

The Paradox of Gender Difference on Emotional Maturity of Adolescents

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ABSTRACT The current study has been designed and formulated to find out if gender difference has any impact on the emotional maturity of adolescents. One hundred and sixty (160) adolescents from Uttarkashi and 160 adolescents from U.S Nagar, that is, 80 boys and 80 girls from both the districts of Uttarakhand were selected using Simple Random Sampling without Replacement as respondents for the present study. A self-outlined socio-demographic questionnaire was employed to study the socio-demographic traits of respondents and emotional maturity was assessed through standardised Emotional Maturity Scale. Z-test was employed to analyse the statistical differences in emotional maturity of respondents across gender. Results revealed that boys of both the districts were more emotionally stable, emotionally progressive, socially adjusting, had adequate personality and were more independent as compared to girls. The prominent reason for the significant difference in emotional maturity across gender was observed to be a patriarchal system, gender bias, family climate, traditions, and confounding factors.

INTRODUCTION

Humans pass through various stages of life, from infancy to childhood and through adolescence to late adulthood. Adolescence is the stage in which considerable physical, cognitive, psycho-social and emotional changes take place and this stage occurs between childhood and adulthood. It is a phase of evaluation, of decision making, of commitment, of seeking out a place in the world (Hamburg and Hamburg 2004). Adolescence is a period when the behaviour gets highly influenced by the emotions. Adolescents are facing difficulties in life due to their swings in emotions. These snags are leading to many psychological difficulties like tensions, anxiety, emotional upsets and frustration. Thus the significance of this study increases in the present-day context. Because adolescents are the future of any nation, it is foremost important to study their emotional maturity. So the current study was conducted to study the levels of emotional maturity and gender-based differences in

emotional maturity among adolescents. Sharma (2012) stated that emotions play a very crucial role in individual's life and one requires a greater emotional maturity to achieve an effective life.

Emotional maturity can be perceived as the ability of self-control which in turn results in personality development. Emotional maturity is important to sustain happiness in life without which an individual feels dependent and insecure (Bal and Singh 2015). Emotional maturity is one of the person's growth stages in life and is considered a crucial step in achieving the success and happiness along with accomplishing the physical, mental, social and economic maturity. There are various notable differences between boys and girls in terms of their emotional maturity. Boys are generally observed to be socially poised, outgoing and contented. Girls are more attentive to their feelings and those of others and are considerably more socially responsible. Subramanian and Veliappan (2013) noted that boys were emotionally more mature than their counterparts. Sinha (2014) reported a significant difference among girls and boys in accordance with their emotional maturity. It was perceived that boys were emotionally more superior to girls. The present investigation is an effort and attempt to unravel the emotional maturity patterns among boys and girls. Do girls have better command over their emotional well-

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being or are boys in more control of their emotions while going through an important developmental phase of life? To understand the young ones of today is fruitful because their maturity determines the kind of future the nation will have. Therefore, the current study has been taken up with the following objectives.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of emotional maturity of girls and boys of Uttarkashi and U. S Nagar districts of Uttarakhand.
2. To investigate if statistical differences exist in the emotional maturity of adolescents across gender of both the districts.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Uttarakhand state was purposively selected for this study because it is one of the underdeveloped states of the country and the researchers being native of the state owe to contribute towards its development. Uttarakhand state comprises 13 districts out of which U.S. Nagar and Uttarkashi districts were randomly chosen as the locale for the current study. Thereafter, a list of senior secondary government schools present in the two selected districts was prepared from which GIC Joshiyada, GGIC Kriti Inter College, GIC Boys Inter College from Uttarkashi and GIC Shantipuri, GIC and PIC from U.S Nagar were randomly selected. A sample of 80 boys and 80 girls from each locale that is 160 from Uttarkashi and 160 from U.S Nagar were selected using Simple Random Sampling without Replacement technique.

