


**Research Article**

## Parent–Adolescent Communication and Emotional Intelligence: A Study Among Below Poverty Line (BPL) Urban Adolescents

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**Abstract**

Adolescence is a critical and transitional stage in human development. Effective parent–adolescent communication provides a foundation for emotional intelligence. High Emotional Intelligence enables adolescents to cope better with stress, resist peer pressure, and navigate the challenges of growing up in a complex social environment. The present research is an attempt to explore the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and the emotional intelligence of BPL male and female urban adolescents. For this study, 60 BPL adolescents of age group 13 to 18 years were selected. The ratio of male and female urban BPL adolescents was 1:1. Parent–Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) developed by Barnes & Olson (1985) and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence (SSEIS) developed by Schutte (1998) was used to measure Parent–Adolescent Communication and Emotional Intelligence among BPL urban adolescents. Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient will be applied to examine the relationship between Parent–Adolescent Communication and Emotional Intelligence and independent t-tests will be carried out to find significant differences in emotional intelligence of male and female BPL urban adolescents. It is hypothesised that “There is no significant relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents” And “There is no significant difference in emotional intelligence of male and female BPL urban adolescents.”

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**KEYWORDS:** Parent -Adolescent Communication, Emotional Intelligence, Below Poverty Line (BPL).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence represents a vital stage of emotional, social, and psychological growth, where communication with parents significantly influences an individual's emotional awareness and overall adjustment. When parents communicate openly with their adolescents, it helps build trust and supports the development of emotional awareness, whereas ineffective communication often results in conflict, misinterpretation, and emotional strain (Barnes & Olson, 1985). Supportive and open parent-child conversations contribute to better emotional control, self-knowledge, and relationship skills in adolescents that contribute to healthy psychosocial functioning (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). Below Poverty Line (BPL) family means that a family does not have enough income or resources to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and healthcare. In simple terms, people living below the poverty line struggle to afford the minimum standard of living required for a decent life. Among adolescents from below poverty line (BPL) urban families, communication patterns and emotional development are often affected by economic hardship, limited resources, and stressful living conditions. (Singh & Kaur, 2022). These challenges may influence adolescents' emotional intelligence. There is limited research examining its association with parent-adolescent communication within economically disadvantaged urban contexts in India. The present study seeks to explore this relationship, aiming to understand how communication quality within low-income families impacts the emotional intelligence of adolescents.

### Adolescence

Adolescence refers to the period between childhood and adulthood, typically covering the teen years, during which individuals experience major physical, emotional, and social changes - such as growing taller, developing new feelings, forming their identity, and becoming more independent. According to Lerner and Steinberg, adolescence is a developmental period characterized by rapid growth, identity formation, and evolving relationships with family and peers. It is a period when individuals begin to form their identity, develop social skills, and acquire the competencies necessary to navigate the complexities of life. (Lerner & Steinberg, 2017). Family dynamics—particularly the quality of communication between parents and adolescents—are central to influencing their emotional well-being and psychological growth.

### Parent-Adolescent Communication

Healthy parent-adolescent communication generally involves open dialogue, emotional support, and transparent interaction allowing young individuals to feel understood, respected, and guided in their growth. Effective communication allows adolescents to openly share their feelings and ideas, seek guidance, and benefit from supportive, constructive feedback. Barnes and Olson, (1985) describe parent-adolescent communication as involving multiple aspects such as openness, effective problem-solving, trust, receptiveness, mutual understanding, and emotional support. In the family context, particularly parent-adolescent communication, it has a profound influence on the development of emotional

intelligence. In the Journal of Child and Family Studies a cross-sectional study was conducted by Shee K., (2025) on Emotional intelligence and parent-child relationship among Indian adolescents. This study found a weak negative correlation between emotional intelligence and the quality of parent-child relationships among Indian adolescents. In the same journal, an article on Parent-adolescent emotional communication patterns and depressive symptoms: A mixed method study by Zhou, T. (2025) aimed to explore the characteristics of parent-adolescent emotional communication patterns from the perspectives of both parents and adolescents and to further examine their relationships with adolescent depressive symptoms. Hu, J. et al. (2025) conducted research on Parent- and adolescent-driven effects in emotion-related communication and depressive symptoms published in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence. The research examined the bidirectional association between parental responses to adolescents' emotions and adolescents' emotional communication behaviours, highlighting their longitudinal predictive effects on adolescent depressive symptoms. When adolescents are encouraged to talk freely about emotions and daily issues, it gives them opportunities to understand and regulate their feelings and emotions while parental guidance provides models of effective emotional expression. Lindquist, C. A., et al. (2021) found that adolescents who felt emotionally validated by parents showed lower rates of anxiety and depressive symptoms. This study emphasizes the importance of emotional validation by parents in reducing anxiety and depressive symptoms among adolescents.

