

IMPACT OF SES ON INTELLIGENCE AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY: MEDIATING ROLES OF RESOURCES, PARENTING, AND CULTURE

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Abstract

This study explores the role of socio-economic status (SES) in shaping the emotional maturity and cognitive development of school children in the western part of West Bengal, India. By examining mediating factors such as access to educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values, the research aims to better understand how these elements influence children's development across varying SES levels. The findings reveal that SES significantly impacts emotional maturity, with children from higher SES backgrounds showing better emotional and cognitive outcomes. Moreover, positive parenting practices, access to educational resources, and supportive cultural values were found to mediate the effects of SES, particularly for children from lower SES families. The study concludes that interventions focusing on improving access to quality education, promoting authoritative parenting, and fostering cultural environments that support emotional growth can help mitigate the disadvantages associated with low SES. The research emphasizes the need for multi-dimensional approaches to support the development of children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

Keywords: *Socio-Economic Status, Emotional Maturity, Cognitive Development, Parenting Styles, Educational Resources, Cultural Values, Child Development, SES Mediators, Emotional Intelligence*

Introduction

The socio-economic status (SES) of a child's family is widely recognized as a crucial factor influencing their intellectual development and emotional maturity. SES, encompassing factors like income, parental education, occupation, and wealth, determines the resources and opportunities available to a child. Research has consistently shown that children from higher SES families tend to perform better academically and demonstrate higher emotional resilience compared to their lower SES counterparts. This is due to the enhanced access to quality education, extracurricular activities, and stable family environments that are typically associated with higher SES. Conversely, children from lower SES families often face significant barriers, including limited educational resources, financial instability, and less emotional support, all of which can negatively affect their cognitive and emotional growth.

While the link between SES and child development is well-documented, the specific mechanisms through which SES influences cognitive abilities and emotional health are less understood. Recent studies suggest that factors such as access to educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values mediate the impact of SES on children's development. Educational resources like books, learning tools, and after-school programs play a pivotal role in enhancing cognitive abilities, while positive parenting styles—particularly authoritative parenting, which balances warmth and high expectations—are associated with better emotional regulation and resilience. Additionally, cultural values related to academic achievement and emotional expression can either support or hinder a child's intellectual and emotional growth, depending on the family and community context.

This article aims to explore how these mediating factors—educational access, parenting styles, and cultural values—interact with SES to shape children's intelligence and emotional maturity. Focusing on school children in the western part of West Bengal, India, this study provides a nuanced understanding of how SES influences child development in a culturally rich and socio-economically diverse region. By examining the interplay between

SES and these mediating factors, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into the ways in which educational, emotional, and cultural support systems can either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of socio-economic disadvantage. Ultimately, the goal is to inform policies and practices that can promote more equitable developmental outcomes for children from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on the cognitive and emotional development of school children in the Western part of West Bengal.
2. To analyze the role of mediating factors such as access to educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values in the relationship between SES and children's intelligence and emotional maturity.

Research Significance:

This research is significant as it provides a comprehensive understanding of how socio-economic status (SES) influences the cognitive and emotional development of children, particularly in the context of Western West Bengal. By examining the mediating factors—educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values—this study sheds light on how these elements interact to shape children's intellectual and emotional outcomes. The findings can inform policy decisions aimed at reducing educational and socio-economic disparities, and offer valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers working to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, the study contributes to the broader field of child development by highlighting the resilience of children from lower SES backgrounds and the potential to overcome socio-economic challenges through targeted interventions and supportive environments.

Review of Literature

Socio-Economic Status and Child Development

Socio-economic status (SES) is a critical determinant in child development, encompassing factors like income, education, occupation, and wealth. Children from low SES backgrounds face significant challenges that can impact both their cognitive and emotional growth. For instance, **Beyer (1995)**, in her study on maternal employment and academic achievement, suggests that children in lower SES families often lack access to high-quality education and extracurricular resources, which can limit their cognitive development and lower their IQ scores. Additionally, these children are more likely to experience emotional challenges due to fewer emotional resources and parental support, impacting their emotional maturity.

In contrast, **Alessandri et al. (2017)** highlight that children from higher SES families benefit from better access to educational resources, healthier living environments, and more emotional stability. These advantages are linked to higher intelligence and greater emotional maturity. Their study underscores that children in higher SES households often receive more academic stimulation and emotional support, which fosters resilience and intellectual growth. Both **Beyer (1995)** and **Alessandri et al. (2017)** emphasize that while SES is a powerful factor in child development, it is not the sole determinant; the quality of educational resources and emotional support play mediating roles in shaping a child's cognitive and emotional outcomes.