Tools

The self-designed general questionnaire was operated to analyse the socio-demographic and socio-economic traits of respondents. Emotional maturity of the subjects was measured with the help of Emotional Maturity Scale by Y. Singh and M. Bhargava. Emotional Maturity Scale is a self-reporting five-point scale. The tool consists of 48 items. The first 10 items examine emotional stability, the second 10 items examine emotional progression, the third 10 items assess social adjustment, the fourth 10 items assess per-

sonality integration and the last 8 items examine independence. The scoring procedure is such that lower the score on the scale, greater will be the degree of emotional maturity and vice-versa. As it is a standardised scale for Indian context, pre-testing was not required in the present study.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The investigators approached the school principals through a letter of request from the department which clarified the purpose of the study. After the permission for the study in the selected schools was granted by their respective principals, investigators approached the respondents in the school itself. Firstly, the motive of the study was made clear to them. Then, they were requested to give honest responses and were assured that their identity would be kept confidential and information provided by them would be used only for the study work. Thereafter, self-designed general questionnaire and emotional maturity scale were administered in the classroom setting to each subject individually after providing necessary instructions. The data collected was classified and tabulated, according to the objectives of the study, to arrive at meaningful and relevant inferences. The data was analysed using statistical techniques like frequency, percentage, mean, Z- test and standard deviation.

RESULTS

The frequency and percentage distribution of senior secondary school students of Distt. Uttarkashi and U.S Nagar on emotional maturity across gender are presented in Table 1. Analysis across Uttarkashi found that both boys and girls (36.2% and 31.2% respectively) were extremely stable on emotional stability component. However, in U.S Nagar girls, 33.7 percent were observed to be extremely unstable as compared to boys (40%) who were extremely stable on emotional stability component. Irrespective of districts too, a similar trend was seen where more percent of boys (38.1%) were extremely stable as compared to girls (28.1%) who were extremely unstable. However, a low percentage of boys (16.2%) were reported to be emotionally unstable whereas more girls (28.1%) were extremely unstable emotionally. The reason behind this

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of senior secondary school students of Distt. Uttarkashi and U.S Nagar on emotional maturity across gender

Components of emotional maturity	Level of emotional maturity	Dist. Uttarkashi ($n_1 = 160$)				Dist. U.S Nagar ($n_2 = 160$)				Total sample ($n=320$)			
		Girls ($n_{1a}=80$)		Boys ($n_{1b}=80$)		Girls ($n_{2a}=80$)		Boys ($n_{2b}=80$)		Girls ($n_1=160$)		Boys ($n_2=160$)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Emotional Stability	Extremely stable	25	31.2	29	36.2	18	22.5	32	40.0	43	26.8	61	38.1
	Moderately stable	15	18.7	19	23.7	17	21.2	25	31.2	32	20.0	44	27.5
	Unstable	22	27.5	11	13.7	18	22.5	15	18.7	40	25.0	26	16.2
Emotional Progression	Extremely unstable	18	22.5	21	26.2	27	33.7	08	10.0	45	28.1	29	18.1
	Extremely stable	15	18.7	18	22.5	21	26.2	37	46.2	36	22.5	55	34.3
	Moderately stable	23	28.7	24	30.0	24	30.0	09	11.2	47	29.3	33	20.6
Social Adjustment	Unstable	28	35.0	20	25.0	21	26.2	18	22.5	49	30.6	38	23.7
	Extremely unstable	14	17.5	18	22.5	14	17.5	16	20.0	28	17.5	34	21.2
	Extremely stable	31	38.7	28	35.0	20	25.0	19	23.7	51	31.8	47	29.3
Personality Integration	Moderately stable	15	18.7	14	17.5	20	25.0	29	36.2	35	21.8	43	26.8
	Unstable	20	25.0	14	17.5	23	28.7	25	31.2	43	26.8	39	24.3
	Extremely unstable	14	17.5	24	30.0	17	21.2	07	8.7	31	19.3	31	19.3
Independence	Extremely stable	31	38.7	21	26.2	25	31.2	28	35.0	56	35.0	49	30.6
	Moderately stable	22	27.5	14	17.5	17	21.2	15	18.7	39	24.3	29	18.1
	Unstable	11	13.7	17	21.2	18	22.5	26	32.5	29	18.1	43	26.8
Composite Emotional Maturity	Extremely unstable	16	20.0	28	35.0	20	25.0	11	13.7	36	22.5	39	24.3
	Extremely stable	19	23.7	18	22.5	24	30.0	30	37.5	43	26.8	48	30.0
	Moderately stable	18	22.5	19	23.7	17	21.2	23	28.7	35	21.8	42	26.2
	Unstable	21	26.2	24	30.0	18	22.5	13	16.2	39	24.3	37	23.1
	Extremely unstable	22	27.5	19	23.7	21	26.2	14	17.5	43	26.8	33	20.6
	Extremely stable	18	22.5	22	27.5	16	20.0	30	37.5	34	21.2	52	32.5
	Moderately stable	24	30.0	18	22.5	21	26.2	18	22.5	45	28.1	36	22.5
	Unstable	18	22.5	13	16.2	21	26.2	20	25.0	39	24.3	33	20.6
	Extremely unstable	20	25.0	27	33.7	22	27.5	12	15.0	42	26.2	39	24.3

may be different gender role socialisation practice among girls and boys. Girls are raised to be subtle and delicate whereas boys are raised to be robust, where they are not allowed to express vulnerable emotions such as anxiety, sadness etc. This leads to a greater control on emotional swings among boys and unrestrained emotional hypes among girls.

