

Gender on Social and Emotional Maturity of Senior School Adolescents: A Case Study of Pantnagar

Ritu Singh, Kusha Pant and Laitonjam Valentina

*Department of Human Development and Family Studies, G.B.P.U. A. and T,
Pantnagar 263145 Distt. U.S. Nagar, Uttarakhand, India*

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ABSTRACT The present research study was undertaken to assess and compare the social and emotional maturity of 277 randomly drawn class XI students of Pantnagar, Uttarakhand across gender. A self-designed questionnaire was used to study the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Social and Emotional maturity of the respondents were assessed employing Rao's Social Maturity Scale and Emotional Maturity Scale, respectively. The study revealed that girls scored significantly higher on the social adequacy component of social maturity whereas boys were observed score higher on the social adjustment component of emotional maturity. However, no gender differences were observed on the composite social maturity and emotional maturity scores. Social and emotional maturity was found to be significantly positively correlated under both genders.

INTRODUCTION

Birth of a child is the most beautiful gift given by God to the parents. When a child is born, he receives blessings from everyone around him and starts growing and developing physically, cognitively and most importantly socially and emotionally. It is a common phenomenon that there is general excitement after birth of a child and by about 3 months of age children starts showing definite signs of distress on the one hand and delight on the other. Besides this, children not only gain more skills and abilities that build on previous development but also develop qualitatively different and more complex ways of organizing their behavior (Sroufe et al. 1999). This is how with age, new social and emotional capacities emerge and continue to change till adolescence. The term adolescence comes from the Latin verb "*adolescere*", which simply means to grow, or to grow to maturity. NCERT (1999) defined adolescence as a period of physical, psychological and social maturity from childhood to adulthood. It is a critical period of human development manifested at the biological, psychological and social levels of interaction, of variable onset and duration, but mark-

ing the end of childhood and setting the foundation for maturity.

Maturity as defined by Finley (1996) is "the capacity of mind to endure an ability of an individual to respond to uncertainty, circumstances or environment in an appropriate manner". Havighurst (1950) has emphasized the importance of attainment of social and emotional maturity by adolescence through his proposed major developmental tasks for adolescence viz., achieving new and more mature relationships with age mates of both sexes, achieving a masculine or feminine social role, achieving emotional independence from parents and adults, preparing for an economic career, and desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior.

According to Menninger (1999), emotional maturity includes the ability to deal constructively with reality. Emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and intra-personally. Raj (1996) defines social maturity as a level of social skills and awareness that an individual has achieved relative to particular norms related to an age group. Social maturity is a term commonly used in two ways like with reference to the behavior that conforms to the standards and expectation of the adults and secondly, with reference to the behavior that is appropriate to the age of the individual under observation. Thus, social maturation permits more detailed perception of the social environment which helps adolescents to influence the social circumstances

Address for correspondence:
Dr. Ritu Singh
Assistant Professor,
Department of Human Development and Family Studies
G.B.P.U. A. and T.
Pantnagar-263145
Distt. U.S. Nagar, Uttarakhand, India
E-mail: ritu.singh07@gmail.com

and develop stable patterns of social behavior. Emotional maturity and social maturity, both are vital for attaining success and happiness in one's life. Emotional maturity enables adolescents make better decisions; better choices; have more fun and less stress which enables them to have better balance in life. In addition, Singh et al. (2007) found that social support and maturity plays an important role in maintaining the health and well-being as it gives the adolescents a feeling of being loved, cared for, esteem, valued and belonging.

The 21st century is an era of technological revolution. Due to the changes in the technology, the environment of today is changing as never before. Adolescents of today are well and easily exposed to vast, unlimited and most importantly censored information and are subject to high pressure because of ever increasing competition and expectations from their family and peers. In this dynamic environment, many of the adolescents are finding it difficult to adjust themselves and even sometimes succumb to the environmental pressure. This is quite evident from the increase in the number of criminal, suicidal, drug abuse and rape cases where adolescents are involved. In some extreme cases, adolescents are even being used by terrorist groups as a weapon of terror. All of it can be attributed to their low social and emotional maturity.

