

Assessment of Emotional Intelligence of Tribal Adolescents of Udaipur: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT The study was conducted on 60 tribal adolescents (30 boys and 30 girls) of 16-18 years studying in senior secondary school of purposively selected "Tidi" village of Udaipur. The level of emotional intelligence of the tribal adolescents was assessed by administering a standardized emotional intelligence inventory - MEII (2004) by S.K.Mangal and Shubhra Mangal. Percentages were calculated to draw inferences and t-test was applied to assess the impact of gender on emotional intelligence of tribal adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period during which a young person learns who he is and what he really feels. It is a crucial time for young people to develop their capacity for empathy, abstract thinking and future time perspective; a time when the close and dependent relationships with parents begin to give way to more intense relationships with peers and other adults. It has been regarded as a group searching for them to find some form of identity and meaning in their lives (Erickson 1968).

Youth today are living in an anxiety - ridden atmosphere: "an age of anxiety". The all pervasive atmosphere encourages adolescents constantly to compare themselves, consequently the new generation has to live, eat and breathe competition which makes them vulnerable to the threats of various psychosomatic problems.

Regarding the present emotional state of adolescents, Goleman (1995) cited that "there is a world-wide trend for the present generation to be more troubled emotionally than the last; more lonely and depressed; more angry and unruly; more impulsive and angry and more nervous and prone to worry."

With the mushrooming of so many of multinational companies with lucrative packages, the demand for individuals with soft skills like the ability to communicate, promote teamwork, present ideas, solve problems and manage projects and people has arisen. Now it is believed

that within a person's soft-skills lies his true smartness and this smartness is defined as emotional intelligence (EQ).

Emotional intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's own thinking and action (Salovey and Mayer 1990).

Adolescence is the most vulnerable stage to the emotional problems, thus teaching adolescents about emotions and how they deal with others as well as their actions can be very helpful in their daily struggles and maintaining good relationships.

But if tribal adolescents are looked at, which are also a major part of Indian population, the conditions are lamentable. The tribes are economically inferior, uneducated at times and are less exposed to the modern world. Being the earliest inhabitant of the country, they have maintained a distinctive life style for centuries. Unfortunately the isolation has kept them out of mainstream and made them easy prey to exploitation (Talesara 1994) and when they are forced to get along with the mainstream culture, they don't get adjusted easily. Kundu (1984) stated that lack of education and deprivation that these tribes face due to poverty may result in frustration both in personal as well as social relationships thereby resulting in poor self-concept and low self-esteem.

With the lots of reservations and programmes launched for tribal people for upliftment and to

bring them into the mainstream, the emotional intelligence i.e. the ability to get adjusted with new people and new situations needs to be addressed and strengthened. Thus the present study was taken up to assess the level of emotional intelligence that these tribes possess so that the positive things of their culture could be enhanced and the deprivations could be identified so that they could get amalgamated with the mainstream and hence contributing to national integration.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample: The sample for the present study consisted of school going tribal adolescents of 16-18 years.

Sample Size: For selecting the sample a tribal village Tidi was purposively selected on the basis of: availability of tribal adolescent of 16-18 years and availability of senior secondary school in the village. From the school present in the village, 60 tribal adolescents (30 boys and 30 girls) of 16-18 years were selected randomly.

Tools Used for Data Collection

(i) **Background Information Proforma:** Background information of the respondents was taken through the proforma made by the investigator to illicit information regarding age, sex, family type and family income of respondents and educational and occupational status of the parents of the respondents.

(ii) **Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory (MEII) (2004):** It was used to assess the emotional intelligence of the adolescent.

Data Collection

The selected subjects were approached by the investigator as per the convenience of the school. Firstly the subjects were asked to fulfill the required information in the appropriate columns of the background information proforma to get information regarding their home and family. After that emotional intelligence inventory was given to the subjects in the classroom settings. The necessary instructions were given to the subjects and were asked to fill required information. The respondents were asked to read the inventory carefully and respond to each item. The total time allocated was 30-40 minutes.

Data Analysis

The responses obtained were scored, coded, tabulated and then percentages were drawn and analyzed. t-test for two samples means was used to study the impact of gender on emotional intelligence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The emotional intelligence of the tribal adolescents was assessed by administering the emotional intelligence inventory - MEII (2004) and the responses of the subjects were tabulated and subjects were categorized as having very good, good, average, poor and very poor level of emotional intelligence.

Table 1 represents the data regarding percentage distribution of tribal adolescents with regard to their emotional intelligence.

Table 1: Level of emotional intelligence among tribal adolescents

Variable	Category	Description	Total (%)
Emotional Intelligence	A	Very good	0.00
	B	Good	3.33
	C	Average	35.00
	D	Poor	55.00
	E	Very poor	6.67

Results in table 1 and figure 1 reveal that majority of adolescents (55%) were found to have poor level of emotional intelligence followed by 35 percent of subjects in average category. A

