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A STUDY ON SOCIAL MATURITY AMONG IX CLASS SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

POOJA SHUKLA[1], DR. HARIOM CHAUHAN[2]

[1] RESEARCH SCHOLOR, IFTM UNIVERSITY, MORADABAD, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA.

[2] ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, IFTM UNIVERSITY, MORADABAD, UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA.

ABSTACT

The essence of a person's social growth is their ability to develop positive relationships with others, adhere to the accepted rules of society, and participate in the expectations of society through established channels. This is Key in managing interactions between people in their communities. The primary focus of this project was to determine how social growth develops through the lens of the social maturity of ninth graders attending secondary schools. Social maturity was measured using Dr. Nalini Rao's Social Maturity Scale (SMS). The sample of 500 made up of boys (250) and girls (250) attending secondary schools in G. B. Nagar was used for this study. The analysis of the outcomes of this research indicates that ninth graders have an adequate amount of social growth. Even though there was no statistically significant difference in level of social growth between male and female students, it was observed that there was a statistically significant difference when comparing social growth among different school types. The information presented in this study can be used to illustrate that social growth is important both to Educators as well as Parents and to Policymakers.

Key Words: Social Maturity, Maturity, IX class students, Gender.

INTRODUCTION

Social maturity means the capacity of a person to function well, responsibly, and appropriately in a social setting. It involves characteristics like self-reliance, participation in work activities, communication effectiveness, self-direction, and purposeful social activity. These are all indicative of a person's readiness to deal with people, carry out social roles, and be useful to society. Social maturity is generally conceived in two different yet interconnected ways. On one hand, it is perceived as age-appropriate behaviour indicating that the individual is growing according to age-related social expectations. On the other hand, it is conceived as behaviour that conforms to expectations and norms commonly found in adult behaviour, irrespective of the individual's real age.

Raj, M. states that an individual's social maturity describes their social skills and social awareness compared with the social maturity of others their same age. Therefore, in addition to knowing how to act, a social mature person demonstrates the ability to know when, where and for what reason to enact socially acceptable behaviours. Social maturity reflects the ability to balance emotional control, display of responsibility, show empathy and to adapt to different types of social interactions. Greenberger (1973) provides a detailed definition, stating that social maturity includes general and culture-specific traits. The general traits include those that are expected in all societies, like cooperation, responsibility, and respect for others. The culture-specific traits include those that differ with the values, traditions, and expectations of a given community or society. Social maturity, therefore, makes people understand the social world better, manage social situations effectively, and develop stable, consistent patterns of socially acceptable behaviour most particularly important during adolescence, an age when there is extreme emotional and social growth.

The three dimensions of Social Maturity and its components associated are:

I. Personal Adequacy

1. Work Orientation: The way an individual views his/her work-related abilities and attitudes toward their job defines their work orientation. This means an individual recognizes the standards for competencies, does the job well, and finds a sense of satisfaction from his/her work, thus leading to self-sufficiency.

2. Self-Directedness: The ability to self-direct (or direct one's own activities) is another characteristic of personal adequacy. The self-directed person has the ability to take personal initiative, acts with self-confidence, and has faith in his/her efforts.

3. Ability to Cope with Stress: The third aspect of personal adequacy is emotional regulation. This includes both maintaining emotional equilibrio Find support and seek assistance, when necessary, without upsetting others, and being able to handle stressful or difficult situations.

II. Interpersonal Adequacy

1. Communication: Communication involves the skills of understanding and expressing oneself verbally and in

writing as well as through non-verbal means. Communication also requires empathy, the ability to empathize and understand another person's feelings so that we can communicate in the most effective way.

2. Enlightened Trust: Enlightened Trust is the consideration one has in knowing they can trust others when needed. Enlightened Trust, therefore, has to do with knowing who and how far you can trust the person, i.e., the ability to identify wise choices of whom to trust, when to trust, and to what extent.