At the end of the adolescent period, the adolescents are expected to be socially and emotionally mature, that is, they must be ready to face the world alone without their parents or teachers to act as buffers, as they did when they were a child. Since emotional and social maturity plays a vital role in transformation of young adolescents into an ideal citizen, therefore, the study of these parameters among adolescents is of great importance. Moreover, it is a general belief that gender difference exists in almost all developmental aspects of human being such as physical, social, emotional, cognitive etc.

Objectives

Considering the above facts in the foreground, the present investigation was conducted with the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the social and emotional maturity of adolescent boys and girls of Pantnagar, Distt. U. S. Nagar, Uttarakhand.

2. To investigate if statistical differences exist in the social and emotional maturity of respondents across gender.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The present research study was carried out exclusively in the schools of G. B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar in the year 2009. The respondents for the study were the adolescents studying in class XI of the various schools situated in Pantnagar. Out of the total eight schools situated in Pantnagar, only three schools could be purposively included in the study since only these schools provided education up to intermediate level. All the adolescents studying in class XI of the selected three schools were taken up as respondents for the present study, that is, 87 senior school adolescents (42 boys and 45 girls) from Campus School, 116 senior school adolescents from GGIC and 74 senior school adolescents from PIC, making a total of two hundred and seventy seven (277) respondents for the present study.

Tools

Self-designed socio-demographic questionnaire was used to study the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Social maturity of the respondents was assessed using Rao's Social Maturity Scale developed by Nalini Rao. This 90 items scale measures social maturity under 3 dimensions viz. Personal Adequacy, Interpersonal Adequacy and Social Adequacy. The response options available for the items are: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree with scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 for positive items and 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 for negative items respectively. The scores of a respondent on 3 sub-scales of the social maturity scale collectively give his/her Composite Social Maturity Score. Emotional maturity of the respondents was assessed through Emotional Maturity Scale by Y. Singh and M. Bhargava. It is a standardized scale. This scale consists of in total 48 questions scattered under five categories, that is, Emotional Stability, Emotional Progression, Social Adjustment, Personality Integration and Independence. Emotional Maturity Scale is a self-reporting Five Point Scale. The response options are Very Much, Much, Undecided, Prob-

ably and Never and scores assigned are 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The scores of a respondent on 5 sub-scales of the emotional maturity scale collectively give his/her Composite Emotional Maturity Score.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The respondents were approached in a group of 4 to 5 in the school itself during their free period. Firstly, the purpose 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 exclusively for the purpose of research work. English version of both the scales was used with Campus School students as this school is an English medium school where as Hindi version of the scales was provided to students from PIC and GGIC because both these schools are Hindi medium schools. Each sampled student was given questionnaires individually and was asked

to fill the questionnaires there and then only under strict supervision of the investigator. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaires within the given time and then the investigator collected the questionnaires from the students immediately. Statistical analysis was done by using Arithmetic mean, Standard deviation, Z-test and Correlation coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency and percentage distribution of adolescents on social maturity across gender is presented in Figure 1. It is very clear from the figure, that on personal adequacy component of social maturity, 51.72% of boys as well 49.07% of girls and 47.41% of boys and 47.20% of girls were unstable and moderately stable, respectively. Unfortunately, 1.24% of the girls and 0.86% of boys were also found extremely unstable. At the same time 2.48% of the girls were found extremely stable however, none of the boy was found extremely stable.