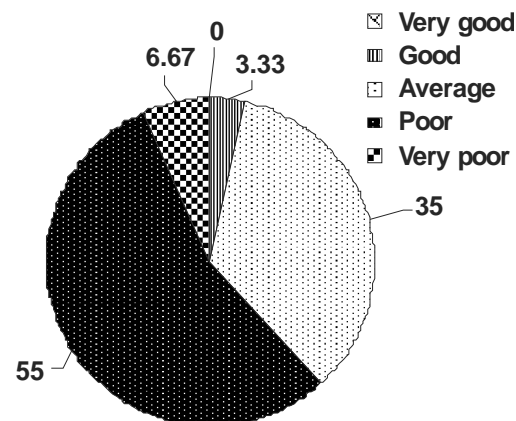


Fig. 1. Percentage distribution of emotional intelligence among tribal adolescents

few subjects (33% and 6.66%) found their place in good and very poor category respectively. Thus it can be inferred that the emotional intelligence of the tribal adolescents was found to be poor. The probable reason behind this may be attributed to the adherence of tribes to their culture. A strong sense of community belongingness in them and confinement to their cultural values and norms may restrict them to get involved with the changing outside world. Tribes are primitive and prefer living in isolation i.e. in remote areas or dense forests, which generally cut-off from other civilized areas. Hence the tribals have limited contact with other societies. The habit of isolation helps to preserve them to their social customs and traditions to a larger extent (Mehta 1994).

Another reason for the poor level of emotional intelligence among the tribal adolescents may be attributed to the distinctive lifestyle or socio-cultural characteristics of the nomadic society. The social isolation, lower socio-economic status and educational backwardness may be some of the factors accounting for lower emotional intelligence of tribal adolescents as these conditions do not provide stimulating environment to them to develop the competent emotional skills in them. The lower the economic status of a person more frustration he experiences both in personal and social relationships and thereby has a poor emotional intelligence level (Henry and Mishra 2006).

The family type may also be a factor for lower emotional intelligence as tribes have a family of procreation in which nuclear family setup is coming. In joint families adolescents find more opportunities to develop personal, interpersonal and social adequacy and thus become more emotionally stable. These results are in line with Audichya (2005), who found that adolescents from joint families were having high emotional intelligence. Moreover the lower educational status of parents is also a contributing factor. The parents are illiterate and they do not value education for their wards because it does not pay any immediate rewards (Azad 1976). Harrod and Scheer (2005) found a positive relationship between educational status of parents and emotional intelligence of children

Goodnow (1985) in his study argues that if societies differ in their conception of the ideal traits in children then parental beliefs and goals might differ reasonably as parents seek to

develop culturally defined traits. In tribes, the parents prepare their children for arranging the basic physiological needs only. Their culture do not addresses the emotional needs to be developed. This can be supported by Maslow (1976) as he stated that when physiological needs are not met, psychological needs take a backseat. Thus in tribal culture, less stress is given on emotional skills enrichment and hence resulting in poor level of emotional intelligence among tribal adolescents.

The mean scores and t-value of emotional intelligence of tribal adolescent boys and girls have been presented in table 2 and figure 2. The table clearly depicts that there is significant difference of emotional intelligence between tribal adolescent boys and girls at 5% level of significance. It can also be seen that the mean scores of emotional intelligence of boys are comparatively higher than that of girls. This may be due to the reason that in India a patriarchal system is still dominant: boys in all cultures are amongst the advantaged members of the family as well as society. They are allowed more exposure to their surroundings in comparison to girls. In tribal societies too, during adolescence, the girls are expected to do household chores like cooking, cleaning and taking care of younger siblings.

Table 2: Mean scores of emotional intelligence of boys and girls

Variable	Total Mean Scores		T- Value
Emotional intelligence	Girls (n=30) 58.16	Boys (n=30) 62.46	2.18*

* Significant at 0.05 level of significance

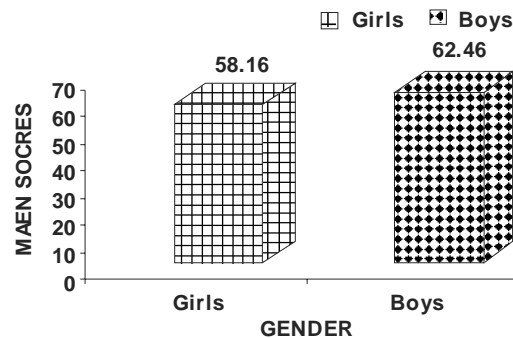


Fig. 2. Mean scores of emotional intelligence of girls and boys

For boys having higher emotional intelligence than girls, the reason may be the socialization in the society. The tribal girls are less often exposed to an enhanced social climate (Henry and Mishra 2006) and thus their interpersonal skills get hampered.

Boys in all culture in India are amongst the advantageous member of the family as well as society. In tribes too, girls are expected to do household chores, cooking, cleaning and taking care of younger siblings and in adolescence, they are usually confined in home. This also contributes to their lesser awareness of their own potentialities, emotions and of others and thus lowers emotional intelligence level.

If biological reasons are looked at, boys are able to control their emotions and are able to express them in a socially approved manner. Boys have lesser anxiety and that's why they are free of emotional conflicts (Audichya 2005). These differences in emotional aspects and better ability of boys to manage emotion make them emotionally intelligent than girls.

If the school context is taken into account, the tribal girls also take a backseat over there. They participate less in the activities like educational and co-curricular in school in comparison to boys. These activities provide an opportunity for self-awareness, self-expression and fosters communication skills and awareness about the world, which all contribute to emotional intelligence. As girls participate less in these activities they lag behind in acquiring higher emotional intelligence.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results of the present study, it could be concluded that the more emotionally intelligent an adolescent is, more easily he bears the turmoils and pressures of this age group. The socio-cultural, economic and educational variables of tribal population operate as a limiting factor for adolescents to be emotionally intelligent. Thus,

to bring this culturally and socially isolated population into the mainstream which is a need for national integration their emotional intelligence needs to be enhanced.

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