
FEELINGS OF SOCIAL INTERACTION ANXIETY AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY AMONG INDIAN ADOLESCENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND CASTE

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ABSTRACT

Emotional maturity refers to our ability to understand, and manage, our emotions. Emotional maturity enables us to create the life we desire. A life filled with happiness and fulfillment. We define success in our own terms, not society's, and we strive to achieve it. Our emotional maturity is observed through our thoughts and behaviors. When we are faced with a difficult situation, our level of emotional maturity is one of the biggest factors in determining our ability to cope. Adolescence is a time of transition from childhood to being an independent adult; it is a period of life characterized by change and by moving away from one's family and towards one's peers. Fears about peer rejection emerge at this stage. At the heart of social phobia and anxiety is the belief that one will behave in an embarrassing way in social situations and be negatively socially evaluated by others for doing so. Keeping in view the effect of caste and gender on this time of transition in adolescents this study examined feelings of social interaction anxiety and emotional maturity in male and female adolescents belonging to different caste system in India. A total of 180 students were randomly selected from various schools of Jodhpur city. Of these, each 60 adolescent students were from general caste, schedule caste and schedule tribes caste respectively with age ranging from 15-18 years. Out of these 180 adolescents, 90 adolescent students are male and 90 are female adolescent students. Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava and Brief Form of Social & Phobia & Anxiety Inventory (SPAI-B) for Adolescents by Garcia Lopez were administered individually on all the participants. It was hypothesized that there will be significant differences in the level of social interaction anxiety and emotional maturity of adolescents belonging to different caste. The t-test was applied to analyze the data. The results indicate that there is significant difference between male and female adolescents belonging to different caste on social interaction anxiety and emotional maturity dimensions.

Keywords: social interaction anxiety, emotional maturity, adolescents, caste, gender

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents make up large percent of the Indian population. During adolescence, young people experience profound physical, psychological, emotional and social changes. In an attempt to cope with the complex changes and challenges of development, adolescents often take risks to explore who they are and test their limits as individuals. Because adolescents are in developmental transition, they are particularly sensitive to social and environmental influences (Mulye et al, 2009). Environmental factors - including family, friends, schools, neighborhoods, policies, and societal cues - can support or challenge young people's health and wellbeing. Behavior patterns established during this period affect their current and future health status. Every parent, family, Tribe, and partnering agency has the opportunity to promote the health and wellbeing of the next generation, or to default on this responsibility.

"Mature" means a completed natural growth. The mature person has developed attitudes in relation to himself and his environment which have lifted him above "childishness" in thought and behavior. Emotions are "voices of our soul", parts of us that are closest to our inner core, to our primordial, spontaneous and intuitive being. Emotional maturity is not related to physical maturity which is expected to be but, does not grow with our chronological age. Emotionally mature people are sensible who do not whine, crib or play the blame game. They have full control over their lives. They reflect on their lives and on the role that they play in other people's lives. Whenever there is a conflict between rational thinking and emotions - if the emotions are healthy - my experience leads me to believe that emotions will usually contain information that is more relevant. Emotion is the energy which makes the mind work. It supplies the energy for survival. Emotions are physical and mental feelings and are necessary for life and stimulate one to behave in a certain way (Umesh, C., 2014).

Emotionally mature people lead a well-adjusted life due to their healthy outlook on life. There are various levels of emotional maturity. The final level is emotional detachment which is the direct consequence of the true understanding of emotions and therefore, letting go of all the emotions, either good or bad and feeling happy. Emotional maturity is a significant predictor of the level of success that an individual achieves in his/her lifetime. Success includes wealth, general level of happiness, self-confidence, success in relationships, etc. where emotional maturity plays a significant role to get success. There is a difference, between emotional maturity and immaturity. The difference lies in careful thought, putting it to use constructively. We can control emotions by:

- Realizing that there are negative and positive ways to react to an impulse that comes into our mind and developing the ability to choose the way we want to react, rather than allowing it to be automatic. In other words, we can reprogram our behavior.
- Understanding that we have been in practice from infancy to react the way we presently do.

Since emotions are parts of our core being, we cannot ignore them without consequences. Many religious and New Age approaches suggest that people reject, ignore, conquer or "rise above" emotions, resulting in deep inner conflicts that can lead to even more suppression, control and fear of self-awareness. Most unhealthy emotions are deeply connected to a toxic self-image. When we block unpleasant emotions, we also block pleasant ones, since they are all intertwined. To small, dependent children, immature behavior of people around them can be so frightening that they try to absorb the shock by creating limiting beliefs and suppressing their feelings.

According to Chamberlain (1960), an emotionally matured person is one whose emotional life is well under control. In a study by Hiremani, et al, (1994) it is indicated that destitute girls were emotionally unstable due to socio-cultural deprivation and parental deprivation. In study by Praveen Kumar Jha (2002), it was found that self-confidence and emotional maturity were positively associated with vigilant style of decision making in case of executives. Alka Mankad (1999) observed that personality of emotionally matured and unmatured adolescents differ significantly. A study by Lipton et. al., (1975) revealed that emotional maturity was a major factor especially as a predictor of success in essay tests among medical students.

Occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an important decision. Anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety does not go away and can get worse over time. These feelings can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships.

Anxiety disorders are the most pervasive class of mental disorders, with 12-month prevalence in the community of about 18% (Kessler et al., 2005). Social anxiety disorder (also known as social phobia) is classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV (DSM-IV; panel 1) (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) and in the International Classification of Diseases 10(ICD-10; panel 2) (WHO, 2007) as a phobic (anxiety) disorder, alongside agoraphobia and specific phobias (from which it was first distinguished only 40 years ago) (Marks & Gelder, 1966). People with social anxiety disorder fear and avoid the scrutiny of others. The concern in such situations is that the individual will say or do something that will result in embarrassment or humiliation. These concerns can be so pronounced that the individual shuns most interpersonal encounters, or endures such situations only with intense discomfort. Once largely neglected by the medical community, social anxiety disorder came to the attention of the general medical community a decade ago, (Stein ,1996) and is now garnering increased attention and recognition as a widespread, impairing, but treatable condition (Schneier, 2006).

The above reviewed literature indicates the dearth of information about impact of emotional maturity on particularly social anxiety among adolescents. Hence the present study is an attempt in this direction. The present study has two fold objectives: To study the effect of gender on emotional maturity and social interaction anxiety of adolescents. To examine the influence of caste system in the development of emotional maturity and social interaction anxiety of adolescents.

METHOD

Design

The present research is a field study in which the social interaction anxiety and emotional maturity of adolescents belonging to different caste were assessed. Independent variable (IV) is three caste categories i.e. General Caste, Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe caste and gender i.e. boys and girls whereas dependent variable is social interaction anxiety and different factors of emotional maturity.

Sample

For the present study an incidental purposive random sample consists of 180 adolescents was taken, both boys and girls between the age group of 15 to 18 years of the Jodhpur city. Of these,

each 60 adolescent students were from general caste, schedule caste and schedule tribes caste respectively. Among these 90 adolescent students are male and 90 are female adolescent students.

Tools

- *Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS)* by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava. It measures five categories of emotional maturity: (a) Emotional Unstability (b) Emotional Regression (c) Social Maladjustment (d) Personality Disintegration and (e) Lack of Independence.
- *Brief Form of Social Anxiety & Phobia Inventory (SPAI-B) for Adolescents* by Garcia Lopez. SPAI-B is a short self-report, particularly useful when screening for social anxiety. It consists of 16 items using a 5-point Likert scale (1-5).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table no. 1: Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' values of adolescent belong to general and schedule castes on social interaction anxiety.

Factor	General Caste Adolescents			Schedule Caste Adolescents			't'	P
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Social Interaction Anxiety	60	22.83	11.12	60	21.36	7.48	0.84	No Sig.

*** P<0.001 ** P<0.01 *P<0.05

Table 1 show that there is no significant difference between general and schedule caste adolescents on social interaction anxiety.

Table no. 2: Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' values of adolescent belong to general and schedule tribe castes on social interaction anxiety.

Factor	General Caste Adolescents			Schedule Tribe Adolescents			't'	P
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Social Interaction Anxiety	60	22.83	11.12	60	24.14	6.13	0.79	No Sig.

*** P<0.001 ** P<0.01 *P<0.05

Table 2 show that there is no significant difference between general and schedule tribe caste adolescents on social interaction anxiety. Children with social anxiety disorder do not show evidence of high rates of childhood maltreatment or other specific forms of early-onset psychosocial adversity (Chavira & Stein, 2005). However, research consistently shows that a heritable temperamental trait known as behavioural inhibition is commonly an antecedent to the development of social anxiety disorder (Hirshfeld-Becker et al., 2007). Social anxiety disorder, notably the generalised type, is familial (Stein et al., 1998).

Table no. 3: Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' values of boys and girls adolescent on social interaction anxiety.

Factor	Boys			Girls			't'	P
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Social Interaction Anxiety	90	21.48	8.03	90	24.08	8.86	2.05*	0.05*

*** P<0.001 ** P<0.01 *P<0.05

Table 3 show that there is significant difference between adolescent boys and girls on social interaction anxiety. As from the result it is clearly indicated that gender differences have some impact in the development of social anxiety in adolescents. The National Comorbidity Survey-Replication of U.S.A provides prevalence estimates of 12-month and lifetime DSM-IV social anxiety disorder as 7.1% and 12.1%, respectively, with higher prevalence in females (Kessler et al., 2005 & Ruscio et al., 2008).

Table no. 4: Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' values of adolescents belong to general and schedule castes on overall and five factors of emotional maturity scale.