Thirty-five percent of girls in Uttarkashi were unstable, whereas thirty percent of boys were moderately stable. In the case of U.S Nagar, thirty percent of girls were noticed to be moderately stable and 46.2 percent of boys were extremely stable. On overall gender difference, irrespective of districts, it was noticed that boys (34.3%) were found to be extremely stable whereas girls (30.6%) were unstable on emotional progression category of emotional maturity.

A close perusal of Table 1 makes it clear that boys of U.S Nagar (36.2%) were more socially stable than girls (28.7%) who were more socially unstable. However, the trend was a bit different

in Uttarkashi where more number of girls (38.7%) were socially adjusted as compared to boys (35%). Overall across gender, it was noticed that social adjustments of girls (31.8%) were comparatively greater than those of boys (29.3%). It was disappointing to note that 19.3 percent of both boys and girls were extremely unstable on social adjustment component of emotional maturity.

Girls of Uttarkashi (38.7%) were observed to be more emotionally stable, as compared to boys (35%) who were extremely unstable on personality integration component of emotional maturity. However in U.S Nagar the opposite was noticed, where more boys (35%) were emotionally stable, as compared to girls. Overall on personality integration component of emotional maturity, it was noticed that girls (35%) were extremely stable as compared to boys (30.6%). The percent of boys and girls found unstable on it were 26.8 percent and 18.1 percent respectively. However, 24.3 percent of boys and 22.5 percent of girls were found to be under the ex-

tremely unstable category of personality integration component of emotional maturity.

In Uttarkashi, it was unveiled that more of boys and girls (30% and 27.5% respectively) were lacking independence, as compared to boys and girls of U.S Nagar (37.5% and 30% respectively) who were more independent. Irrespective of districts it was seen that more percent of boys (30%) were independent whereas those who were found to be dependent were girls (26.8%).

A cursory look at the composite emotional maturity of respondents depicts that thirty percent of girls in Uttarkashi were moderately stable whereas boys were extremely unstable (33.7%). The opposite was seen in the case of U.S Nagar where boys (37.5%) were noticed to be more emotionally stable as compared to girls (27.5%) who were more emotionally unstable. Similar observations were made across overall gender irrespective of districts, where boys (32.5%) were observed to be more emotionally mature as compared to girls (26.2%) who were more emotionally immature. The reason behind this may be the cultural norms that set limitations on girls and restricts them at every step of their life. This controlled rein of girl's life leads to frustrations, anxiety, depression, swings in moods and finally leads to emotional instability, whereas boys in Indian culture are given greater liberty to explore life and deal with strenuous situations with family and social support. Due to this boys tend to be more independent, socially stable, and in a nutshell emotionally stable.

DISCUSSION

It is very clear from Table 2 that there was a significant difference in emotional maturity among adolescents of Distt. Uttarkashi and U.S Nagar across the genders. Similar results were also reported by Kaur and Singh (2016) where significant differences in emotional maturity were found among male and female senior secondary school students. Across both the districts similar results were noted. It was observed that boys were more emotionally mature than girls. Boys were more emotionally stable ($Z=3.02$ and $Z=2.85$), emotionally progressive ($Z=6.79$ and $Z=3.52$), socially adjusted ($Z=3.43$ and $Z=3.17$), had an adequate personality ($Z=2.75$ and $Z=2.30$) and were independent ($Z=4.37$ and $Z=3.59$) than girls of both the districts respectively.