3. Cooperation: Cooperation means working together with others in reaching the same goal. Cooperation means that rules or practices are unique to a particular society and not permanent or unchangeable rigidities.

III. Social Adequacy

1. Commitment to Society: A commitment to society is, in part, an expression of unified behavior. A willingness to sacrifice one's own goals for the welfare of a larger social group is an expression of a person who is committed to long-term improvement of our social environments.

2. Tolerance of Others: A conflict exists when someone believes that they are entitled to discriminate against an individual or a group, based upon the different views, opinions, and lifestyles. By accepting the differences of the outgroup, a person can begin to develop an interest in the in-group, thus developing empathy for others.

3. Openness to Change: A willingness to embrace change within one's social structure is indicative of an ability to adjust to new social expectations and demands emerging from life experiences.

According to Mussen and colleagues (1984), as children grow up, one of their greatest accomplishments is to be able to regulate their own behaviours in society based on what is socially acceptable. The ability to regulate behaviour according to societal expectations is an indicator of social maturity.

"Social maturity" refers to the ability to participate in and engage with others in their community, this may include their families, neighbours, friends, peers, teachers and so forth. A significant factor of social maturity is the ability of an individual to create and maintain friendships. Social maturity comprises many different types of accomplishments as stated by Greenberg, Josselson, Knerr and Knerr (1995): Independent Functioning, Effective Communication, Interpersonal Interaction, and Contributing Positively to Society's Well- Being.

According to Raj, M. (1996), "social maturity is a level of social skills and awareness that an individual has attained, relative to specific norms related to an age group." It is a measure of an individual's growth competency in interpersonal relationships, proper behaviour, social problem solving, and judgement'. Human social maturity is an important part of being human - particularly when it comes to children in school, as children who have reached a level of "social maturity" can successfully navigate real-life situations and make the best decisions for themselves, socially and personally. The majority of adjustment problems students experience while in school have a direct correlation to levels of social maturation.

The socially mature student's social skill set is both sophisticated and effectively utilised. As individual students develop higher levels of social maturity, they develop an increased capacity for successfully navigating through social difficulty. Students who do well in adapting to varying degrees of social experiences tend to be happier and more successful. These students look forward to being able to interact with and meet their social expectations, while those who are considered socially immature experience many issues, both on a personal and social level, and will also cause these issues in relation to their families and society.

Mussen et.al. (1984) says, 'One of the major accomplishments of children as they grow older in their increasing ability is to regulate their own behaviour in a way that confirms to their expectations of the society in which they live'. Basically social acceptance appears to be a reflection of social maturity.

The attainment of social maturity occurs through the development of positive social relationships. This includes developing a positive relationship with all close family members as well as with other family members, neighbours, friends, classmates, teachers and the community in general. The hallmark of a mature person socially will be the capacity to form and maintain friendships.

In defining social maturity, Greenberg, et al. (1995) state that social maturity includes success in all four areas of social functioning, including independent living and social responsibility, namely contributing positively to society.

Raj, M. (1996) defines, 'Social maturity is a level of social skills and awareness that an individual has achieved, relative to particular norms related to an age group. It is a measure of the development competence of an individual with regard to interpersonal relations, behaviour appropriateness, social problem solving and judgment'.

According to Advanced Learners Dictionary (2000), 'Social maturity refers to degree of growth in social and vocational abilities'.

According to Dictionary of Education (2007) by Lohithakshan, 'Social maturity means social

development level characterized by independence from parental and adult control in social situations'. A person's social maturity indicates his or her level of comfort with other people. A person who is social mature has achieved an adult-level of social interaction due to the process of socialisation.

Social maturity can be defined in two ways. First, socially mature people have a good understanding of themselves and where they fit into the society they live in, including an appreciation for their social heritage, prejudice and the customs of their culture. They also understand the importance of maintaining a stable and productive society through rules and laws that govern the behaviour of individuals. Second, social maturity also involves developing the habits, attitudes, manners and skills necessary to become more comfortable adjusting to group living, while also providing support for their community.

