

## Emotional Intelligence of Adolescents: An Interventional Approach

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**ABSTRACT** The present study was conducted to study the emotional intelligence levels of male and female adolescents of different sociocultural settings and to assess the efficacy of intervention programs. The total sample comprised of 325 adolescents from five different institutions of urban, rural and tribal areas of Jorhat district of Assam. A standardized questionnaire named MEII was administered to measure the Emotional Intelligence of the adolescents. An intervention package had been prepared by the researcher to enhance the emotional intelligence levels of adolescents. Study revealed that majority of adolescents of urban culture projected more efficiency in all the dimensions of emotional intelligence than the adolescents of rural culture barring interpersonal management before intervention. The adolescents of tribal culture possessed low level of emotional intelligence in all its dimensions before intervention. The results of intervention program emphasized that emotional intelligence can be elevated significantly when intervened appropriately.

### INTRODUCTION

The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed a revolutionary change in the field of human intelligence. The major figures in intelligence research recognized that people might differ not just in intellectual abilities but also in the ability to understand and manage men and women, boys and girls, to act wisely in human relations. The newer concept which emerged as a key construct in recent psychological research appeared as the most widely disclosed aspect of intelligence in current literature is, "Emotional Intelligence". Subsequently, the construct has gathered international media's attention ever since its inception. Emotional Intelligence, also called EI and often measured as an Emotional Quotient or EQ, describes an ability, capacity or skill to perceive, assess and manage the emotions of one's self, of others and of groups. The merging of emotion and intelligence as a cognitive ability under the caption "Emotional Intelligence" (EI) was proposed by Yale psychologists, Salovey and Mayer (1990).

According to Goleman (1998), emotional intelligence is the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves and for managing emotions of ourselves and our relationships. Emotional intelligence is

the innate potential to feel, use, communicate, recognize, remember, describe, identify, learn from, manage, understand and explain emotions (Hein, 2007). Emotional intelligence (EI) involved the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought (John et al. 2008). Emotional responses within a social network are evaluated based on core cultural practices. The emotions, unlike intelligence, are primarily learned. Cultures, by way of socialization and enculturation practices, have a great role to play. Miyamoto and Ryff (2011) used the term cultural scripts to refer to cultural norms that influence how people expect emotions to be regulated. The cultural scripts dictated how positive and negative emotions should be experienced and combined. Cultural scripts may also guide how people choose to regulate their emotions which ultimately influence an individual's emotional experience. Since both, emotion and intelligence are psychological processes, and all psychological processes are necessarily culturally constituted, emotional intelligence also should be shaped by environment (culture). From the viewpoint of an individual, his socio-cultural environment is made up of situations, roles, and institutions that represent normative pressures on him for correct performance and

also offer opportunities for personal expression and satisfaction. However, the effectiveness with which an individual operates his capacities is influenced greatly by the type of treatment and stimulation he receives in a particular culture during childhood and adolescent years. In adolescence, because of increasing self-consciousness and interdependence with peers, anything that violates self-respect is taken with special hurt. It may result in withdrawal, complete destruction of self, mental illness, or enormous hostility. Further, because of the complex transitional period, rates of cigarette, alcohol and drug use that peak in late adolescence have their start in early adolescence. The researches have shown that the key risk periods for drug abuse occur during major transitions in children's lives. These transitions include significant changes in physical development or social situations when children experience heightened vulnerability for problem behaviours. If these behaviours continue, they will likely lead to other risks. These risks can include academic failure, early peer rejection, and later affiliation with deviant peers, often the most immediate risk for drug abuse in adolescence (Robertson et al. 2003). Smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use are leading causes of morbidity and mortality, during adolescence as well as later in life (Johnston et al. 2013). Problems for adolescents are increasing all the more in the present fast-paced, time-driven, competitive profit-obsessed modern society with technological advancement and liberalization. The crimes and antisocial activities prevalent in the society make the people's life stressful and critical. Thus, the adolescents confront stressed parents which bring more stress to their life. Hence, in-depth research of adolescence periods for developing emotional intelligence are of great significance in today's context for the growth of any individual, family, society, as well as the nation. However, there are very few empirical studies which demonstrate that emotional functioning ability is something that it is possible to teach and develop. Wong et al. (2007) indicated the need to have interventional researches on determining the effectiveness of training on promoting the level of emotional intelligence, and the necessity of studies with cases and controls, to compare the level of emotional intelligence before and after training.