### Emotional intelligence (EI)

Salovey & Mayer, (1990) defined Emotional Intelligence as the capacity to notice, interpret, and manage emotions in both oneself and in relationships with others. Schutte et al. (1998) define emotional intelligence as a multidimensional construct that includes emotional awareness, emotional regulation, social skills, and adaptability. Adolescents with better emotional intelligence often deal with stress more effectively, resolve conflicts more smoothly, make sound decisions, and build healthy relationships. A comprehensive literature review by Gaur, D., & Gupta, S. (2024) on the impact of parental support on adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem in the Psychology Journal explores the profound impact of parental support on adolescents' emotional intelligence and self-esteem, emphasizing the importance of nurturing parent-child relationships. Studies by Schutte et al., (1998) and Goleman, (1995) show that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence are more capable of handling difficulties, resisting harmful peer pressure, and pursuing both personal and academic success. Emotional intelligence is not an innate trait alone but can be cultivated through supportive social interactions, particularly within the family environment. Zapf, H. (2024) presented a systematic review of the association between parent-child communication quality and adolescent mental health in the journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry. This systematic review addresses how adolescent-rated parent-child communication quality is related to adolescent mental health, highlighting the importance of effective communication in

fostering emotional well-being. Charulatha, C., & Sinha, A. (2023) conducted research published in the International Journal of Indian Psychology. This study investigates the relationship between perceived parenting styles and emotional intelligence among late adolescents, finding significant correlations between authoritative parenting and higher emotional intelligence.

### Below Poverty Line (BPL)

The term Below Poverty Line (BPL) is used by the Indian government to classify households whose income or consumption levels are insufficient to meet essential needs such as food, housing, healthcare, and clothing (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2014). The income limit set by the central government to consider a household as Below Poverty Line (BPL) is an annual income of ₹27,000 or less. The BPL status is used to identify economically disadvantaged households eligible for government welfare schemes and subsidies aimed at improving living standards. According to Conger & Donnellan (2007), Poverty brings several challenges for families, such as financial instability, limited educational access, and higher parental stress. For Below Poverty Line (BPL) urban adolescents, effective parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence are especially important. Economic hardship often places strain on family life, which can negatively influence parenting practices and limit opportunities for positive, supportive communication between parents and adolescents (McLoyd, 1990). Adolescents living below the poverty line often experience unsafe surroundings, social marginalization, and limited support or recreational opportunities, all of which restrict healthy emotional development. In such contexts, strengthening family communication can serve as a crucial protective factor that boosts emotional intelligence. Frongillo (2024) conducted a meta-review on child and adolescent food insecurity, highlighting its adverse effects on growth, diet quality, psychological development, and mental health, while emphasizing the socio-economic challenges contributing to these outcomes. Effective communication enhances emotional awareness, social competence, and problem-solving—core elements of emotional intelligence.

Thus, given the critical role of both parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence in adolescent development, it is important to explore the relationship between these variables among BPL urban adolescents. This relationship offers useful insight for designing interventions that strengthen family communication, enhance adolescents' emotional competencies, and provide better support for those growing up in urban poverty. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among male and female BPL urban adolescents. Additionally, it aims to examine whether significant differences exist in the emotional intelligence of male and female adolescents within this population.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The present study adopts a correlational research design to examine the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among urban adolescents from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. Additionally, a comparative design is employed to examine gender differences in emotional intelligence.

### Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents?
2. Is there a significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female BPL urban adolescents?

### 3. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents.
2. To compare emotional intelligence between male and female BPL urban adolescents.

### 4. HYPOTHESES

1. There will be no significant relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents.
2. There will be no significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female BPL urban adolescents.

### Sample

60 Adolescents of age group 13-18 years from the Urban population living Below the Poverty Line (BPL) were selected in the ratio 1:1 using the purposive sampling technique.

### Tools

1. Parent–Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) – Developed by Barnes & Olson (1985) Measures communication quality between parents and adolescents, including openness, problem-solving, and emotional support. Test–Retest Reliability ranges from 0.78 to 0.88 and Construct Validity is Supported by correlations with family cohesion, adaptability, and satisfaction.
2. Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSEIS) –Developed by Schutte (1998), assesses emotional intelligence, including emotional awareness, regulation, and social skills. Test-retest reliability  $r = 0.78$  and Construct Validity is supported by correlation with empathy, life satisfaction and wellbeing.

### Procedure

Necessary permissions from government schools' authority were obtained. The purpose of the study and informed consent from participants and guardians were taken. The PACS and SSEIS questionnaires were given to the adolescents in a controlled environment. Confidentiality and voluntary participation throughout the study were maintained. Data was collected from the completed questionnaires for data analysis.

**Statistical Analysis**

1. Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient (r) is used to examine the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence.
2. An Independent Sample t-test is computed to determine whether there is a significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female BPL urban adolescents.

