

Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Adolescent's Self-Esteem: A study of Secondary School Students of Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

The current research paper examined the influence of emotional intelligence on adolescents' self-esteem among secondary school adolescents of the Kashmir Division. A quantitative descriptive survey design was used. A sample of 600 adolescents was selected from the districts of Baramulla, Srinagar, and Anantnag using stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2002) and the State Self-Esteem Scale developed by Heatherton and Polivy (1991). The data were analysed using mean, percentage, standard deviation, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, and Simple Linear Regression Analysis. The findings reflected that the respondents possessed high levels of emotional intelligence and moderate to high levels of self-esteem. A significant positive correlation was found between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Furthermore, emotional intelligence emerged as a significant predictor of adolescents' self-esteem. The study highlights the significance of fostering emotional intelligence to promote positive self-esteem and healthy psychological development among adolescents.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Self-Esteem, Adolescents, Psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is one of the most significant developmental stages in the human lifespan because it is featured by rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. During this transitional period, individuals experience considerable changes in their self-perception, interpersonal relationships, emotional regulation, and identity formation. The successful organisation of these developmental challenges contributes significantly to adolescents' psychological adjustment and overall well-being. Among the many psychological constructs that influence adolescent development, emotional intelligence and self-esteem have consistently attracted significant attention from researchers, counsellors, educators and psychologists because of their deep influence on student's academic achievement, mental health, and personality development. The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) emerged as an important area of psychological analysis during the latter part of the twentieth century. Although emotions had traditionally been viewed as hindrances to rational thinking, contemporary psychological research established that emotions and cognition function in an integrated manner. Emotional intelligence refers to an person's ability to recognize, understand, regulate, express, and effectively utilize emotions in oneself and others to enable adaptive thinking, problem-solving, interpersonal relationships and decision-making. Individuals possessing high emotional intelligence demonstrate greater emotional awareness, operative emotional regulation, sympathy, social competence, resilience and the ability to cope successfully with stressful circumstances. These competencies enable adolescents to respond positively to academic demands, peer interactions, family expectations and everyday life challenges.

Different theoretical perspectives have conceptualized emotional intelligence in different ways. The ability model proposed by Mayer and Salovey regarded emotional intelligence as a set of cognitive abilities including perception, understanding, facilitation & management of emotions. On the contrary, mixed models emphasized a broader constellation of emotional competencies, personality characteristics, social skills, motivation, and behavioural traits that contribute to successful adaptation in everyday life. Despite these conceptual differences, researchers generally agreed that emotional intelligence constitutes an essential psychological resource that improves personal effectiveness and promotes psychological well-being.

Another fundamental construct associated with healthy adolescent development is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to the overall assessment, perception, and appreciation that individuals hold concerning their own worth, competence and value. It reflects the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as proficient, respected, accepted and successful in various spheres of life. Self-esteem develops progressively through continuous interactions with family members, teachers, peers and the broader social environment. Constructive experiences of achievement, acceptance, encouragement and emotional support contribute to higher levels of self-esteem, whereas repeated experiences of rejection, disapproval, failure or social exclusion often weakens individual's self-worth. Healthy self-esteem plays a pivotal role in promoting youngsters' psychological adjustment and educational success. Adolescents possessing high self-esteem generally demonstrate greater confidence, academic motivation, emotional stability, optimism, resilience and interpersonal effectiveness. They tend to approach challenges with greater confidence, exhibit stronger managing

abilities during stressful situations, and maintain healthier relationships with others. On the contrary, adolescents with low self-esteem are more susceptible to anxiety, depression, academic underachievement, behavioural problems, social withdrawal and various forms of psychological distress. Consequently, self-esteem has been widely regarded as one of the most significant indicators of positive mental health & successful psychosocial adjustment during adolescence. The relationship between emotional intelligence & self-esteem has received increasing empirical attention because both variables contribute substantially to adolescents' psychological functioning. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to regulate emotional experiences, interpret social situations accurately, communicate effectively, & manage interpersonal conflicts constructively. These competencies often foster successful social interactions, greater self-confidence, and more positive assessment of personal abilities, thereby strengthening self-esteem. Adolescents who effectively understand and manage their emotions are generally better equipped to overcome academic pressures, peer conflicts, family expectations, & developmental uncertainties, which in turn enhances their overall perception of self-worth.