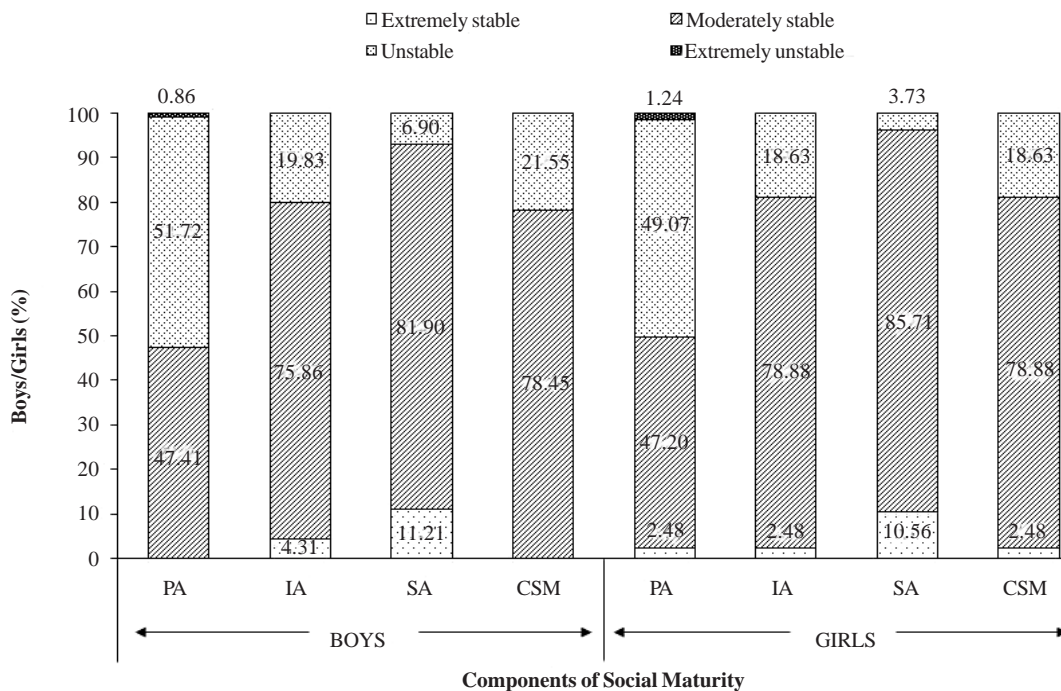


Fig. 1. Percentage distribution of senior school adolescents of Pantnagar on social maturity across gender
 Note: 1. PA indicates Personal Adequacy, IA indicates Inter-personal Adequacy, SA indicates Social Adequacy and CSM indicates Composite Social Maturity
 2. ES indicates Emotional Stability, EP indicates Emotional Progression, SA indicates Social Adjustment, PI indicates Personality Integration, I indicates Independence and CEM indicates Composite Emotional Maturity

The picture under interpersonal adequacy component of social maturity is quite different. Majority of the boys (75.86%) and girls (78.88%) were found to fall on moderately stable level of social maturity followed by unstable (boys- 19.83% and girls-18.63%) level. Only 4.31% of boys and 2.48% girls were found extremely stable. To our excitement, none of the boy or girl was found to be extremely unstable on this component.

On social adequacy component also, majority of the boys (81.90%) and girls (85.71%) were found moderately stable, however, followed by extremely stable level of (boys-11.21% and girls-10.56%) social maturity. 6.90% boys and 3.73% girls were even observed to be unstable but none was extremely unstable.

The composite social maturity score reveals that none of the boy and girl was extremely unstable whereas, 2.48% girls and none of the boys were extremely stable. Majority of the boys (78.45%) and girls (78.88%) were found to be moderately stable followed by 21.55% of boys

and 18.63% of girls as unstable on social maturity.

Figure 2 represents percentage distribution of senior school adolescents of Pantnagar on emotional maturity across gender. 45.69% boys and 52.17% girls were found to be moderately stable on emotional stability component of emotional maturity and 43.97% boys and 36.02% girls as extremely stable. However, 10.34% boys and 11.18% girls were found unstable and 0.62% girls extremely unstable as well.

Similar trend across gender was observed on the emotional progression component of emotional maturity. 47.41% boys and 47.20% girls were found moderately stable followed by 38.79% and 41.61%, respectively as extremely stable. At the same time, 11.21% boys and 10.56% girls were found unstable and 2.59% boys and 0.62% girls were observed to be extremely unstable also.