The importance of social maturity to the human experience is particularly important during the school and teenage years. Socially mature men and women can trust themselves during difficult times in life, they have a sense of integrity and they have good judgment when it comes to making choices about their lives and the lives of others.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a research conducted by **Hameed and Tharia (2010)**, the researchers investigated emotional maturity and social adjustment of student teachers. A sample of 600 student teachers, representing multiple teacher education institutions in the Malapuram District located in Kerala, were utilised. The authors found that male student teachers demonstrated greater emotional maturity than female student teachers and also had higher levels of social adjustment when compared to all other groups. The authors further noted that emotional maturity and social adjustment were positively correlated among all student teachers in the sample.

Surjit Sing, T. and Praveen Thakral, N. (2010) conducted a study on "High achievers and poor achievers' social maturation and locus of control." The key results of the research revealed no significant differences in the social environment related to social maturity or locus of control. Students of all grades demonstrated social competency regardless of sex or academic ranking. The research also showed that the social agents (e.g., parents, peers, and community) exert a great deal of influence on the material aspect of social maturity within children's personalities.

According to, Sarita Sanwal, Dr. Shridhar Joshi, Serene Shekhar, (2014), studied A Comparative Study on Social Maturity among School Going Rural Teenagers; the aims of the study were 1.To determines the level of social maturity and gender differences among girls and boys in secondary schools aged 13 to 15 years. 2. To investigate the effect of therapy on adolescent social maturity. Results indicated that approximately 70% of rural adolescents exemplified social maturity with no significant gender differences. This social maturity may be attributed to the fact that many adolescents during this phase develop attributes such as confidence, self-direction, empathy, personal responsibility, competition, and the ability to work independently and solve problems.

Anusha Punia conducted a comparative study of adolescent social maturity and indicated that first-year female students demonstrated stronger levels of work orientation, stress tolerance, communication, cooperation, social commitment, and social tolerance than other gender groups.

A study by **Mishra Astha, Dubey Seema and Mamta Kumari in 2017** investigated the social maturity level of adolescents residing in Sultanpur, with 68.34 percent of youth indicating a high level of social maturity while 31.66 percent showed a low level of social maturity. The majority were female, as boys were more likely to have a high level of social maturity if they lived in urban areas and had a low level of social maturity if they were from nuclear family structures. Most females with high levels of social maturity came from joint family systems.

Abdulla and Singh's 2019 study examined the role of social support and the level of social support received by senior secondary students from Kashmir, finding that there were significant differences in terms of social support and student participation rates between male and female students, noting that females received a greater amount of social support than males. There were significant differences between government and private school students with regard to social support, however, there were no significant differences in student participation rates. Additionally, we found that the amount of social support received had a substantial effect on student participation.

A study undertaken by **Dr. Susan Sam and Dr. Nalini Totuka in 2021** compared the level of social maturity and interest in academic subjects of adolescents. The sample included 60 participants (30 males and 30 females). The differences in social maturity and academic interest were statistically significant based on age and gender. Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that social maturity indirectly relates to an adolescent's level of academic interest.

GLOBAL

Y. Herry et al., (2012) conducted a research study in Iran that was intended to analyse the influence of pre-school experience on social maturity of first-grade elementary school students. This study highlighted three findings: (i) there is no statistical significance between the social maturity of urban primary students compared to rural primary students; (ii) there is no correlation between the socio-demographic variables chosen for the study and the social maturity of rural children; and (iii) there is also no correlation between the social maturity of urban children and the socio-demographic characteristics chosen for this study.