Previous empirical researches conducted across different cultural settings consistently demonstrated positive associations between emotional intelligence & self-esteem. Studies reported that emotionally intelligent adolescents generally exhibited higher levels of confidence, better psychological adjustment, stronger resilience, superior interpersonal relationships, and improved academic performance. Researchers also suggested that emotional intelligence served as a protective psychological factor by reducing the adverse effects of stress, anxiety, and negative emotional experiences. These findings underlined the importance of developing emotional competencies as an effective means of promoting adolescent's psychological health and overall development.

Despite the growing body of international literature, comparatively limited empirical evidence had been available regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among adolescents in the Kashmir region. Kashmir presents a distinctive socio-cultural and educational context shaped by geographical diversity, varying socio-economic conditions, cultural traditions, and prolonged exposure to social and environmental stressors. Adolescents in this region encounter unique developmental challenges that may influence their emotional functioning, interpersonal relationships, and self-perceptions. Consequently, understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem within this specific context was considered both theoretically and practically significant.

Educational institutions increasingly recognized that academic success alone could not ensure holistic student development. Contemporary education emphasized the cultivation of emotional competencies alongside cognitive abilities to prepare students for personal, academic & professional success. Schools play a crucial role in fostering emotionally supportive environments where students develop emotional awareness, empathy, self-confidence and positive interpersonal relationships. Empirical evidence regarding emotional intelligence and self-esteem can therefore assist teachers, school counsellors, educational administrators, curriculum developers & policymakers in designing effective interventions that enhance students' socio-emotional development.

The present study was undertaken to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescent's self-esteem among secondary school students in Kashmir. The study also investigated whether emotional intelligence & self-esteem varied across selected demographic variables and examined the extent to which emotional intelligence predicted adolescent's self-esteem. The findings were expected to contribute to the existing body of psychological & educational research while providing practical implications for promoting adolescents' emotional well-being, positive self-concept, & overall personality development through educational interventions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Emotional intelligence and self-esteem have emerged as two significant psychological variables that contribute significantly to adolescents' cognitive, emotional, social and academic development. Over the past three decades, researchers have deeply analysed the relationship between these variables, establishing emotional intelligence as a protective psychological resource that enhances positive self-perceptions, interpersonal competence, psychological well-being, & adaptive functioning. The existing literature reflects that emotionally intelligent adolescents are more likely to possess healthy self-esteem, better emotional adjustment, & greater resilience in coping with developmental challenges. Nevertheless, the nature and magnitude of this relationship vary across different cultural, educational & socio-economic contexts.

The theoretical foundation of emotional intelligence was established by Salovey and Mayer (1990), who defined it as the ability to understand, regulate, perceive and utilize emotions effectively. Their conceptualization emphasized emotional intelligence as a form of cognitive ability involving emotional information processing. Mayer and Salovey (1997) subsequently refined this model by proposing four interrelated branches of emotional intelligence: perceiving emotions, facilitating thought through emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions. This ability-based perspective was further strengthened by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2008), who argued that emotional intelligence should be regarded as a distinct form of intelligence rather than merely a collection of desirable personality traits.

The concept gained widespread recognition following Goleman's (1995) work, which emphasized that emotional abilities are equally important as intellectual abilities in determining personal & professional success. Goleman's mixed model incorporated self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, thereby expanding emotional intelligence beyond cognitive abilities to include behavioural competencies. Similarly, Bar-On (1997)

conceptualized emotional intelligence as a multidimensional construct comprising interpersonal skills, stress management, emotional regulation, & general mood. These theoretical developments broadened the application of emotional intelligence in educational psychology and stimulated extensive empirical research examining its influence on students' academic achievement, psychological well-being, & personality development.

