

Emotional Intelligence and Adjustment Abilities among Scheduled Tribe Students of Senior Secondary School

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Abstract—The present study aimed to examine the levels of emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities and the relationship between these two variables among Scheduled Tribe (ST) students studying at the senior secondary level. A descriptive survey research design was employed for the study. The sample comprised 395 ST students studying in Classes XI and XII in selected government senior secondary schools of Jeypore, Koraput district, Odisha. Data were collected using standardized measures of emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, were used to determine the levels of emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities. Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities. The findings indicated that majority of ST students have possessed low level of intelligence whereas most of the students demonstrated high adjustment abilities. Further, a strong positive and statistically significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities ($r = .858$, $p < .001$, $N = 395$), indicating that students with higher emotional intelligence tended to report higher adjustment abilities. The findings highlight the importance of emotional and adjustment-related competencies in the educational and personal development of ST students at the senior secondary level. The study has implications for teachers, school counsellors, and educational institutions in developing appropriate programmes to strengthen students' emotional competencies and adjustment abilities.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Adjustment Abilities, Scheduled Tribe Students, Senior Secondary Schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning has now evolved from mere acquisition of knowledge to that of transforming the entire individual. After completing school, it is required of learners to have productive lives, and therefore, academic competencies alone cannot be sufficient. It is necessary for them to know how to handle emotions, develop sound interpersonal relations, deal with stress, and adjust to changes in social and educational settings. This is evident in emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities, which are critical psychological characteristics of the current era. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, experience, controls and effectively reacts to their emotions and the emotions of others. Adjustment is the capacity to have a healthy, balanced relationship in various aspects of life: School, social life, self-care and emotional wellbeing.

Emotional intelligence is an essential aspect of psychology that impacts individuals' personal, social, and academic conduct. This is the capacity to acknowledge, understand, manage and make use of one's emotions as well as those of other individuals. As per Salovey & Mayer (1990), EI involves the observation of one's emotions, being able to distinguish between different

emotions and utilizing them to inform one's thoughts and actions. Goleman (1995) goes on to explain the five fundamental competencies of EI as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill that facilitate achievement both academically and in one's professional and personal life. The fact that students at the senior secondary stage are exposed to rapid change requires them to have a high level of EI to manage emotional regulation and decision-making. It is even more important for ST students owing to several socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural differences, isolation, and lack of opportunities and transition into formal education.

Adjustment skills are the capacity to remain attuned to one's self and the environment through management of personal, social, emotional, and academic needs. This is an ongoing, dynamic process of adapting cognitions, emotions, and behaviors to fit new demands of a situation as pointed out by James C. Coleman (1960). In an educational setting, adjustment implies that students blend in to the school, develop good relations with teachers and fellow students, manage emotions, participate in class, and handle academics. Better adjustment is associated with better academic achievement, good emotional health, high self-esteem, and positive social relations; on the other hand, poor adjustment results in stress, anxiety, behavioral issues, low self-esteem, and poor participation. Scheduled Tribe (ST) learners in the senior secondary school require more adjustment skills than other students owing to various factors such as culture shock, language issues, socio-economic disadvantage, geographical isolation, and lack of facilities for learning.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several studies have examined the emotional intelligence of school students and adolescents, and the results showed that there were differences among positive or negative scores based on socio-cultural origin and education type. Shaikh et al. (2019) studied the emotional intelligence of 423 students of standard XI in the city of Ahmedabad. Based on percentile classification 33.57% were found to have a low emotional intelligence, 33.57% showed a moderate level and 32.86% had a high level of emotional intelligence. Likewise, with 100 adolescent school students in Nagpur, Baghele et al. (2019) discovered that 80% had high emotional Intelligence while 20% had moderate emotional Intelligence. No student was seen as having a low level of EI. In his study Jisha (2026) studied emotional intelligence among 240 adolescent students in Kerala and he found that the overall emotional intelligence of his subjects was average. Das and Ray (2026) have also studied emotional intelligence in 355 students of XI and XIIth standard from Scheduled Tribes. For the status of emotional intelligence, they used the descriptive survey method and reported a moderate level of emotional intelligence among the participants.