On social adjustment component, it was noticed that majority of the boys and girls were extremely stable (57.76% and 61.49%, respect-

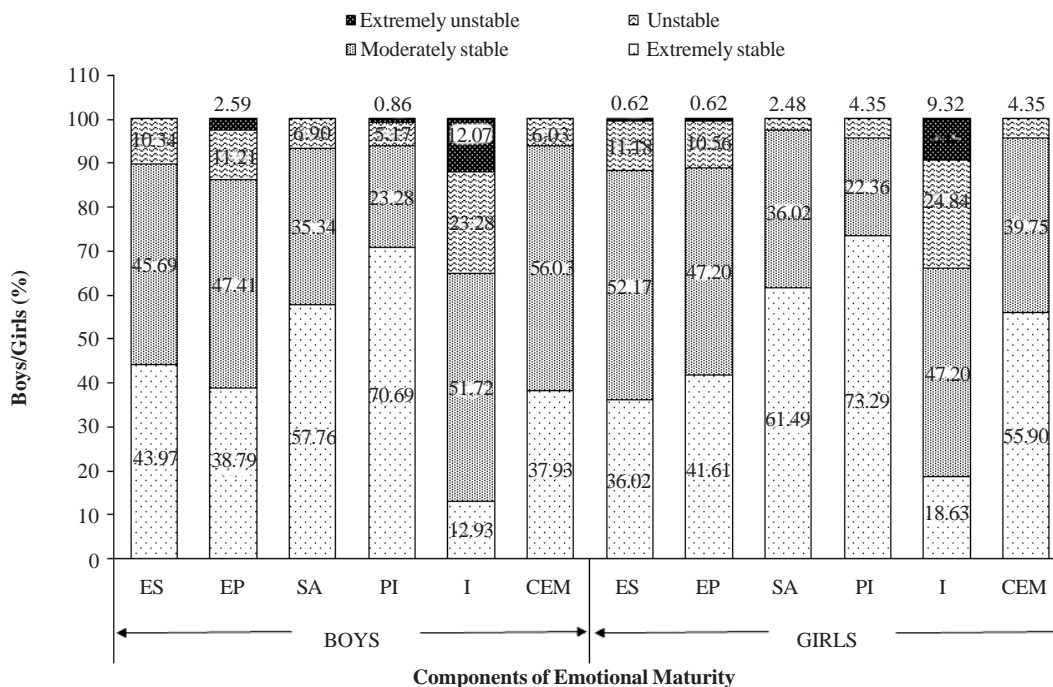


Fig. 2. Percentage distribution of senior school adolescents of Pantnagar on emotional maturity across gender
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 2. ES indicates Emotional Stability, EP indicates Emotional Progression, SA indicates Social Adjustment, PI indicates Personality Integration, I indicates Independence and CEM indicates Composite Emotional Maturity

ively). The percent boys and girls found moderately stable on it were 35.34% and 36.02%, respectively. 6.90% boys and 2.48% girls were observed to be unstable also. However, none were assessed to be extremely unstable.

Just like on social adjustment component, majority of the boys (70.69%) and girls (73.29%) were observed to be extremely stable on personality integration component of emotional maturity as well. 23.28% boys and 22.36% girls were found to have moderately disintegrated personality whereas, 5.17% boys and 4.35% girls were observed to have unstably integrated personality and 0.86% boys as extremely unstably integrated personality.

Under independence component, 51.72% of the boys and 47.20% of the girls were observed to be moderately stable followed by 23.38% boys and 24.84% girls being unstable. 12.07% of boys and 9.32% of girls were found to be extremely unstable. On the contrary, 12.93% boys and 18.63% girls were also observed to be extremely independent.

On the whole, it can be seen that 56.03% of the boys were moderately emotionally mature and 55.90% of the girls were extremely emotionally mature. Among boys, 37.93% were extremely emotionally stable. At the same time, 6.03% boys and 4.35% girls were emotionally unstable. However, none of the adolescent was found to be extremely unstable.

A close perusal of Table 1 clearly shows that social adequacy among adolescents varied significantly across gender. Girls were noticed to be more socially adequate than boys ($z=2.03$, $p<0.05$). However, differences on other components of social maturity viz. personal and interpersonal adequacy, across gender were found to

be non-significant. The result bears resemblance to the study of Athanimath and Yenagi (2011) who reported non-significant gender differences among adolescents on social maturity.