Self-esteem has likewise received considerable attention within developmental and educational psychology. Rosenberg (1965) conceptualized self-esteem as an individual's overall evaluation of personal worth and self-acceptance. It reflects the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as competent, capable, and valuable. According to Coopersmith (1967), self-esteem evolves through interactions with significant others, particularly parents, teachers, peers and is influenced by experiences of success, acceptance, encouragement, and recognition. Adolescence represents a particularly sensitive period for the development of self-esteem because individuals undergo rapid physical, emotional, and social changes that shape their self-concept & identity.

Research has consistently demonstrated that emotional intelligence positively impacts various dimensions of adolescent adjustment. Adolescents possessing higher emotional intelligence, possess superior emotional regulation, greater empathy, stronger interpersonal relationships, improved decision-making, & healthier coping strategies. They are generally more capable of managing academic stress, peer conflicts, and emotional challenges without experiencing any major psychological distress. A meta systematic review by Resurrección, Salguero, and Ruiz-Aranda (2014) concluded that emotional intelligence was consistently associated with lower levels of anxiety, depression, maladaptive coping, and behavioural problems among adolescents, reflecting its protective role in promoting mental health.

A growing body of empirical evidence has further established emotional intelligence as a major predictor of positive psychological outcomes. Recent evidence synthesized by Llamas-Díaz, Cabello, Megías-Robles, and Fernández-Berrocal (2022) demonstrated that emotional intelligence maintained a moderate positive relationship with adolescents' subjective well-being across different measurement models. Their meta-analysis indicated that teenagers with higher emotional intelligence consistently reported greater emotional well-being, life satisfaction, & psychological adjustment, thereby reinforcing the importance of emotional competencies during adolescence.

The association between emotional intelligence & self-esteem has attracted substantial empirical attention because both constructs contribute to healthy personality development. Researchers generally agree that adolescents capable of understanding & regulating their emotions develop greater confidence in their abilities, establish healthier interpersonal relationships, and experience stronger feelings of self-worth. Effective emotional regulation enables adolescents to interpret stressful situations more positively, recover from setbacks, and maintain constructive relationships with peers and teachers. These experiences reinforce favourable self-evaluations & strengthen global self-esteem. Conversely, deficiencies in emotional competence often contribute to emotional instability, social difficulties and reduced confidence, thereby negatively influencing self-esteem.

A numerous empirical investigation conducted across varied educational settings have reported significant positive correlations between emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Studies consistently observed that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence demonstrated greater confidence, emotional stability, resilience & psychological well-being than those with lower emotional intelligence. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence not only facilitates adaptive emotional functioning but also enhances adolescents' perceptions of personal competence and social acceptance. Consequently, emotional intelligence has increasingly been viewed as a significant predictor of self-esteem & overall psychological adjustment.

Researchers have also assessed demographic variations in emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Although findings remain somewhat inconsistent, several studies reported gender differences in specific dimensions of emotional intelligence, particularly empathy & emotional awareness, while differences in overall emotional intelligence were often small or statistically insignificant. Similarly, investigations comparing urban and rural students produced mixed findings, indicating that contextual factors such as family environment, educational opportunities, parenting practices, and socio-economic conditions may exert greater influence than geographical location alone. These variations highlight the importance of conducting context specific investigations rather than generalizing findings across different populations.

Within educational settings, emotional intelligence has been related with various desirable outcomes, including academic achievement, adjustment In the classroom, leadership skills, social competence, resilience and psychological well-being. Students with higher emotional intelligence generally demonstrate greater classroom participation, improved communication with teachers & peers, and more effective stress management during examinations. Higher levels of self-esteem further enhance these results by fostering confidence, intrinsic motivation, persistence, & academic engagement. Consequently, many researchers have advocated the incorporation of socio-emotional learning programmes into school curricula to strengthen both emotional intelligence and self-esteem among adolescents.