Studies are also underway to evaluate adjustment situation of the secondary and higher secondary school students. Barik and Dhara (2019) have adopted descriptive survey method with Bell's Adjustment Inventory to study the adjustment capacity among 350 Secondary school students of Purba Bardhaman district in West Bengal. According to their results 12.00% of the students presented high level of adjustment, 73.14% moderate level and 14.86% low level. Based on the results of this study the researchers concluded that students' overall adjustment level was moderate. Murugeswari and Anandaraj (2017) studied the adjustment and emotional maturity in the context of higher-secondary students of Sivagiri Taluk, with a sample of 300 students. Overall the results suggested participants had a moderate level of adjustment. Similarly, Johari (2024) conducted a study to examine the adjustment level of secondary school students and found that the overall adjustment of the secondary school students was in the moderate category with the use of standardized adjustment inventory.

There has also been research on emotional intelligence and adjustment on the School Student sample. These two factors were also found to be correlated followed with positive correlation by several researchers (Ampa, 2019; Kaur and Kumar, 2018; Akhtar and Perveen, 2022). Kar, Saha and Mondal (2016) investigated the correlates of emotional intelligence and adjustment of 302 higher secondary school students of Purulia district, West Bengal. The results they found showed an association between emotional intelligence and adjustment in both the home and school, as well as in the peer domain. The positive correlation between emotional intelligence and adjustment was similarly found by Goyal and Khan (2022) with the help of an empirical survey conducted among secondary level students. While most participants demonstrated good levels of emotional intelligence and adjustment, some showed relatively low levels, highlighting the need to give appropriate attention and support.

Similarly, Boruah (2018), while working with higher secondary students of Sivasagar District, Assam, investigated the correlation of emotional intelligence with various other variables such as adjustment, socioeconomic status and scholastic achievement, and concluded that there was no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and adjustment among the students of higher secondary schools in Sivasagar district, Assam. This incongruity in the results is indicative of the fact that we may expect adjustment to correlate with emotional intelligence in different ways based on the participant, educational context, socio-cultural context, testing method, and other contexts.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To evaluate the level of Emotional Intelligence of the Scheduled Tribes students studying in senior secondary schools.
2. To find out the level of adjustment abilities of the Scheduled Tribe students of senior secondary schools.
3. To examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities of Scheduled Tribe students in senior secondary schools.

IV. HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: *There is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities of Scheduled Tribe students of senior secondary schools.*

V. METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this regard, the study of the present type was descriptive survey research type which assessed the level of emotional intelligence and adjustment capacity of the senior secondary students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) from Odisha district. This design would be used as an appropriate one which allowed the researcher to systematically examine and describe the existing characteristics and conditions of the variables under investigation without manipulating the participants and introducing experimental interventions. It further enables gathering of data on the psychological attitude and behaviour of students in Learning Environments. Hence, the descriptive survey method was apt for the present study in order to get to know the emotional intelligence of the ST students and also to find the adjustment ability of the students.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

This study involved government senior secondary schools of ST students studying in Classes XI and XII at Jeypore in the Koraput district, Odisha. The sample consisted of 395 students obtained through random sampling technique out of the identified students.

The district of Koraput was specifically chosen as the location of the study because of having large number of Scheduled Tribes and tribal population spread in remote and mostly rural areas. The ST students' numbers constitute a considerable percentage of students in the district who supports one unique socio-cultural and educational environment. Therefore, the district was purposively selected to examine these psychological and educational characteristics within the specific socio-cultural context of ST students.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

Two standardized psychological tools were used for this study to collect information on emotional Intelligence and adjustment skills related to the ST students. Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Dr. Shruti Narain's Emotional Intelligence Scale was employed for the measurement of emotional intelligence. It is the third edition of the scale which was published in 2025 that was used in the current study. It consists of 31 statements that span four aspects: Understanding Emotions, Understanding Motivation, Empathy and Managing Relationships. Of the 31 total items, 27 are positively worded and 4 are negatively worded. Positive

items were coded with a “1” for a “Yes” answer and a “0” for a “No” answer. The scoring procedure was reversed for items that were negatively worded. The scale has a reliability coefficient of 0.86 (test-retest) and a validity coefficient also of 0.86.

The standardized “Adjustment Inventory for School Students” was used to evaluate the adjustment skills of the participants. This inventory was conceived by Prof. A. K. P. Sinha and Prof. R. P. Singh and the fifth edition (2025) was used for the current study. The inventory is divided into 3 major dimensions of adjustment – emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and educational adjustment, with 60 items. All items have responses of “Always,” “Sometimes,” and “Never.” The inventory provides high reliability, having correlation coefficients of 0.94, 0.93, and 0.93, which have been obtained by split-half method, test-retest method and Kuder-Richardson Formula 20, respectively.