Table 2: Mean differences in emotional maturity of senior secondary school students of Distt. Uttarkashi and U.S Nagar across gender

Components of emotional maturity	Distt. U.S Nagar ($n_1=160$)			Distt. Uttarkashi ($n_2=160$)			Total sample ($n=320$)					
	Boys ($n_{1a}=80$)			Girls ($n_{1b}=80$)			Boys ($n_1=160$)			Girls ($n_2=160$)		
	Mean	SD	Z	Mean	SD	Z	Mean	SD	Z	Mean	SD	Z
Emotional Stability	20.19	5.23	3.02*	22.99	6.41	3.02*	21.42	6.18	2.85*	23.37	5.62	2.95*
Emotional Progression	16.8	3.70	6.79*	21.64	5.19	6.79*	20.90	5.25	3.52*	23.61	6.12	4.25*
Social Adjustment	16.86	4.84	3.43*	20.26	7.40	3.43*	19.94	5.3	3.17*	22.56	6.00	4.14*
Personality Integration	20.33	4.59	2.75*	22.91	7.04	2.75*	16.90	3.8	2.30*	21.66	5.20	9.35*
Independence	14.96	3.34	4.37*	17.85	4.88	4.37*	15.79	4.36	3.59*	18.13	5.30	4.31*
Composite Emotional Maturity	90.14	10.33	10.2*	103.65	22.99	10.2*	94.82	21.9	4.27*	109.16	22.3	5.80*

Note: (a) *Significant at 0.05 level

(b) Lower score represents higher maturity

Irrespective of districts, it was clearly depicted that boys were emotionally more mature than girls. Boys were more emotionally stable ($Z=2.95$), emotionally progressive ($Z=4.25$), socially adjusting ($Z=4.14$), had adequate personality ($Z=9.35$) and were more independent ($Z=4.31$) than girls. Eventually on composite emotional maturity too, boys were noted to be more emotionally mature as compared to girls. Similar results were also reported by Aleem (2005) who depicted that girls were less emotionally stable as compared to boys. Bhattacharjee (2016) also supported this study by affirming that boys were emotionally more mature than girls. Likewise, Singh et al. (2013) also reportedly supported it by stating that boys were slightly better than girls in emotional aspects of personality. Lal (2014) also supported it, reporting that substantial difference exists between boys and girl in the area of emotional maturity. Nuzhat (2013) also supported the present finding. He observed that female university distance learners were more emotionally unsteady than male university distance learners. He witnessed that females had a lack of capacity to dispose of problems, irritability, and need constant help for their day to day work, vulnerability, stubbornness and temper tantrum whereas male students were comparatively more stable. Rani and Kumari (2014) conducted a study on Emotional Maturity of DEd. Students in relation to their adjustment and the results of the study revealed that girls were having higher mean scores for emotional maturity than the boys. It was clearly mentioned in the scale that higher the score, the greater will be the degree of emotional immaturity and vice versa. This indicates that girls are more emotionally crude than their counterparts.

The probable reason for boys being more emotionally adequate than girls in the present research study may be that in India patriarchal system is still dominant: boys in Indian culture are amongst the privileged members of the family and society. They are allowed more exposure to their surroundings where they face the society and strenuous situations. Due to such circumstances they develop the capacity to tackle the problems in a holistic way, improve the ability to tolerate a reasonable amount of frustrations, become more self-determined, confident and highly independent whereas girls are expected to do household tasks like cooking, cleaning and taking care of younger siblings where they lack such exposure and remain restricted within the family. This, in turn, develops

a sense of dependency, insecurity and lack of social adaptability which brings about emotional instability in girls.

Probably social conditioning and mindset in relation to gender difference also have a considerable impact on emotional stability. In Indian culture, rearing practice and social conditioning are based on fixed mindset that boys should be bold, independent and confident whereas girls should be obedient, followers, delicate and submissive. This intends to develop emotional inferiority in girls and surpassing emotional superiority among boys.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the study that for sure gender difference has a great impact on the emotional maturity of adolescence. The results of the present investigation were similar across both the districts. It was observed that boys were seen to be significantly better on emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration and independence components of emotional maturity than girls. Boys were noted to be virtuous, contented, confident in social interaction and self-reliant whereas girls had a feeling of inferiority, hostility, lacked in social adaptability and were highly dependent. Substantial efforts can be made to create a positive atmosphere at school and at home for the overall development of adolescents. An effort can be made to create an atmosphere at school where they can achieve the experience they lack at their respective homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parents and teachers should ensure that gender bias does not exist even in the subtlest manner in home and school environment.
2. Co-educational settings should be given priority as it provides a positive opportunity for both the genders to explore their life and learn to adjust emotionally with each other, as ultimately they have to live in the same environment.

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