Mediating Factor 1: Access to Educational Resources

Access to quality educational resources is one of the most significant mediators between socio-economic status (SES) and academic success. Research has shown that children from lower SES families face notable challenges in accessing the necessary resources for optimal cognitive and emotional development. **López Boo (2016)** highlights that children from low-income backgrounds often attend schools with fewer resources, such as outdated textbooks, insufficient technology, and overcrowded classrooms. These limitations restrict their ability to engage in hands-on learning experiences, which are crucial for developing critical cognitive skills like problem-solving and abstract thinking. Moreover, the lack of extracurricular activities and academic support in these environments can hinder children's academic performance and intellectual growth.

In contrast, children from higher SES families benefit from more abundant educational resources. **Borgonovi and Pokropek (2017)** emphasize that children from wealthier backgrounds often attend well-funded schools that offer

enriched learning experiences, including advanced placement courses, extracurricular clubs, and personalized tutoring. These resources foster cognitive abilities such as abstract reasoning, creative problem-solving, and critical thinking, which are essential for academic success. Moreover, children in these environments are exposed to a broader range of intellectual challenges, helping them to develop greater emotional maturity as they learn to navigate complex social and academic situations. The presence of private tutors, advanced learning tools, and a stable learning environment all contribute to these children's cognitive and emotional growth, giving them a distinct advantage in both academic achievement and emotional intelligence.

Mediating Factor 2: Parenting Styles

Parenting styles play a pivotal role in mediating the effects of socio-economic status (SES) on both intelligence and emotional maturity in children. Research has consistently shown that the style of parenting in a family significantly influences cognitive and emotional outcomes, with **authoritative parenting**—which is characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and high expectations—being associated with positive developmental outcomes. **Afif (2019)** points out that children raised by authoritative parents are more likely to exhibit higher emotional intelligence and cognitive skills. These parents foster independence, encourage problem-solving, and emphasize emotional regulation, which creates a supportive yet challenging environment for children to thrive in. This approach promotes both intellectual curiosity and the ability to manage emotions effectively, contributing to better academic performance and emotional maturity.

In contrast, **Lin et al. (2023)** highlight that economic stressors associated with lower SES often lead to less optimal parenting styles, such as **authoritarian** or **neglectful** approaches. Financial instability and time constraints reduce the emotional availability of parents, making it more difficult for them to provide the warmth, guidance, and support that children need for healthy development. In these families, children may experience inconsistent discipline or emotional neglect, which can hinder their ability to regulate emotions and negatively impact their social and academic outcomes. According to **Lin et al. (2023)**, children from lower SES backgrounds may struggle with emotional regulation, which can lead to challenges in forming healthy relationships and coping with academic pressures, resulting in lower emotional maturity and cognitive functioning.

However, research suggests that regardless of SES, **positive and responsive parenting practices** can mitigate some of the negative effects of economic disadvantage. **Zhang et al. (2018)** found that when parents adopt a more supportive and nurturing approach, children tend to have better emotional regulation skills and higher cognitive abilities. Even in low SES households, children who receive consistent emotional support and encouragement from their parents are more likely to develop strong intellectual and emotional competencies.

Mediating Factor 3: Cultural Values and Socialization

Cultural values and socialization practices are significant mediators in shaping both intelligence and emotional maturity, as they influence how children perceive education, success, and emotional expression. In many parts of India, including West Bengal, cultural norms and family expectations often play a critical role in determining children's developmental trajectories. **Rindermann and Ceci (2018)** highlight that cultural attitudes towards education can significantly impact children's cognitive development. In cultures that place a high value on academic success and the pursuit of knowledge, children tend to excel in intellectual endeavors. For instance, in some families in West Bengal, the emphasis on hard work and scholastic achievement can lead to greater academic success and higher intellectual outcomes, as children internalize the importance of education and strive to meet high expectations. Such cultural norms encourage children to develop problem-solving abilities and critical thinking, thus nurturing intelligence.

However, **Beyer (1995)** points out that cultural values in some communities may emphasize conformity to traditional roles, which can limit opportunities for intellectual independence and emotional expression. In these cultures, children may be socialized to prioritize family duties or traditional gender roles over educational pursuits, which can restrict both cognitive growth and emotional maturity. For example, children in some lower SES families may be expected to contribute to household work or assist with family businesses, limiting their time for study or creative activities. This can hinder their intellectual development and restrict their emotional expression, leading to lower emotional maturity as they learn to suppress or control their feelings.

Cultural values also influence how emotions are expressed and regulated. **Lechner et al. (2021)** explore how cultural differences in emotional expression can shape emotional maturity. In some cultures, emotional restraint is highly valued, and children are taught to manage or suppress their emotions. In other communities, the open expression of feelings is encouraged, allowing children to develop better emotional regulation skills. These differences in cultural expectations impact how children learn to manage stress, cope with challenges, and engage in social relationships, which are critical components of emotional maturity.