TECHNIQUES OF DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data were analysed and interpreted by implementing appropriate statistical procedures. For addressing the Objectives 1 and 2, descriptive statistical measures such as frequency, percentage, Mean score and Standard deviation were used. Pearson’s Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for Objective 3 which aimed to explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment capability of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) students.

VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Objective 1: Level of emotional intelligence among Scheduled Tribe students of senior secondary schools

The first aim of the present study was to find out the level of emotional intelligence of the students of the Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the senior secondary schools. For this purpose these data were grouped based on the various levels of emotional intelligence and the frequencies and percentages of the students on each of these levels were determined. The SPSS version 20 (Statistic Package for the Social Sciences) was also used to perform descriptive statistical analysis. The results from the analysis are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Intelligence

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Emotional Intelligence	395	11	31	20.88

The table-1 reported that the number of students is 395, minimum and maximum score of emotional intelligence is 11 and 31 respectively. The mean of the emotional intelligence score is 20.88.

Table 2: Distribution of students according to Level of Emotional Intelligence

Level of Emotional Intelligence	Range of Scores (as per the Scale Manual)	Frequency	Percentage
High Emotional Intelligence	27 and Above	31	7.85%
Average Emotional Intelligence	21 to 26	175	44.30%

Low Emotional Intelligence	20 or less	189	47.85%
Total		395	100

Table 2 shows the distribution of emotional intelligence scores of students classified as low, average, and high according to the norms found in the Emotional Intelligence Scale manual. The students who scored 27 or higher are considered as high level of emotional intelligence. Those who scored from 21 to 26 considered as average, and students who scores less than 20 considered as having low level of emotional intelligence.

As presented in the results in the table, there were 31 students categorized as "high" emotional intelligence. In total, there were 175 students in the "average" range and 189 students in the "low" range. Hence, 7.85%, 44.30% and 47.85% students are coming under high, average and low EI respectively. Therefore, it can be stated that the majority of ST students have possessed low level of intelligence, whereas very few students have possessed high EI.

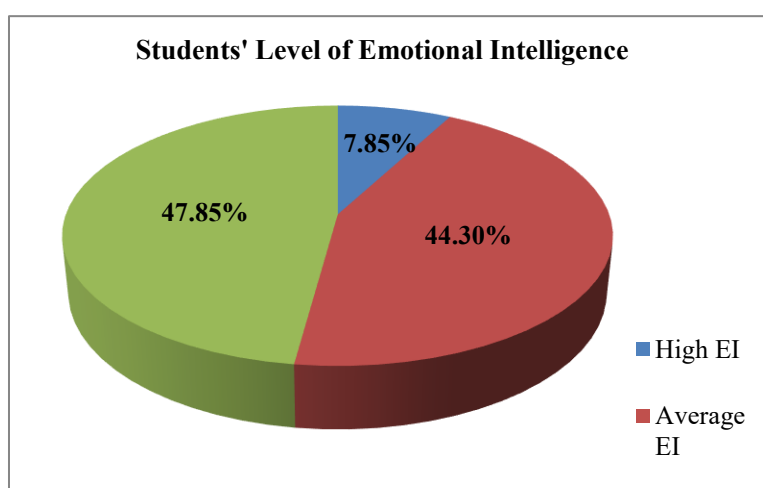


Figure 1: Level of Emotional Intelligence among ST students

Objective 2: Level of adjustment abilities among Scheduled Tribe students of senior secondary schools

The second aim of the present investigations was to evaluate the state of the adjustment ability of Scheduled Tribe (ST) students of the senior secondary schools. For this purpose, the data were categorized relating to the various levels of adjustment, and frequency and percentage of the students in each category were determined. The descriptive statistical analysis was also conducted on SPSS version 20 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The results from the analysis are given in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Adjustment Abilities

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Adjustment Abilities	395	45	120	81.35

The table-3 reported that the number of students is 395, minimum and maximum score of adjustment abilities is 45 and 120 respectively, whereas the mean is 81.35.