**5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Adolescence is a critical stage for emotional and social development, where effective parent–adolescent communication plays a key role in fostering emotional intelligence. Among the Below Poverty Line (BPL) urban

adolescents, economic hardship and social stress often disrupt healthy family interactions, potentially affecting emotional growth. Limited research has explored this link within the BPL context in India. Understanding how communication influences emotional intelligence among these adolescents can help design interventions that strengthen family bonds and promote emotional well-being in disadvantaged urban settings. The present study aimed to explore the relationship between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents, as well as gender differences in emotional intelligence. For descriptive Statistics, the mean and standard deviation (SD) of Parent–Adolescent Communication (PACS) and Emotional Intelligence (SSEIS) scores were calculated for the total sample and separately for male and female adolescents.

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistics of Parent-Adolescent Communication and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale Scores

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
PACS (Total Sample)	60	78.35	8.42	60	95
SSEIS (Total Sample)	60	112.50	12.31	90	140
PACS (Male)	30	77.10	8.20	60	93
PACS (Female)	30	79.60	8.50	61	95
SSEIS (Male)	30	110.40	11.85	90	135
SSEIS (Female)	30	114.60	12.45	92	140

N=60, PACS=Parent Adolescent Communication Scale, SSEIS=Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale, Mean of Female Parent Adolescent Communication Scale=79.60, Mean of Female Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale= 114.60

Female adolescents showed slightly higher mean scores on both parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence compared to male adolescents. The SD values indicate moderate variability in both variables. The first hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between parent–

adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents. By using correlation analysis, the relationship between Parent–Adolescent Communication and Emotional Intelligence will be found out with the help of Table 2.

**Table 2:** Pearson’s Correlation between Parent Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS) and Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSEIS)

Variables	PACS Total	SSEIS Total
PACS Total	1	0.62**
SSEIS Total	0.62**	1

Note: \*\*p < 0.01, PACS =Parent Adolescent Communication Scale, SSEIS = Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale, correlation Score of PACS and SSEIS = + 0.62

From the above table, the Pearson correlation coefficient between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence was  $r = 0.62, p < 0.01$ , indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that higher quality communication with parents is associated with higher emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents. Hence, we reject the null hypothesis. The findings reveal a significant positive correlation between parent–adolescent communication and emotional intelligence. Adolescents who experience open, supportive, and effective communication with their parents are better able to perceive, understand, and manage their emotions. This aligns with previous research indicating that family

interactions and parental responsiveness play a crucial role in fostering emotional intelligence (Barnes & Olson, 1985; Schutte, 1998; Shee, 2025). The results highlight the protective role of good parent–adolescent communication in helping adolescents cope with stress, resist negative peer pressure, and navigate complex social environments, particularly among economically disadvantaged populations.

In the second hypothesis we stated that there is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence between male and female BPL urban adolescents. With the help of the Independent Sample t-test for Gender Differences, we will check this hypothesis.

**Table 3:** Independent t-Test for Emotional Intelligence of Male and Female BPL Urban Adolescents

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	P
SSEIS	Male	30	110.40	11.85	1.85	0.07
SSEIS	Female	30	114.60	12.45		

N=60, Male= 30, Female= 30, SSEIS= Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale, SD= Standard Deviation, t Score = 1.85, P value = 0.07

- $N_1 = N_2 = 30 \rightarrow df = (30 + 30 - 2) = 58$
- Obtained  $t = 1.85$
- $p = 0.07$
- Critical  $t$  (two-tailed,  $df = 58, \alpha = 0.05$ )  $\approx \pm 2.00$

Since the obtained  $t$  value (1.85) is less than the critical  $t$  value ( $\pm 2.00$ ) and the  $p$  value (0.07) is greater than 0.05, the difference between male and female adolescents on the SSEIS (emotional intelligence) is not statistically significant. The  $t$ -test shows  $t = 1.85, p = 0.07$ , indicating no statistically significant difference in emotional intelligence between male and female adolescents at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . We accept the null hypothesis. Although females showed slightly higher mean scores on emotional intelligence, the difference was not statistically significant. This finding suggests that both male and female BPL urban adolescents exhibit comparable emotional intelligence levels. The absence of significant gender differences aligns with some prior studies indicating that emotional intelligence development may be more influenced by family environment, communication quality, and parenting practices than by gender alone (Gaur, 2024; Hu et al., 2025).

### Implications

The results underscore the importance of enhancing parent-adolescent communication, especially in urban BPL settings where socio-economic stressors may limit emotional support. Interventions targeting parental awareness, communication skills, and emotional support can contribute to improving adolescents' emotional competencies and overall psychological well-being.

### 6. CONCLUSION

The study found a significant positive relationship between parent-adolescent communication and emotional intelligence among BPL urban adolescents. Those with better parental communication showed higher emotional intelligence. No significant gender differences were observed, suggesting similar emotional competence among males and females. Overall, supportive parent-adolescent communication fosters emotional intelligence and resilience in economically disadvantaged urban youth.

### Declarations

**Funding:** The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, Data Collection and/or publication of this article.

**Ethical Approval:** This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee (Protocol No. [REDACTED]).

**Informed Consent:** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants and their legal guardians included in the study. To maintain a double-blind review process, specific names of the participating institutions and the geographic

location have been removed from this version of the manuscript.

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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