. Understanding the information emotion conveys and the action emotion generates
4. Regulating one's own emotions, for personal benefit and for the common good

Later, the term has been reworked by another psychologist and journalist, Daniel Goldman. He has tried to process this information and utilize it effectively. Daniel has extended the concept of John Mayer and Peter Salovey. He has integrated their four branches of emotional intelligence with five other traits. They are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Self-regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social Skills.

Self-awareness

The key element in emotional intelligence is self-awareness. Self-awareness is nothing but being aware of one's emotional reactions to the incidents and situations that they encounter in life. Emotionally intelligent people are normally aware about themselves. They do not let their emotions rule their life. They trust their intuition and have confidence on themselves. They know their own strengths and weaknesses.

Self-Regulation

The next element in emotional intelligence is self-regulation. It is the act of controlling one's emotions. People who are in control of their emotions do not make impulsive and careless decisions. The characteristic features of self-regulating people are integrity and thoughtfulness.

Motivation

People who regulate their emotions possess the quality of personal motivation. People with high emotional intelligence are motivated by themselves. They motivate themselves to attain their long term goals. These people love to take up challenges and do their work in an effective way.

Empathy

Empathy is another important element of emotional intelligence. It is the ability to understand and identify the wants, needs and points of view of other people. People with empathy are good in understanding people's emotions and feelings. They avoid judging others. They live their life in a n authentic way. Empathetic people are good in managing relationships.

Social Skill

The last element in emotional intelligence is social skill. It is the act of focusing on the development and success of other people rather than their own success and development. The people with social skills are excellent in creating and maintaining relationships with people. They are selfless.

These five elements of Daniel Goldman's emotional intelligence are applied to analyse the character of Peyathdevar in *Kallikaatu Ithigasam*. Peyathdevar is considered to be a man of high emotional intelligence. He knows the art of controlling his emotions and the emotions of other people. Peyathdevar is the best example of self-awareness. He is aware of his own emotions and feelings. He does not allow his own emotion to rule his life. His self-awareness is visible during the time of his wife's death. He loves his wife and shares everything with her. She becomes his strength and support in every situation. When he hears the news of his wife's death, he is heartbroken because he has lost his greatest strength. People feel both mentally and physically drained when they lose the person who has been their greatest strength. They feel greatly disturbed and recovering from this lose becomes a difficult task. Only a person who is emotionally strong can recover from such pain.

Peyathdevar is the perfect example for this. He is aware of his feelings and tries to control his emotions. He does not let his emotions ruin the rest of his life. He comes back to the original state in order to survive in the world. Peyathdevar portrays self-awareness during the shifting incident. They have shifted everything to the other side of the village. The only things that are left are windows and doors which were built by their ancestors. Peyathdevar does not want to leave the things behind and let them get destroyed by the river so he gets ready to take it with them. During this time, his daughter and the lady Murugayu try to stop him because the water has reached their home and he will not be able to come back once he goes there. This does not stop Peyathevar who does not heed to their words. He argues that he knows swimming and will come back again. He trusts himself and his abilities. He goes back to bring the windows and doors with him.

The second element of emotional intelligence is self-regulation. When a person is aware of his own emotions he must regulate it in a proper way. They do not make careless and impulsive decisions which may ruin their life. When this element is applied to Peyathdevar's character, it is clear that he regulates his emotions in a proper path. His self-regulation is evident during his son's

punishment. When the village people catch his son for his fraudulent act of selling one tamarind tree to two parties, they punish him. On seeing this, as a father Peyathdevar feels sad but he regulates his emotions and allows the people to punish his son for his wrong deed.

He does not plead to villagers to forgive his son. He controls his emotions and takes the correct decision regarding his son's life because anyone who commits a mistake has to be punished. Peyathdevar's careful decision making is seen in the scene where he learns that the water is rushing to his home in high speed. He is confused about what he has to safeguard first. He takes the decision to safeguard the people first, then the animals and finally the things. He properly regulates his emotions to avoid any mess.

Motivation is the third element of emotional intelligence. Peyathdevar is considered to be a man of motivation. He motivates himself to attain success in life. When his land is taken by the landlords, he does not lose hope. He motivates himself to get his land back so he starts to harvest the other land. When the situations turn against him, he does not lose hope and tries again with full effort. This shows the motivational he possesses to attain long term success in his life.

The fourth and important element of emotional intelligence is empathy. People who have this quality are emotionally intelligent people because it helps them understand the emotions of the other people. Peyathdevar is filled with empathy and even understands the feelings of animals and plants. His empathy towards animals is portrayed perfectly in the scene of the cow's delivery. When his neighbour calls him to recover his cow from its stomach pain, he understands the pain of cow and carefully helps it recover. He also has empathy towards human beings. When his only friend, Vandinayakkar, falls ill, no one comes forward to take care of him. Only Peyathdevar understands his emotional trauma and comforts him. The emotional comfort given by Peyathdevar helps Vandinayakkar let go of his pain and sufferings. His empathetic quality is expressed when he understands Murugayu's situation and takes care of her for the rest of her life. These incidents portray the empathetic quality of Peyathdevar.

Social skill is the final element of emotional intelligence. Peyathdevar is a perfect example of a person with efficient social skills. He cares about the villagers and understands their emotions. When they are asked by the government to move from their village to another place, Peyathdevar takes the responsibility and speaks to the government. This shows his leadership quality. He also cares about the development of his grandson, Mokkaian, who stands with him throughout his life. He does not care about his own development and success. He always cares about the people around him. This depicts his selfless character.

Analysing the character Peyadevar with reference to the five elements of emotional intelligence, he can be considered as a character with emotional intelligence. He is aware of his own emotions and channels it in the right track. He is also a man of empathy and social skills. These features make him unique and realistic and create a huge impact on the readers.