Table 4: Distribution of students according to Level of Adjustment Abilities

Level of Adjustment Abilities	Range of Scores (as per the Scale Manual)	Frequency	Percentage
Extremely High Adjustment	92 & more	113	28.61%
High Adjustment	78-91	107	27.09%
Above Average Adjustment	63-77	119	30.12%
Average/Moderate Adjustment	42-62	56	14.18%
Below Average Adjustment	27-41	0	0%
Unsatisfactory Adjustment	12-26	0	0%
Extremely Unsatisfactory Adjustment	11 & less	0	0%
Total		395	100

From the Table-4, it is revealed that the level of adjustment abilities is classified under seven levels. These levels are stated in the manual of standardized adjustment inventory. Students' adjustability was put into seven categories: extremely high, high, above average, average/moderate, below average, unsatisfactory, and extremely unsatisfactory. The test score norms for standardized inventory were used to set score ranges for each category. The results reveal that 28.61% (113 students) of the ST students were extremely high on the axis of adjustment, and 27.09% (107 students) were high on the axis of adjustment. Eleven students (3.46%) met above-average criteria for adjustment, while 56 (16.47%) met average/moderate adjustment criteria. In the other three subcategories, there were no students identified as below average, unsatisfactory or extremely unsatisfactory in the area of adjustment. In general, these results indicated that a significant number of the students exhibited good adjustment capacities. Most pupils in the above normal and high and extremely high categories belonged to the largest group of pupils in these categories from the ST. The zero counts in below-average and lower categories suggest that no participants qualified as being categorized below-average or lower in adjustment abilities or were adjusted extremely poor.

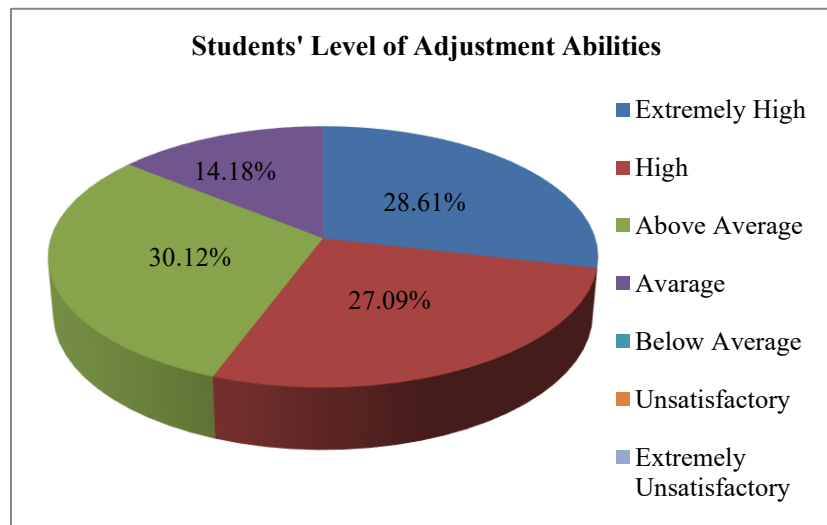


Figure 2: Level of Adjustment Abilities among ST students

Objective 3: Relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities among Scheduled Tribe students of senior secondary schools

The third purpose of the present study was to examine the relation between emotional intelligence and adjustment skill of the scheduled tribe (ST) students. For this purpose Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed in SPSS version 20. The results obtained were statistically analysed to find out the type of association if any between both the variables. Table 5 shows the results of correlation analysis. Results of the correlation analysis were presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Adjustment Abilities

Variables	Emotional Intelligence	Adjustment Abilities
Emotional Intelligence	1	0.858**
Adjustment Abilities	0.858**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	--	< .001
N	395	395

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The association between emotional intelligence and adjustment ability of ST students was studied with Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and the results are presented in table 5. The relationships between the two variables were analyzed and statistically significant ($r(393) = .858, p < .001$) and strongly positive. Hence, the hypothesis "There is significant relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities of Scheduled Tribe students of senior secondary schools" was accepted. The finding revealed correlation between students' adjustment ability with their emotional intelligence; strong positive correlation exists between them, meaning that if students' emotional intelligence is high, there is a high possibility for them to show a good ability to adapt. The overall findings suggest that there is a significant positive correlation between emotional intelligence and adjustment skills among the ST learners in senior secondary level.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to examine the level of emotional intelligence and adjustment ability of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) students studying in the Senior Secondary schools and to find the association of emotional intelligence and adjustment ability of the students of scheduled tribe. Analysis and interpretation of the whole data collected showed that a high number of ST students had low level of emotional intelligence. The findings of this study corroborate those of Shaikh et al. (2019) who also found that a majority of higher secondary students have low emotional intelligence. But the results of the present study are not consistent with the results obtained by Baghele et al. (2019), Das and Ray (2026) and Jisha (2026) who found their respective participants have comparatively higher or average level emotional intelligence. The differences can be attributed to the diversity of the socio-cultural and educational contexts, geographical location, age groups, participants and instruments for measurement used in the different studies. Relatively low EI level of the ST students in the present investigation points to the need for the development of emotional awareness, emotion regulation, empathy and interpersonal skills at senior secondary level.