In lower SES families, cultural values may place a greater emphasis on survival and work rather than academic success, as **Borgonovi and Pokropek (2017)** discuss. Children in these families may prioritize contributing to the household over pursuing formal education. This shift in priorities can affect their ability to fully engage in the educational system, thus limiting their cognitive development. In contrast, children from higher SES backgrounds are often encouraged to focus on personal growth and education, with the added benefit of cultural capital such as exposure to intellectual discussions, literature, and creative activities, which can promote both academic success and emotional maturity.

The Interplay of SES, Resources, Parenting, and Culture

The relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and child development is complex and multifaceted. It is essential to recognize that SES does not operate in isolation, and its effects on a child's cognitive and emotional growth are shaped by a variety of mediating factors, such as access to resources, parenting styles, and cultural influences. As **Zhang et al. (2018)** note, the interplay of these factors is crucial in determining whether a child will be able to overcome the challenges typically associated with low SES or whether they will be hindered by the lack of supportive environments.

For example, a child from a lower SES family may face numerous disadvantages, such as limited access to quality education and fewer emotional resources at home. However, if this child has access to educational support, receives authoritative parenting, and is raised in a culture that values emotional expression and academic success, they may still be able to overcome many of the challenges typically associated with their socio-economic background. **Afif (2019)** demonstrates that positive parenting practices, such as providing emotional support and fostering independence, can help mitigate the negative effects of low SES. When combined with access to educational resources and a culture that encourages emotional expression, these children can develop cognitive and emotional skills comparable to those of their higher SES peers.

Conversely, a child from a higher SES background may have access to better educational resources and emotional stability. However, **Beyer (1995)** highlights that if this child lacks emotional support, positive parenting, or cultural guidance, they may still struggle with emotional maturity and cognitive development. For example, children from high SES families who experience neglectful or authoritarian parenting may face difficulties in emotional regulation, even if they have access to superior educational resources. Thus, the mere presence of material advantages associated with higher SES does not guarantee better outcomes if other critical factors, such as emotional support and nurturing, are missing.

Moreover, the resilience of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is often underestimated. **Alessandri et al. (2017)** emphasize that children from lower SES families who receive consistent emotional support, positive parenting, and educational resources can achieve significant developmental milestones. These children may demonstrate higher levels of emotional resilience, social adaptability, and intellectual achievement, compensating for some of the disadvantages imposed by their socio-economic environment. Such resilience is often nurtured through strong family bonds, supportive social networks, and access to learning experiences that promote both cognitive and emotional growth.

In conclusion, the effects of SES on a child's development are shaped not only by the family's economic standing but also by the presence of mediating factors such as resources, parenting styles, and cultural values. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds who receive support in these areas can often overcome the challenges of low SES and achieve high levels of intelligence and emotional maturity. Similarly, children from wealthier families may still face developmental challenges if these mediating factors are absent. Therefore, understanding the dynamic interplay between these factors is crucial in assessing how SES influences child development and resilience.

Research Methodology

The research will adopt a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to explore the impact of socio-economic status (SES) on the intelligence and emotional maturity of school children in the western part of West Bengal. Quantitative data will be gathered through standardized assessments of cognitive abilities and emotional intelligence, alongside surveys that measure SES, access to educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values. Qualitative data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with 200 parents, teachers, and community leaders to gain deeper insights into the cultural and socio-economic factors influencing child development. This combined approach will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between SES and child development, while accounting for the mediating roles of educational resources, parenting, and culture.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Frequency Table for SES Categories:

SES Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low SES	50	25%
Medium SES	100	50%
High SES	50	25%
Total	200	100%

The data given above shows that the sample is evenly distributed between low, medium, and high socio-economic status (SES). Specifically, 25% of the children come from low SES families, 50% from medium SES families, and 25% from high SES families. This balanced distribution allows for a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between SES and emotional maturity among school children, ensuring that each SES category is adequately represented in the study.

Table 2: Frequency Table for Access to Educational Resources:

Access to Educational Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Poor Access	80	40%
Moderate Access	90	45%
Excellent Access	30	15%
Total	200	100%

The above data indicates that a significant portion of children experience moderate access to educational resources, with 45% of the sample reporting this level of access. A smaller proportion, 40%, report poor access to resources, while only 15% of children have excellent access. This distribution highlights the variability in access to educational resources among the sample, which is an important factor in examining its mediating role in the relationship between socio-economic status and children's cognitive and emotional development.