Despite the substantial body of international and national literature, relatively limited empirical research has examined the relationship between emotional intelligence & self-esteem among adolescents in Kashmir. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western societies or other regions of India, limiting the generalizability of their findings to the socio-cultural context of Kashmir. Adolescents in Kashmir experience unique educational, social, & environmental circumstances that may influence their emotional functioning and perceptions of self-worth. Therefore, evidences

generated within this regional context is essential for understanding the psychological characteristics of Kashmiri adolescents & for developing culturally appropriate educational and counselling interventions.

The literature review indicates that emotional intelligence serves as an important psychological resource for promoting positive self-esteem & healthy adolescent development. Although existing studies have consistently reported a positive relationship between these variables, limited evidence exists regarding this relationship among secondary school students in Kashmir using comprehensive quantitative analysis. The current study was therefore undertaken to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescents' self-esteem & to determine whether emotional intelligence significantly predicts self-esteem among secondary school students in the Kashmir Valley. Despite the substantial empirical evidence available internationally & within different regions of India, several research gaps were identified. The majority of existing investigations were conducted in Western countries or among college and university students, whereas comparatively fewer studies focused specifically on adolescents enrolled in secondary schools. Since adolescence represents a crucial developmental stage characterized by rapid emotional and psychological changes, findings obtained from adult populations cannot be generalized to adolescent students without empirical verification. Only a limited number of studies simultaneously examined differences in emotional intelligence and self-esteem across selected demographic variables while also investigating the predictive relationship between the two constructs within a single quantitative framework. Addressing these gaps was considered essential for generating evidence that could assist teachers, school counsellors, educational administrators, and policymakers in designing interventions aimed at strengthening adolescents' emotional competencies and promoting healthy self-esteem. In view of these gaps, the current study examined the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescents' self-esteem among secondary school students in Kashmir.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the levels of emotional intelligence and self-esteem among secondary school adolescents in Kashmir.
2. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among secondary school adolescents.
3. To determine the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescents' self-esteem.

Hypotheses

The following alternative hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

- 1.H₀₁:** There is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among secondary school adolescents.
- 2.H₀₂:** There is a significant influence of Emotional Intelligence on adolescent's self-esteem.

METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a quantitative research approach using the descriptive survey design. The design was considered appropriate as it facilitated the systematic collection, analysis, & interpretation of data to examine the association between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among adolescents. Furthermore, the study sought to determine the predictive influence of emotional intelligence on adolescent's self-esteem through appropriate statistical techniques. The descriptive survey design enabled the researcher to investigate the variables in their natural setting without manipulating any of the variable.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all adolescents enrolled in Government and Private secondary schools of the Kashmir Division during the academic session 2021–2022. The target population included students studying in Classes IX and X, generally falling within the age group of 14–18 years. This population was selected because adolescence is a crucial developmental period characterized by rapid emotional, psychological, & social changes that significantly influence emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

Sample

A sample of 600 adolescents was selected from three districts of the Kashmir Division, namely Srinagar, Baramulla, and Anantnag. These districts were selected to ensure proper geographical representation of the Valley. A stratified random sampling technique was employed for the selection of the sample. In the first stage, the three districts were selected. In the second stage, schools were stratified on the basis of management (Government and Private) and locality (Urban and Rural). Thereafter, schools were selected randomly from each stratum. Finally, students were selected through simple random sampling from the selected schools. Equal representation was ensured across gender & school type to enhance the representativeness of the sample and reduce sampling bias. The final sample consisted of 600 adolescents, including both male and female students drawn from Government and Private secondary schools located in urban & rural areas of the selected districts.

Research Instruments

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2002) consisting of 34 items measuring 10 dimensions of emotional intelligence.

Self-Esteem

State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) developed by Heatherton and Polivy (1991). The scale comprises 20 items assessing 3 dimensions of self-esteem, namely Performance Self-Esteem, Social Self-Esteem, and Appearance Self-Esteem. Responses are recorded on a five-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-esteem.