Just like social maturity, there was no significant difference in the overall emotional maturity of adolescents across gender except on the social adjustment component. Boys were observed to be significantly better on social adjustment ($Z=2.19$, $p<0.05$) than girls. Dutta et al. (1998) however contradicts it, reporting that no significant difference exists between boys and girls in the area of social adjustment.

The probable reason for girls being more socially adequate than boys in the present research study may be because in our society gender role socialization practices differ for girls and boys. Girls are reared to be submissive, nurturing, sensitive and expressive and act as more matured adults whereas boys are expected to be active and aggressive. Personality traits of girls as explained by Dunn (2002) also supported the present finding. He observed that girls score higher with regard to empathy, social responsibilities and interpersonal relationships than boys. Moreover, girls were found to be more sensitive towards their relationships with parents, friends and siblings.

Besides this, Aleen and Sheema (2005) found significant differences between the mean scores of male and female students on emotional stability and reported that female students were less emotionally stable as compared to male students. In contrast, Kaur (2001) revealed insignificant difference on emotional maturity between boys and girls. Similarly, Subbarayan and Visvanathan (2011) in their study on emotional maturity among college students revealed that the

Table 1: Mean differences in social and emotional maturity of senior school adolescents of Pantnagar across gender

	Boys($n_1=116$)		Girls($n_2=161$)		Z calculated
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
<i>Components of Social Maturity</i>					
Personal adequacy	72.62	8.69	73.73	9.94	0.98
Inter-personal adequacy	80.08	8.35	80.3	7.50	0.22
Social adequacy	85.14	7.65	86.99	7.14	2.03*
Composite social maturity	237.86	19.20	241.03	20.65	1.31
<i>Components of Emotional Maturity</i>					
Emotional stability	22.11	5.72	23.01	5.99	1.27
Emotional progression	23.19	7.02	22.13	5.64	1.35
Social adjustment	20.83	6.18	19.36	4.70	2.19*
Personality integration	18.60	5.97	17.91	5.85	0.95
Independence	17.44	4.84	17.05	4.75	0.67
Composite emotional maturity	102.23	24.61	99.48	21.32	0.96

Note: * Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2: Relationship between social and emotional maturity of senior school adolescents of Pantnagar across gender

Components of emotional/ social maturity	Boys				Girls			
	Personal adequacy	Inter- personal adequacy	Social adequacy	Composite social maturity	Personal adequacy	Inter- personal adequacy	Social adequacy	Composite social maturity
Emotional stability	.200 *	.142*	.165*	.205 *	.240**	.177 *	.262**	.133*
Emotional progression	.267**	.175*	.134*	.243**	.299**	.272**	.364**	.315**
Social adjustment	.168*	.164*	.211 *	.192 *	.113*	.196 *	.294**	.170 *
Personality integration	.176 *	.193 *	.190 *	.234 *	.327**	.287**	.317**	.261**
Independence	.169*	.126*	.232 *	.157*	.283**	.159 *	.266**	.193 *
Composite emotional maturity	.164*	.142*	.205 *	.216 *	.341**	.315**	.345**	.265**

Note: * Significant at 0.05 level **Significant at 0.01 level

emotional maturity of college students is extremely unstable but is not dependent on gender.

Table 2 highlights the relationship between social and emotional maturity of senior school adolescents of Pantnagar across gender. It was found that for boys and girls both, all the components of emotional maturity (emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration, independence) and eventually emotional maturity was significantly and positively correlated with all the components of social maturity (personal adequacy, inter-personal adequacy and social adequacy) and eventually social maturity.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from the study that gender differences do exist in social and emotional maturity of adolescents. However, these gender differences can be attributed to the variations in socialization process of both genders than to the inherent genetic character. Moreover, the difference is not so massive that it cannot be subdued. Even if gender differences do exist in various spheres of life and even if inherent natural instincts cannot be overlooked, an effort can be made to create an environment for adolescents of both sexes to give equal opportunities and freedom to perform the duties of the society and nation without gender biasness. Social and emotional maturity is reciprocal, so an effort to develop one domain would automatically lead to development in other domain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parents and teachers should ensure that gender bias does not exist even in the subtlest manner in home and school environment.

2. Schools should organize various personality development programs from time to time to help adolescents mature socially and emotionally.

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