With these backdrops the researcher has undertaken the study with the following objectives:

- ♦ To study the emotional intelligence levels of male and female adolescents of different socio-cultural settings.
- ♦ To assess the efficacy of intervention programs developed to enhance the emotional intelligence in adolescents.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample universe of the study consisted of late adolescents between the age group of 16-18 (class – XI) years. Five different educational institutions from urban, rural and tribal areas of Jorhat district of Assam had been selected intentionally. The total sample selected for the present study was 325. The numbers of students from each selected class were determined on the basis of probability proportionate to the total number of students found in the five institutions. The numbers of respondents from the institution were drawn by the method of simple random sampling. Further, before finalizing the respondents the importance of the programme was presented and their willingness to participate in the same was sought.

### Research Instrument

A standardized structured questionnaire named Mangal (2004) Emotional Intelligence Inventory (MEII) was administered. The inventory measured the total Emotional Intelligence of adolescents. The inventory also assessed Emotional Intelligence of an individual separately i.e. in terms of Intrapersonal Awareness (knowing about one's own emotions), Interpersonal Awareness (knowing about others' emotions), Intrapersonal Management (managing one's own emotions) and Interpersonal Management (managing others' emotions). The inventory had provided a fivefold categorization ('very good', 'good', 'average', 'poor' and 'very poor') for an estimation and quick interpretation of emotional intelligence scores earned by an individual student. The mode of response to each of the item of the inventory was in the form of a forced choice i.e. either 'yes' or 'no', indicating complete agreement or disagreement with the proposed statement respectively. For scoring, one

mark was provided for response indicating presence of emotional intelligence and zero for the absence of emotional intelligence.

### DATA COLLECTION

The overall data collection period was divided into three phases that is,

- (i) before intervention or pre-test,
- (ii) conducting intervention programs for a duration of four months and,
- (iii) after intervention or post-test

### Intervention Package

An intervention package had been prepared by the researcher to enhance the emotional intelligence levels of the adolescents. The package used in the study was an integration of (a) one folder, (b) one activity booklet and (c) few experiential learning activities.

- a) **Folder:** The folder was prepared in order to develop emotional skills and competencies. The common skills and competencies of emotional intelligence in terms of human qualities, which are highly essential while confronting different situations in our day-to-day life, were briefly discussed in the folder.
- b) **Activity Booklet:** Fourteen activities were prepared with an attempt to develop emotional skills and competencies in adolescents.
- c) **Experiential Learning Activities:** Five additional activities were also added in the package for developing (empathy, self control, delaying gratification etc.) important dimensions of emotional intelligence through learning experiences.

Data was analysed through frequency, percentage and to ascertain the impact of intervention, a paired *t*-test was done.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The calculated values of the paired *t*-test (Table 1) focused on the determination of the effectiveness of the intervention program in modifying emotional intelligence of adolescents. The overview of the results reported that the values of paired *t*-test of male, female and total respondents of the study were highly significant ( $P < 0.01$ ) in total emotional intelligence and

its four dimensions. Similar findings were also reported by the study conducted by Ayappa and Acharya (2014) in which the pretest-post-test comparison shows a strongly significant improvement in emotional intelligence of the respondents. In all the aspects, the differences of mean scores between before and after intervention were more in female than their male counterparts except for intrapersonal management (male: 2.40, female: 2.16), which was virtually equal. It can be inferred that the intervention program was highly effective in developing the emotional intelligence of adolescents. In case of female adolescence it was more effective as the female population seemed to be more sincere, had more patience and perseverance than the male adolescents while carrying out the intervention programme. These findings can be supported by the study conducted by Katyal and Awasthi (2005) who had also found the differences between mean scores of boys and girls with regard to emotional intelligence, with girls having higher emotional intelligence than boys.

It can be observed from the results (Table 2) of urban adolescents that barring the male adolescents in the area of intrapersonal awareness (0.78<sup>NS</sup>) the results of calculated paired *t*-test were highly significant ( $P < 0.01$ ) in all the aspects. The highly significant result of total adolescents ( $t = 6.14$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) in the area of intrapersonal awareness proved the contribution of female adolescents in terms of increased scores in the level of intrapersonal awareness after intervention. The non-significant result of male adolescents in the area of intrapersonal awareness proved that the enhancement of scores after intervention in this dimension was not remarkable. The reason could be that, in reality some of the male adolescents of urban areas seemed to be overconfident about any critical, practical and realistic thinking during the time of intervention as far as their own development was concerned. Those adolescents' attitude made them somewhat inattentive and, thus, they put less effort to give deep insights for the optimum development of their self-awareness skills. The remaining results of paired *t*-test of male, female, and total adolescents of urban areas proved that the intervention package was highly effective in bringing some necessary changes in the development of emotional intelligence of urban adolescents. The results of the study done by Kaur (2011) also clearly demonstrated the positive

