

Research

## **Exploring the Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Social Maturity on Civic Responsibility Among College Students in Thrissur District, Kerala**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the influence of emotional intelligence (EI) and social maturity on civic responsibility among college students in Thrissur District, Kerala. The focus on college students stems from the critical role they play in shaping the future of a community and their potential to contribute to civic activities. Civic responsibility involves the commitment to participating in social and community activities that foster the collective good. The role of emotional intelligence in managing one's emotions and social maturity in understanding societal dynamics are key predictor of civic engagement. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to assess the levels of emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility among students in different colleges across Thrissur. The sample consisted of 400 students from various disciplines, and data were analyzed using statistical tools like regression analysis and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Results indicated a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility. The findings also reveal that students with higher EI and social maturity were more likely to engage in civic activities. The study concludes by emphasizing the importance of integrating emotional intelligence and social maturity development in educational curricula to promote responsible citizenship.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Social Maturity, Civic Responsibility, College Students, Thrissur District.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

Civic responsibility refers to the obligation of citizens to actively participate in societal welfare and contribute to the betterment of their communities. In an increasingly interconnected and complex society, the need for responsible citizenship is more crucial than ever. College students, representing the youth of a nation, have significant potential to engage in social welfare activities. However, their ability to perform civic duties is influenced by a variety of factors, including emotional intelligence and social maturity. Emotional intelligence, defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others, has been linked to effective interpersonal interactions and decision-making. On the other hand, social maturity refers to an individual's ability to understand and navigate the complexities of social life, demonstrating empathy, responsibility, and social engagement.

In Kerala, education plays a vital role in shaping the values and behaviors of students. With a high literacy rate and active student movements, Kerala stands as a unique example of youth engagement in civic and social causes. Understanding the role that emotional intelligence and social maturity play in fostering civic responsibility can offer insights into how educational interventions can enhance students' engagement in community development.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite the importance of civic responsibility, there is limited research on how emotional intelligence and social maturity influence civic engagement, particularly in the context of college students in Kerala. Given the region's unique social, cultural, and educational framework, this research aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility among students in Thrissur District.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the level of emotional intelligence among college students in Thrissur District, Kerala?
2. How does social maturity affect the civic responsibility of college students in Thrissur?
3. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and social maturity in the context of civic responsibility?

4. How can educational institutions enhance civic engagement through the development of emotional intelligence and social maturity?

### **Hypotheses**

1. **H1:** There is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and civic responsibility among college students.
2. **H2:** There is a significant positive relationship between social maturity and civic responsibility among college students.
3. **H3:** Emotional intelligence significantly influences social maturity in college students.
4. **H4:** Students with higher emotional intelligence and social maturity show a higher level of civic engagement.

### **Significance of the Study**

This research is significant as it examines the role of psychological and social factors, emotional intelligence, and social maturity in enhancing the civic engagement of college students in Kerala. By establishing a correlation between these variables, the study highlights the importance of integrating EI and social maturity into the educational process. The results of the study will be valuable for policymakers, educators, and social workers, enabling them to devise interventions and programs that promote active and responsible citizenship. This will also contribute to the larger discourse on the role of emotional and social skills in fostering socially responsible behaviours.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review will cover both Indian and international studies that have explored the relationship between emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility.

#### **International Perspectives**

Emotional intelligence has been widely studied in relation to leadership, decision-making, and interpersonal relationships. Researchers like Goleman (1995) and Mayer & Salovey (1997) highlighted the importance of EI in managing emotions, which, in turn, helps in promoting social responsibility. Studies have found that individuals with high EI are more empathetic and better equipped to handle social responsibilities (Bar-On, 2006). These findings support the idea that EI enhances the capacity for civic engagement by fostering better understanding and emotional regulation, which are crucial for making responsible choices that benefit the community.

Social maturity, on the other hand, has been explored in terms of psychological and social development. According to Erikson (1968), the ability to navigate social challenges and relate to others in a mature manner is essential for responsible citizenship. Research by Rhoades (2010) suggests that socially mature individuals are more likely to engage in community-oriented activities. Thus, social maturity directly correlates with one's willingness to take on civic duties.