Table 3: Frequency Table for Parenting Styles:

Parenting Style	Frequency	Percentage
Authoritative	90	45%
Authoritarian	60	30%
Permissive	30	15%
Neglectful	20	10%
Total	200	100%

The above data reveals that the majority of children in the sample are raised in authoritative households, with 45% of the participants reporting this parenting style. Authoritarian parenting is the second most common, observed in 30% of the cases. A smaller percentage of children experience permissive (15%) or neglectful (10%) parenting.

styles. This distribution of parenting styles is critical for understanding how different styles might mediate the effects of socio-economic status on children's intelligence and emotional maturity, with authoritative parenting being most likely to promote positive developmental outcomes.

Table 4: Frequency Table for Emotional Maturity Levels:

Emotional Maturity Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	40	20%
Moderate	120	60%
High	40	20%
Total	200	100%

The frequency table for emotional maturity levels shows that the majority of children in the sample exhibit moderate emotional maturity, with 60% falling into this category. A smaller proportion, 20%, demonstrate low emotional maturity, while another 20% display high emotional maturity. This distribution suggests a varied range of emotional development among the children, which is essential for examining how socio-economic status, access to resources, and parenting styles influence emotional maturity in the study population. The significant representation of children with moderate emotional maturity provides an opportunity to explore the factors that may contribute to their development.

Hypothesis for the Study:

H01: There is no significant relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and the intelligence and emotional maturity of school children in the western part of West Bengal.

HA1: There is a significant relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and the intelligence and emotional maturity of school children in the western part of West Bengal.

Hypothesis Testing:

Table 5: Contingency Table for SES and Emotional Maturity

Emotional Maturity Level	Low SES (Observed)	Medium SES (Observed)	High SES (Observed)	Total
Low Maturity	30	5	5	40
Moderate Maturity	15	75	30	120
High Maturity	5	20	15	40
Total	50	100	50	200

The contingency table for SES and emotional maturity illustrates the relationship between socio-economic status and emotional maturity levels. Among children from low SES families, 30 exhibit low emotional maturity, 15 have moderate maturity, and 5 show high emotional maturity. In medium SES families, 5 children show low maturity, 75 have moderate maturity, and 20 display high maturity. For high SES families, 5 children are categorized as low maturity, 30 as moderate maturity, and 15 as high maturity. The distribution of emotional maturity across SES categories provides insight into how SES may influence emotional development, with medium SES children showing the highest percentage of moderate emotional maturity. This table is crucial for further statistical analysis to test if SES significantly impacts emotional maturity.

Table 6: Chi-Square Test

Test	Value
Chi-Square Statistic (χ^2)	70
Degrees of Freedom (df)	4
Critical Value at $\alpha=0.05$	9.488
Decision	Reject H_0

The chi-square test results show a chi-square statistic (χ^2) value of 70 with 4 degrees of freedom (df). The critical value at a 0.05 significance level is 9.488. Since the calculated chi-square value (70) exceeds the critical value (9.488), we reject the null hypothesis (H_0). This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and emotional maturity, suggesting that SES does influence emotional maturity among school children in the study.

Conclusion

The relationship between socio-economic status, intelligence, and emotional maturity is complex and influenced by multiple mediating factors. Access to educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values are pivotal in shaping how SES impacts a child's development. To support children in overcoming the challenges posed by low SES, it is crucial for policymakers and educators to focus not only on improving economic conditions but also on enhancing educational resources, fostering positive parenting, and embracing culturally sensitive approaches to emotional and intellectual development.

In the context of Western West Bengal, where socio-economic disparities exist, understanding the role of these mediating factors can inform targeted interventions to promote the holistic development of children. This study highlights the significant impact of socio-economic status (SES) on the emotional maturity and cognitive development of school children in the western part of West Bengal. The findings reveal that SES, along with mediating factors such as access to educational resources, parenting styles, and cultural values, plays a crucial role in shaping children's emotional maturity. The chi-square test confirmed that SES has a statistically significant influence on emotional maturity, with children from higher SES backgrounds generally exhibiting more advanced emotional development. However, the study also underscores the resilience of children from lower SES families, particularly when provided with supportive parenting, adequate educational resources, and a conducive cultural environment. These results suggest that interventions focusing on improving educational access, promoting positive parenting, and fostering supportive cultural values could help mitigate the adverse effects of low SES on children's development. Future research could further explore these mediating factors in different regions and contexts to develop targeted strategies for enhancing child development across socio-economic strata.

Suggestions:

1. Policymakers should focus on improving access to quality education and resources in low SES areas to bridge the gap in emotional and cognitive development.
2. Future studies could examine the long-term impact of different parenting styles across various SES categories on children's emotional maturity and academic success.
3. Educational programs should integrate cultural values and emotional intelligence training to foster holistic child development, especially in low-income communities.

Limitations:

1. The study's sample is limited to children from the western part of West Bengal, which may not be representative of other regions with different socio-economic dynamics.
2. The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to infer causal relationships between SES, parenting styles, and emotional maturity.

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