Reliability of the Instruments

The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The Emotional Intelligence Scale yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.89, while the State Self-Esteem Scale yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.91, indicating high reliability for both instruments.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from the concerned school authorities before data collection. The questionnaires were administered personally to the selected respondents, and confidentiality and voluntary participation were ensured throughout the study.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analysed using SPSS (Version 26). Mean, percentage, and standard deviation were used to describe the data, while the Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, and Simple Linear Regression Analysis were employed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 26). Descriptive statistics were computed to assess the levels of emotional intelligence and self-esteem among adolescents. Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was employed to examine the relationship between the two variables, while Simple Linear Regression Analysis was performed to determine the influence of emotional intelligence on adolescents' self-esteem.

Objective 1

To assess the levels of emotional intelligence and self-esteem among secondary school adolescents in Kashmir.

Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem (N = 600)

Table 1.1

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Emotional Intelligence	600	78	164	128.64	15.82
Self-Esteem	600	41	95	72.41	9.76

Table 1.2

Level of Self-Esteem	Frequency	Percentage
Low	84	14.0%
Moderate	276	46.0%
High	240	40.0%
Total	600	100%

Table 1.3

Level of Self-Esteem	Frequency	Percentage
Low	84	14.0%
Moderate	276	46.0%
High	240	40.0%
Total	600	100%

Interpretation:

Table 1, 1.2, and 1.3 presents the descriptive statistics of emotional intelligence and self-esteem among the adolescents. The mean score of emotional intelligence was 128.64 (SD = 15.82), table 1.2 reflected the levels of EI. Table showed that approximately 48% of the sample exhibit high level of EI indicating that the respondents possessed a high level of emotional intelligence. Similarly, the mean score of self-esteem was 72.41 (SD = 9.76), and 46% of the sample fall in the moderate level and 40% at high level indicating a moderate to high level of self-esteem among the participants. The standard deviation values suggest a moderate variation in the responses, reflecting individual differences among the adolescents.

Objective 2

To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and adolescents' self-esteem.

Coefficient of correlation between EI and SE

Table 2.1

Variables	Pearson's r	p-value	Remarks
Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem	0.641	< .001	Positive and significant Relationship

Interpretation:

Table 2.1 reflects the association between Emotional intelligence And Self-esteem. It was found that there is a statistically significant and positive correlation between the mentioned variables with r as 0.641 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. Therefore the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and self-esteem among secondary school adolescents is accepted.

Objective 3

To determine the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescents' self-esteem.

Table 3.1 Model Summary table

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	F
0.641	0.411	0.410	7.49	327.24

Table 3.2 Coefficients summary table

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	21.38	2.87	—	7.45	< .001
Emotional Intelligence	0.398	0.022	0.641	18.09	< .001

Interpretation:

Table 3.1 and 3.2 highlights the regression analysis between emotional intelligence and Self-esteem. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 598) = 327.24$, $p < .001$, indicating that emotional intelligence was a significant predictor of self-esteem. The model explained 41.1% of the variance in adolescents' self-esteem ($R^2 = .411$). The

standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = .641, p < .001$) indicated a positive influence of emotional intelligence on self-esteem, suggesting that an increase in emotional intelligence was associated with a corresponding increase in self-esteem. Therefore, the hypothesis “There is a significant influence of Emotional Intelligence on adolescent's self-esteem” stands accepted.

Discussion of Results

The current study examined the influence of emotional intelligence on adolescent's self-esteem among secondary school students in Kashmir. The results revealed that the respondents possessed relatively high levels of emotional intelligence & moderate to high levels of self-esteem. These results suggest that the adolescents included in the study generally demonstrated satisfactory emotional competencies, including the ability to perceive, understand, & regulate emotions, which may have contributed to their positive evaluation of self-worth.

The results further highlighted a statistically significant positive association between emotional intelligence & adolescents' self-esteem. The correlation analysis indicated that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tended to report higher levels of self-esteem. Results supports the theoretical proposition that emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to regulate emotions, cope with stressful situations, establish positive interpersonal relationships, & maintain favourable perceptions of themselves. Effective emotional regulation enables adolescents to deal constructively with academic challenges, peer interactions, & everyday life stressors, thereby enhancing their confidence and self-worth.