**Table 1: Difference in emotional intelligence of the respondents across three socio-cultural settings**

Emotional intelligence	Total respondents across three socio-cultural settings N = 325																	
	Male N = 101			Female N = 224														
	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	Mean	SD	Difference of mean												
Total emotional intelligence	60.71	11.05	10.81	9.40	12.77**	60.36	70.94	8.79	10.00	10.58	20.08**	60.47	70.68	9.53	10.25	10.21	23.77**	
Intrapersonal awareness	15.56	18.29	4.68	3.11	2.73	5.71**	14.79	18.74	3.44	4.16	3.95	14.98**	15.03	18.60	3.87	3.86	3.57	15.10**
Interpersonal awareness	14.72	17.01	3.77	4.68	2.29	5.74**	14.05	17.05	3.13	3.32	3.00	13.29**	14.26	17.04	3.38	3.46	2.78	13.93**
Intrapersonal management	13.74	16.14	4.74	4.45	2.40	7.13**	14.13	16.29	3.74	4.11	2.16	9.22**	14.01	16.24	4.07	4.23	2.23	11.63**
Interpersonal management	17.33	18.63	3.35	3.47	1.30	3.96**	17.30	19.19	2.96	2.58	1.89	9.15**	17.31	18.99	3.08	2.86	1.68	9.64**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 probability level.

**Table 2: Difference in emotional intelligence of urban respondents before and after intervention**

Emotional intelligence	Urban respondents N = 129																	
	Male N = 35			Female N = 94														
	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	Mean	SD	Difference of mean												
Total emotional intelligence	63.94	70.09	12.48	11.10	6.15	5.90**	63.66	72.49	8.17	9.18	8.83	14.23**	63.74	71.84	9.98	9.75	8.10	14.97**
Intrapersonal awareness	16.97	17.80	6.37	3.71	0.83	0.78 <sup>ns</sup>	15.87	19.26	3.26	4.89	3.39	7.72**	16.17	18.86	4.33	4.63	2.69	6.14**
Interpersonal awareness	15.74	16.94	3.86	3.83	1.20	2.21**	15.13	17.66	2.88	2.89	2.53	8.02**	15.29	17.47	3.17	3.17	2.18	7.84**
Intrapersonal management	15.31	16.94	4.15	2.87	1.63	2.69**	14.94	16.74	4.00	4.05	1.80	6.29**	15.04	16.80	4.03	3.76	1.76	6.64**
Interpersonal management	17.17	18.40	4.20	4.19	1.23	2.37**	17.74	19.53	2.58	2.56	1.79	6.55**	17.57	19.16	3.09	3.04	1.59	6.60**

NS – Non-significant \*\* Significant at 0.01 probability level.

impact of the intervention program on the emotional intelligence skills of the urban group exposed to the intervention program.

The paired *t*-test results (Table 3) deduce that the intervention program was successful to its full extent in rural areas as the calculated values in all the variables of emotional intelligence were highly significant ( $P < 0.01$ ). The differences of mean are higher in case of female adolescents than that of male adolescents in total emotional intelligence and intrapersonal awareness. Further, the differences of mean in male and female adolescents in the dimension of intrapersonal management (male: 3.16, female: 2.89) and interpersonal management (male: 2.11, female: 1.73) and interpersonal awareness (male: 3.53, female: 4.02) were almost equal. It can be noted that the researcher could attract enough attention of rural adolescents for emotional learning during intervention as their behaviour patterns and the activities of the program complemented each other. The behaviour patterns of rural adolescents were predominated by the attributes as humility, politeness, quietness, honesty and most importantly they considered the entire programme as a new approach to lead a successful life. It also had a linkage with indigenous thinking of rural people to be nice to other people. In rural areas it had been observed that the female adolescents were more enthusiastic, sincere and steady while gaining multifaceted emotional education than the male counterparts.

It can be revealed that (Table 4) the calculated values of paired *t*-test of male, female and total adolescents of tribal area are highly significant ( $P < 0.01$ ) in total emotional intelligence and its dimensions except the male adolescents in the dimension of interpersonal management. The differences of mean in total emotional intelligence (male: 8.64, female: 9.51), interpersonal awareness (male: 2.00, female: 2.49), and interpersonal management (male: 0.29, female: 2.21) are higher in case of females than the male counterparts. These findings are in sync with the study conducted by Ayappa and Acharya (2014) who also mentioned that females have high interpersonal management than that of males. Though, the tribal male respondents participated quietly in the intervention program, majority of them were not very enthusiastic and were concerned about the materialistic benefits from the program. Despite of all these, results showed an excellent improvement in some aspects of