Factor	General Caste Adolescents			Schedule Caste Adolescents			't'	P
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Emotional Unstability	60	22.28	8.00	60	19.71	5.61	2.03*	0.05*
Emotional Regression	60	22.63	6.97	60	19.13	4.98	3.16**	0.01**
Social Maladjustment	60	19.86	6.06	60	17.70	5.71	2.01*	0.05*
Personality Disintegration	60	19.58	6.68	60	15.80	5.47	3.39**	0.01**
Lack of Independence	60	17.23	4.82	60	16.11	4.36	1.32	No Sig.
Overall Emotional Maturity	60	101.30	24.58	60	88.01	18.28	3.35**	0.01**

*** P<0.001 ** P<0.01 *P<0.05

Table 4 shows that there are significant differences between general caste adolescents and schedule caste adolescents group on overall and four factors of emotional maturity i.e. emotional unstability, emotional regression, social maladjustment and personality disintegration but not significant on lack of independence factor. These show that general castes adolescent are more emotionally mature in comparison of schedule caste adolescents. This is because schedule caste adolescents face problems of discrimination on the basis of caste system in their societies. Emotions are internal events that coordinate many psychological subsystems including physiological

responses, cognitions, and conscious awareness. Emotions typically arise in response to a person's changing relationships (Mayer et al., 2000).

Table no. 5: Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' values of adolescents belong to general and schedule tribe castes on overall and five factors of emotional maturity scale.

Factor	General Caste Adolescents			Schedule Tribe Adolescents			't'	P
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Emotional Unstability	60	22.28	8.00	60	28.10	9.20	3.69**	0.01**
Emotional Regression	60	22.63	6.97	60	29.26	8.88	4.54**	0.01**
Social Maladjustment	60	19.86	6.06	60	24.80	7.57	3.93**	0.01**
Personality Disintegration	60	19.58	6.68	60	26.71	9.15	4.87**	0.01**
Lack of Independence	60	17.23	4.82	60	21.31	5.32	4.40**	0.01**
Overall Emotional Maturity	60	101.30	24.58	60	130.15	34.59	5.26**	0.01**

*** P<0.001 ** P<0.01 *P<0.05

Table 5 shows that there are significant differences between general caste adolescents and schedule tribe caste adolescents group on overall and five factors of emotional maturity i.e. emotional unstability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence factor. It shows that caste have significant role in the development of emotional maturity among adolescents. From the result it is clear that schedule tribe adolescents are more emotionally mature in comparison of general caste adolescents. Due to the discrimination on the basis of caste system the schedule tribe adolescent becomes more emotionally mature to cope out from this discrimination of society in their day-to-day life.

Table no. 6: Shows Mean, S.D. and 't' values of adolescent boys and girls on overall and five factors of emotional maturity scale.

Factor	Boys			Girls			't'	P
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Emotional Unstability	90	23.00	8.30	90	23.73	8.66	0.58	No Sig.
Emotional Regression	90	23.47	8.15	90	23.87	8.37	0.32	No Sig.
Social Maladjustment	90	20.50	7.53	90	21.07	6.69	0.54	No Sig.
Personality Disintegration	90	20.90	9.17	90	20.50	7.89	0.31	No Sig.
Lack of Independence	90	18.64	5.17	90	17.80	5.46	1.06	No Sig.
Overall Emotional Maturity	90	106.34	33.65	90	106.63	30.14	0.06	No Sig.

*** P<0.001 ** P<0.01 *P<0.05

Table 6 shows that there are no significant gender differences between adolescent boys and girls on overall and five factors of emotional maturity i.e. emotional unstability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence. This shows that adolescent boys and girls are equally emotionally mature. Generally girls are emotionally unstable because they are confined to home, cooking, family orientation and more restrictions, due to this they don't facilitate the other human beings. The adolescent girls need to develop on all factors of emotional maturity in order to fulfill their potential and find happiness in their adult lives (Subhash, M., 2015). But in today's educational scenario the gender differences are minimum due to this girls are equally participate in all things and face same challenges which the boys are facing this make them equally emotional matured in today's society.

LIMITATIONS

Generalizations "from this study should be considered in the light of certain limitations. These are that, the sample included a limited age range, was small in number, and was drawn from one city only. There is a need for additional studies from other social and cultural contexts to identify how the range of caste, feelings of social anxiety and emotional maturity constructs are dependent on contextual features of different school systems and gender roles.

CONCLUSION

The analyzed and interpreted findings of the study have led to the following conclusions. Adolescents with different caste have no significant difference on social interaction anxiety but there is significant differences were found between male and female adolescents (gender differences) on social interaction anxiety. On the other hand caste have significant role in the development of emotional maturity among adolescents of different castes. Sex of the adolescents

has not influenced their emotional maturity. This study can help a lot in improving the system of education for the awareness of casteism barrier among children and adolescents as these are real gems of education system. Feeling of emotional maturity have very important place in the life of individual. They help in shaping the personality of an individual and coping from their social anxiety. But at some point caste discrimination hinder in the development of emotionally matured person. This type of study shall be helpful for educationist and psychologists as they make the children and adolescents more emotionally matured to cope out from their social anxiety and they become better citizens of the nation.

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