In the ability to adjust, significant number of the students in ST learning group exhibited high level of adjustment. The findings differ from that of Barik and Dhara (2019) who found that the majority of secondary students in their study had moderate level of adjustment. A similar result was also presented by Murugeswari and Anandaraj (2017) and Johari (2024) who detected students in their respective studies had mainly moderate conditionals. The current study found lower levels of adjustment among the ST students with none being in the below-average range. Such a result implies that across the board, the students were able to react and adjust their needs to their educational, social and personal surroundings. They are fit to handle up with expectations, responsibilities and challenges of their adolescent secondary school time, hence their relatively better adjustment may be related to this ability.

Another important finding of the study was the correlation between emotional intelligence and the adjustment among the students of ST in the senior secondary level. Results showed a high, positive and statistically significant correlation between the two variables $r = .858$ with $p < .001$. Students with higher emotional intelligence tended to score higher on adjustment abilities, suggesting that those with higher EI scores also tended to have higher scores on adjustment abilities. This study is in consonance with Ampa (2019), Kaur and Kumari (2018), Akhtar and Perveen (2022), Kar, Saha and Mondal (2016) and Goyal and Khan (2022) who found positive correlation between emotional intelligence and adjustment of students. In particular, Kar et al. (2016) found emotional intelligence and adjustment to be significantly related among the higher secondary school students. However, present finding is contrary to Boruah (2018) who investigated, and found no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and adjustment among the higher secondary students. A number of differences were commented on in the various studies, which might be due to the differences in the study samples as well as to the socio-cultural and educational contexts, geographical locations, and measurement instruments used to measure the variables.

The results showed a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence and adjustment skills which implies that there are close ties between the participants' adjustment capacities and emotional intelligence. Being able to recognize, understand and regulate their emotions could help students to process effectively to the demands they face academically, socially and in everyday life. However, the correlational result is a relationship between variables and by itself does not signify evidence of the relationship of emotional intelligence to the level of adjustment.

In general, the results indicated that at the same time, a substantial percentage of ST students have reported low emotional intelligence, they were generally at a high level of adjustment. At the same time, emotional intelligence exhibited a strong positive association with adjustment abilities. The results of these findings emphasize the importance of developing emotional competencies in senior secondary school. Schools can thus offer supportive opportunities as a component of activities and programmes focusing on emotional awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, communication, interpersonal skills and effective coping strategies. Such educational enterprise can contribute to the overall emotional, social, academic and psychological growth of pupils.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The results of the present study highlight the need of focusing on emotional development and adjustment skills in the learning process of the Scheduled Tribe (ST) students in the senior secondary level of education. The students adjusted relatively well, but with increasing emotional intelligence of the students who were low, it is recommended that the school pays more attention to emotional development. The positive correlation found between emotional intelligence and adjustment abilities is another indication of the close relationship between these two aspects of students' comprehensive cultivation. Therefore, ST students' education should not be limited to mere academic success but should include sufficient opportunities for emotional awareness, self-regulation, empathy, inter-personal competence and coping mechanisms. A desired outcome for these competencies is that teachers and school counsellors will support these qualities in the classroom and through co-curricular experiences such as group meetings, co-curricular interaction, role-playing experiences, cooperative learning, structured emotional awareness programmes. Schools may also create supportive and culturally competent instructional and social settings that are comfortable for students to speak out and share their concerns, ask for help and advice, and build positive interactions with their teachers and peers. A supportive learning environment can foster the overall growth and development of every ST student by meeting their needs—emotional, social, and interpersonal—as well as academic. Practices in this category may also provide some support for students to cope better with the academic, social and personal issues within the senior secondary phase of schooling.

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