**Table 3: Difference in emotional intelligence of rural respondents before and after intervention**

Emotional intelligence	Rural respondents N = 110															
	Male N = 38				Female N = 72				Total N = 110							
	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	t	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	t	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	t				
Total emotional intelligence	61.21	10.68	12.95	9.10**	62.06	75.78	6.92	9.17	13.72	12.03**	61.76	75.22	8.37	9.13	13.46	15.51**
Intrapersonal awareness	15.42	18.95	3.04	2.62	15.11	20.47	2.94	2.78	5.36	12.66**	15.22	19.95	2.97	2.81	4.73	14.26**
Interpersonal awareness	14.79	18.32	4.22	3.05	14.56	18.58	3.15	2.91	4.02	9.83**	14.64	18.49	3.54	2.95	3.85	10.04**
Intrapersonal management	13.47	16.63	4.54	4.48	13.78	16.67	3.26	4.27	2.89	6.12**	13.67	16.65	3.73	4.50	2.98	9.04**
Interpersonal management	18.10	20.21	2.15	1.79	18.33	20.06	2.35	2.01	1.73	4.65**	18.25	20.11	2.28	1.93	1.86	6.98**

\*\* Significant at 0.01 probability level.

**Table 4: Difference in emotional intelligence of tribal respondents before and after intervention**

Emotional intelligence	Tribal respondents N = 86																	
	Male N = 28				Female N = 58				Total N = 86									
	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	t	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	t	Mean	SD	Difference of mean	t						
Total emotional intelligence	56.00	64.64	7.92	10.50	8.64	7.68**	52.90	62.41	7.46	6.46	9.51	10.37**	53.91	63.12	7.71	8.01	9.21	12.87**
Intrapersonal awareness	14.00	18.00	3.51	2.83	4.00	5.15**	12.66	15.76	3.36	2.39	3.10	6.96**	13.09	16.49	3.45	2.74	3.40	8.64**
Interpersonal awareness	13.36	15.36	3.02	4.01	2.00	3.38**	11.68	14.17	2.14	2.62	2.49	5.37**	12.23	14.56	2.57	3.17	2.33	6.37**
Intrapersonal management	12.14	14.50	5.26	5.01	2.36	2.88**	13.24	15.07	3.62	3.84	1.83	3.66**	12.88	14.88	4.22	4.24	2.00	4.68**
Interpersonal management	16.50	16.79	3.39	3.34	0.29	0.33 <sup>NS</sup>	15.34	17.55	3.30	2.52	2.21	4.66**	15.72	17.30	3.36	2.82	1.58	3.64**

NS – Non-significant      \*\* Significant at 0.01 probability level.

emotional intelligence of tribal adolescents. Pool and Qualter (2012) also found that it is possible to increase some aspects of emotional intelligence ability. The non-significant result of male adolescents only in one area disclosed the fact that the male adolescents of tribal area were still lacking in developing skills such as analyzing and understanding relationships, skills for communication, being co-operative, listening openly and sending convincing messages, negotiating and resolving disagreements even after gaining knowledge through intervention program. However, it remains a fact that the intervention package has been a success in such an area where the idiosyncratic nature of human being was prevalent and hence completing the whole program became a challenge for the researcher. The understanding level of this age, developmental change and the values behind the emotional education in terms of intervention might have a significant influence on the adolescents resulting which a remarkable achievement was seen among this particular section of society.

**CONCLUSION**

It can be concluded and highlighted from the results of the study that a majority of adolescents of urban culture projected more efficiencies in all the dimensions of emotional intelligence than the adolescents of rural culture barring interpersonal management before intervention. The adolescents of tribal culture possessed considerably low level of emotional intelligence in all its dimensions before intervention. The overall picture of intervention emerging from the results strongly emphasized that the emotional intelligence can be modified and elevated significantly when intervened appropriately. The intervention program had been a success to a great extent and could bring significant developmental changes and eventually modified and upgraded the level of emotional intelligence of urban and rural adolescents except for the urban male adolescent in the dimension of intrapersonal awareness. So far as the tribal adolescents were concerned, the intervention program was effective significantly within the purview of rigid sociocultural prescription barring the male respondents in the dimension of intrapersonal management. Thus, the effect of intervention had been highly successful to enrich the emotional intelligence of adolescents as more than

half of the adolescents levels of emotional intelligence were in lower side before intervention (poor and very poor) whereas, after intervention only one fifth of them had depicted the same picture.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

‘Emotional Intelligence’ should be introduced to the students of school and college levels using rigorous and comprehensive programs by the policymakers to minimize the burning social problems, tensions and dissatisfaction caused by poor emotional health of today’s children as well as youth.

The intervention package developed by the researcher may be used for an effective application of emotional learning for any literate group.

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