Faezeh et al., (2013) have also researched the relationship between pre-school education and the social maturity of primary school children. The purpose of this study was to determine how pre-school education will influence the social maturity of first-grade elementary school students located in Kermanshah, Iran. This study followed a

descriptive cross-sectional design for collection of data and was done during the years 2006 and 2007. An elementary school student was randomly chosen from a pool of approximately 62 elementary school students selected from the local community. Social maturity scales were administered to 99 children. Expert psychology staff from the department of Psychology at Kermanshah Medical University completed the face validity of the questionnaire that accompanied the social maturity scales. The researchers then revised the questionnaire based upon expert recommendations and conducted a pilot study of children that did not fall within the main sample of students to determine the reliability of the scales through the use of Cronbach's alpha.

Ahmadi, Afsharinia and Kakabaraei (2014) conducted a similar study with reference to the influence of pre-school experience on social maturity in first graders; however, their study was limited to children in Iran, and they found results similar to those of previous studies. In their case, they found that: (i) the social maturity of children from rural areas did not differ significantly from the social maturity of children from urban areas; (ii) the social maturity of rural children was not related to any of the selected socio-demographic variables; and (ii) the social maturity of urban children was not related to any of the selected socio-demographic characteristics.

Kugbey et al. (2015) examined the impact of social support from friends, family, and significant others on the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among 175 University of Ghana undergraduate students. According to the findings, social support from family members strongly predicted students' stress levels, while support from friends and significant others significantly predicted their degree of depression. Furthermore, it was shown that the degrees of stress, anxiety, and depression varied significantly by gender. Depression levels among the pupils were significantly impacted by their academic standing.

Bhochhibhoya et al (2017) studied the social support networks that 328 foreign students in the US have access to. Significant variations were found between each kind of social assistance, according to the findings. Social support from friends and family who are currently residing in their native country was found to have the greatest score, while social support from friends and family who were born and raised in the United States received the lowest score.

Zamani-Alavijeh et al. (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study at Ahvaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences to see how social support was regarded by medical science students. 763 students participated in the study. The findings demonstrated a substantial correlation between the length of weekly residence in the dorm, gender, ethnicity, and faculty and the perceived level of social support. Nonetheless, no noteworthy correlation was observed between social support and other personal and family attributes. When it came to perceived social support, male students scored higher than female students.

Objectives of the Study:
The objectives formulated for the study were

1. To study the social maturity level of IX class secondary school students
2. To find out social maturity level among the male and female students
3. To find out the social maturity level among private and government school students

HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference in social maturity of IX class secondary school students with respect to their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in social maturity of IX class secondary school students with respect to type of school (private & government).

Variables:

1. Dependent variable: (a) Social Maturity
2. Independent variables: (a) Gender, (b) Type of school

Scopes of the study: The present study was designed to assess the level of social maturity of students enrolled in Class IX (9th grade) at secondary schools located in Gautam Buddha Nagar District, Uttar Pradesh. The data for the study was collected through self-administered questionnaires (tools), which were filled out by the students.

Delimitation of the Study:

1. The research was conducted in both public and private secondary schools located in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh.
2. The sample was restricted to only Class IX (9th grade) students.
3. The sample size for this research was 500 total (includes 250 male and 250 female students).

METHODOLOGY

To gather data for this inquiry the Survey Method was used.

Sample: A sample of 500 students in Class IX (250 boys, 250 girls) was selected. Each group consisted of equal numbers of both genders, as well as an even distribution amongst private and public schools. The student population was chosen using Random Selection Methods, while providing stratification based on gender and type of education facility.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in social maturity of IX class secondary school students with

respect to their gender.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value	Level of significance
Social Maturity	Male	250	76.93	7.57	498	0.36	NS
Social Maturity	Female	250	76.68	8.35	498	0.36	NS