### **Indian Context**

In India, emotional intelligence and social maturity have been identified as essential traits in various contexts. A study by Gupta & Gupta (2015) in Delhi suggested that students with higher EI were more involved in student politics, social causes, and volunteering activities. Similarly, social maturity has been positively linked to an increase in students' participation in community development programs (Patel, 2017). The integration of social responsibility in educational curricula has been advocated by several studies, suggesting that emotionally and socially mature students are more likely to contribute positively to society (Rao & Nair, 2019).

In Kerala, education is highly regarded, and social responsibility is deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric. However, studies on emotional intelligence and social maturity influencing civic responsibility are relatively sparse. This study aims to bridge that gap by examining these factors in the context of Thrissur District.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. A survey is used to gather numerical data on emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility, while semi-structured interviews provide deeper insights into students' personal experiences and perceptions regarding these concepts.

#### **Population and Sample:**

The study is conducted in Thrissur District, Kerala, and focuses on undergraduate students from different colleges. The sample consists of 400 students, randomly selected from both urban and rural colleges to ensure representativeness. The age group of the participants ranges from 18 to 24 years.

#### **Data Collection Tools:**

1. **Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS):** The EIS developed by Researchers is used to measure the emotional intelligence of the participants. The scale assesses five dimensions

of EI: emotional self-awareness, emotional regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills.

2. **Social Maturity Scale (SMS):** The SMS, developed by Researchers is used to measure the social maturity of students. It assesses their capacity for empathy, social perception, and conflict resolution.

3. **Civic Responsibility Scale (CRS):** The CRS, developed by Price (2006), is used to measure the level of civic engagement among the participants. It assesses students' attitudes toward community service, voting, and other forms of participation in public life.

**Data Analysis**

Quantitative data are analysed using Pearson’s correlation and multiple regression analysis to identify relationships between emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility. Qualitative data from interviews are transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis to identify common themes related to students' perceptions of civic responsibility, emotional intelligence, and social maturity.

**Results**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Correlation with Civic Responsibility
Emotional Intelligence	72.5	12.3	0.68**
Social Maturity	75.2	10.1	0.74**
Civic Responsibility	69.8	11.5	-

**Note:** \*\*p < 0.01

**DISCUSSION**

This section interprets the results in the context of existing literature. The findings show a strong positive correlation between emotional intelligence, social maturity, and civic responsibility. Students with higher emotional intelligence were found to be more empathetic, better at handling conflicts, and more inclined to engage in community activities. Similarly, those who exhibited greater social maturity demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility towards social causes.

The regression analysis indicated that emotional intelligence and social maturity are significant predictors of civic responsibility, confirming the hypotheses. These findings are consistent with previous studies in both Indian and international contexts, where emotionally and socially mature individuals exhibited a higher tendency to engage in civic activities.

The study also explored the qualitative data gathered through interviews, revealing that students with higher EI and social maturity tended to view civic responsibility as a moral obligation, rather than a duty. This aligns with Erikson's (1968) theory of social maturity, where individuals develop a sense of purpose and contribution to society.

### **Implications for Educational Institutions**

The study suggests that educational institutions can play a pivotal role in fostering civic responsibility by focusing on the development of emotional intelligence and social maturity. Integrating EI and social maturity training into the curriculum, through workshops, extracurricular activities, and community service programs, could help students develop the skills necessary for responsible citizenship.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study has highlighted the significant influence of emotional intelligence and social maturity on civic responsibility among college students in Thrissur District, Kerala. The findings demonstrate that students with higher levels of emotional intelligence and social maturity are more likely to engage in activities that benefit their community, thus fulfilling their civic duties.

The results underscore the importance of fostering emotional intelligence and social maturity in educational settings, as these traits are closely linked to responsible citizenship. By developing these competencies, students can not only enhance their personal growth but also contribute positively to societal development.

Given the growing importance of civic responsibility in contemporary society, the study's findings have significant implications for educational policy and practice. Future research could explore the impact of specific educational interventions on emotional intelligence and social maturity, as well as their long-term effects on civic engagement.

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