This finding is consistent with the studies of Schutte et al. (2002), Ciarrochi, Chan, and Bajgar (2001), Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts (2012), and Resurrección, Salguero, and Ruiz-Aranda (2014), who reported that emotional intelligence was positively related with self-esteem, psychological well-being, social adjustment, & adaptive coping among adolescents and young adults. Similarly, Llamas-Díaz et al. (2022) highlighted that emotionally intelligent adolescents experienced higher levels of subjective well-being & positive psychological adjustment, reinforcing the importance of emotional competencies during adolescence.

The regression analysis results reflected that emotional intelligence significantly predicted adolescent's self-esteem and explained a substantial proportion of the variance in self-esteem scores. This result indicates that emotional intelligence functions as an important psychological determinant of adolescents' self-esteem. Adolescents who possess greater emotional awareness, empathy, emotional regulation, & interpersonal competence are more likely to develop confidence in their abilities and maintain positive self-evaluations. This finding is consistent with the work of Schutte et al. (2002), who reported that emotional intelligence greatly predicted psychological well-being & self-esteem among adolescents and young adults. Similarly, Ciarrochi, Chan, and Bajgar (2001) found that emotional intelligence served as a significant predictor of adolescents' mental health, and psychological well being. The results of the study reveal the importance of promoting emotional intelligence within school settings. Educational institutions should integrate socio-emotional learning programmes into the curriculum to enhance students' emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Teachers & school counsellors should provide supportive learning environments that encourage emotional expression, resilience, and positive self-development. Such initiatives may contribute not only to improved self-esteem but also to better academic engagement, psychological wellness and overall personality development among adolescents.

Conclusion

The present study examined the impact of emotional intelligence on adolescent's self-esteem among secondary school students in Kashmir. The results revealed that the participants exhibited relatively high levels of emotional intelligence & moderate to high levels of self-esteem. The study further demonstrated a significant positive association between emotional intelligence & self-esteem, indicating that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence tended to possess more positive self-perceptions & greater confidence in their abilities.

The regression emotional model highlighted that emotional intelligence predicted adolescent's self-esteem, suggesting that emotional competencies play a very crucial role in shaping adolescent's psychological well-being. The results imply that adolescents who effectively perceive, understand and regulate their emotions are more likely to develop healthy self-esteem enabling them to cope successfully with academic, social and emotional challenges.

Overall, the study highlights emotional intelligence as an important psychological element that contributes to the enhancement of positive self-esteem among adolescents. The findings highlighted the need for educational institutions to promote emotional intelligence through school-based interventions, counselling services & socio-emotional learning programmes. Strengthening adolescents' emotional competencies may not only enhance their self-esteem but also improve their psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, academic engagement, and overall personality development.

Educational Implications

The findings of the current study have the following educational implications:

1. Emotional intelligence programmes must be integrated into the school curriculum to promote adolescents' emotional competence & enhance their self-esteem.

2. Teachers should be provided with professional training on socio-emotional learning strategies to assist enrolled adolescents to develop emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy and interpersonal skills.
3. School counsellors should organize regular guidance and counselling sessions aimed at strengthening students' emotional intelligence and fostering positive self-esteem.
4. Institutions should create supportive and emotionally inclusive learning environments that encourage self-expression, resilience & healthy peer relationships.
5. Parents and teachers should work collaboratively to provide consistent support and positive reinforcement, thereby enhancing the development of healthy self-esteem among students.
6. Workshops, seminars and life skills education programmes focusing on emotional intelligence should be conducted periodically to enhance student's emotional well-being and psychological adjustment.
7. Policymakers & curriculum planners should incorporate socio-emotional competencies into school education to promote the holistic development of students.

Limitations of the Study

The current study has following limitations

1. The study was confined to secondary school adolescents from the three selected districts of the Kashmir Division; therefore, proper care should be taken while generalizing the findings to adolescents from other regions.
2. The study used a quantitative descriptive survey design, which limited the exploration of participant's experiences & perceptions in greater depth.
3. The study mainly relied on self-report measures of emotional intelligence and self-esteem, which may have been impacted by social desirability & response bias.

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