NS – Not Significant at both levels

As shown in the table above, a T value of 0.36 is smaller than the critical T values of 1.96 (for a significance level of 0.05) and also 2.58 (for a significance level of 0.01) for 498 degrees of freedom. This means that we can accept the null hypothesis. Thus, there is no statistically significant difference between males and females on the index of social maturity for students in IX class students.
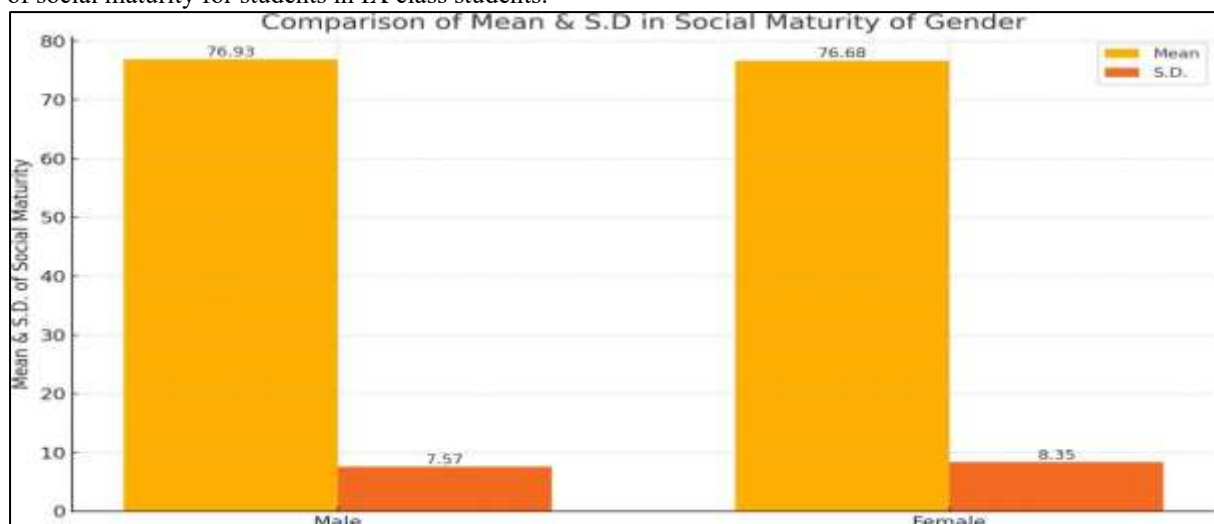

The outcomes of this investigation reveal:

1. The level of social development in male and female student has the same level of maturity, as illustrated through the t-test which resulted in a t-value of 0.36, which is well below the critical value of both 0.05 and 0.01 significance levels indicating no significant difference between male and female students.

2. Males scored an average of 76.93 and females scored an average of 76.68, therefore there is no evidence that males and females have different levels of social development.

3. The standard deviations of males (7.57) and females (8.35) illustrate that their scores have equal amounts of variance, thus providing additional evidence to conclude that gender plays no role in determining the social development of IX class secondary students.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in social maturity of IX class secondary school students with respect to type of school (private & government).

Variable	School Type	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t-value	Level of significance
Social Maturity	Private School	250	86.724	5.42	498	2.64	Significant
Social Maturity	Government School	250	85.424	5.60	498	2.64	Significant

Based on the findings of this study, the computed t-value (2.64) exceeded both .05-level critical t-values (1.96) for 498 degrees of freedom as well as the .01-level critical t-values (2.58) for the same degrees of freedom; thus, there exists a statistically significant difference in social maturity for secondary school students depending upon whether they are enrolled in a public or private school; more particularly, those students enrolled in private schools demonstrated greater levels of social maturity than did their peers in public schools, therefore rejecting the null

hypothesis established in this research study.

Comparison of Mean & S.D in Social Maturity of School Type
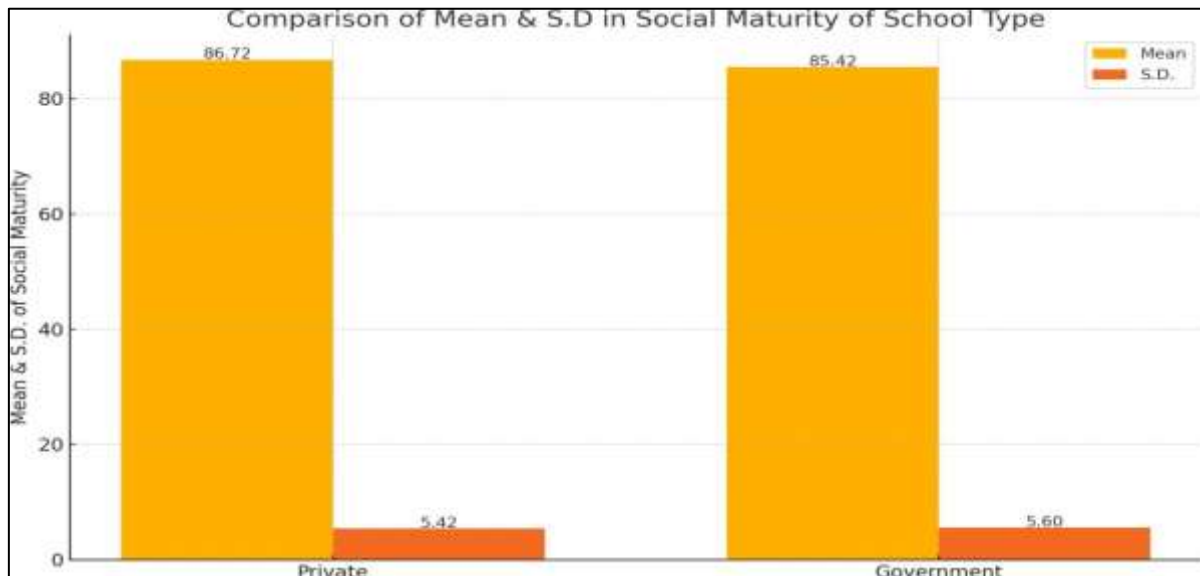
The findings of this research can be summarised as follows:

1. There was a statistically significant difference in social maturity based on school type, as shown by a t-value of 2.64, which is greater than the critical values for the 0.5 and 0.1 level of significance for secondary school students.

2. Higher levels of social maturity were in evidence for private school students (average social maturity score = 86.724) compared to government school students (average social maturity score = 85.424) indicating that government school students adjust, act responsibly and interact with their peers at slightly lower levels than do private school students.

3. Private school students showed less variability on their social maturity scores (S.D. = 5.42) compared to government school students (S.D. = 5.60), and this consistent difference in group means is supportive of the conclusion that the type of school attended could contribute to or modify social maturity levels of students.

4. The statistically significant t-value obtained led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in social maturity levels for private school students and government school students. The conclusion reached was that school type is a factor in influencing a student's level of social maturity.

Findings of the Study:
The findings of the study were –

1. There is no significant difference in social maturity of IX class secondary school students with respect to their gender.

2. There is significant difference in social maturity of IX class secondary school students with respect to type of school.

CONCLUSION

According to the present investigation on the social maturity of Class IX (high school level) students, there is no evidence to suggest a gender difference in terms of social maturity; however, there is a statistically significant relationship between the type of school attended (public or private). In general, Class IX students are socially mature, meaning that they do not display any indications of immaturity based on gender; however, there are significant variations between types of schools attended. Overall, these findings indicate that the social maturity of students in Class IX does not depend upon the student's gender, but there is a marked difference between students from different schools based on the type of school attended.

Implications for Education:

1. Teachers can utilise the data obtained from this study to more accurately assess the social development of their students.

2. The information gathered from this research will assist school administrators in creating programmes to enhance the development of social responsibility and the ability to establish socially responsible behaviours among the student population.

3. Based on the findings of this study, parents can better address their child's social needs and challenges during

the adolescent years.

4. Based on the research, we can conclude that students should actively engage in promoting moral values and enhancing social maturity for the overall physical, emotional and mental well-being of the child.

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