GENDER AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AMONG PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN IMPHAL

Dr.Thuishim Kashung[1], Oinam Olympia Devi[2], S. Penmigrace Shimrei[3] & Olivia Shinglai[4]

[1]Assistant Professor1, DM College of Teacher Education.
[2, 3, 4] M.Ed Trainees2 -4, DM College of Teacher Education.

Abstract

The current paper examines gender and socio-cultural differences in the Emotional Intelligence (EI) of pre-service teachers in Imphal, Manipur. The study will use a descriptive survey design, which will be based on a proportionate random sample of 300 pre-service teachers (150 D.El.Ed and 150 B.Ed.) pursuing teacher education in institutions within the Imphal East and the Imphal West districts. Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2002) was used as a measure of emotion competence of ten dimensions to collect data. The analysis of the data was performed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA. The results show that there are no significant dissimilarities between district and caste categories on Emotional Intelligence, and in fact, it can be asserted that emotional competence is relatively homogenous across the socio-cultural groups. Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant gender difference, where male pre-service teachers had a higher EI score as compared to their female counterparts. Such findings indicate that there are contextualized gender relations affecting emotional skills in teacher education in Manipur. The paper emphasizes the importance of socio-emotional learning that is gender responsive to be incorporated into teacher education programmes to support comprehensive professional growth of the future teachers.

Keyword:
Emotional Intelligence, Pre-Service Teachers, Gender Differences, Socio-Cultural Factors.

1.INTRODUCTION

The landscape of education is undergoing a profound paradigm shift. Beyond the traditional focus on cognitive development and pedagogical skills, the affective domain—the realm of emotions, attitudes, and social competencies—has emerged as a critical determinant of a teacher's effectiveness. At the heart of affective domain lies Emotional Intelligence (EI) which is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize one's own emotions and those of others to guide thinking and behavior. The cultivation of EI is not merely a personal asset but a professional imperative for student-teachers. It supports classroom management, fosters positive student-teacher relationships, mitigates burnout, and enhances overall instructional quality by enabling educators to create a supportive and empathetic learning environment.

In the culturally rich and diverse context of Manipur, with its unique socio-demographic fabric, preparing teachers who are not only academically proficient but also emotionally adept is paramount. The state's teacher education programs, such as the Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) and the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), are the foundational pillars shaping

future educators. However, a significant gap exists in understanding the emotional preparedness of these student-teachers, particularly as it may be influenced by regional, gender, and socio-cultural variables within the Manipuri context. The capital region of Imphal, divided into Imphal East and Imphal West districts, serves as a major hub for teacher training institutions. While geographically contiguous, subtle differences in institutional ethos, demographic composition, and access to resources between these two districts could potentially influence the developmental trajectories of their student-teachers, including their EI.

Furthermore, the role of gender in EI development remains a contested area in global research, with studies often yielding inconsistent findings regarding inherent or socialized differences between males and females. Examining this dynamic among student-teachers within the specific milieu of Imphal is crucial to inform gender-sensitive training modules. Perhaps most significant in the local context is the intricate caste and community structure. The presence of categories such as General, Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC), Scheduled Caste (SC), and the specific local group Meitei Pangal Other Backward Class (MOBC) represents a complex socio-cultural hierarchy. These affiliations can deeply shape an individual's life experiences, social interactions, access to opportunities, and psychological development, all of which are potential contributors to emotional competencies.

This study systematically investigates Emotional Intelligence levels among student-teachers in Imphal through four comparative objectives. It aims to create a detailed profile of their emotional strengths and gaps, providing evidence to inform teacher education, curriculum design, and policy. The goal is to support more holistic teacher training that integrates EI development, preparing educators to nurture both the minds and hearts of students in a diverse society.

Although there is a lot of national and international research on the subject of Emotional Intelligence, there are very few empirical studies, which are carried out on the subject of pre-service teachers in North-East India and specifically on the state of Manipur. Further, there are a high number of comparative studies on programme type (D.El.Ed vs B.Ed.) and caste analysis in this region.

2.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To compare the Emotional Intelligence level of D.El.Ed student- teachers of Imphal East and D.El.Ed student-teachers of Imphal west.

2. To compare the Emotional Intelligence level of B.Ed. student-Teachers of Imphal East and B.Ed. student-teachers of Imphal West.

3. To compare the Emotional Intelligence level of Male student-teachers and female student-teachers of Imphal

4. To find out the difference in the Emotional Intelligence level across caste groups [General, Scheduled Tribes (ST), other backward class (OBC), Scheduled Caste (SC) and Meitei Pangal Other Backward Class (MOBC)].

3.HYPOTHESES

H_0 (Null Hypothesis)

1) There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level of D.El.Ed student-teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West.

2) There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level of B.Ed. student-teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West.

3) There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level between male and female student-teachers of Imphal.

4) There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level between the Caste groups of pre-service student-teachers of Imphal.

4.REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mahmoudi, A. (2011) study on Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. teacher trainees found that there was a significant relationship between the variables, gender, type of institution, age, religion on EI among the B.Ed. teacher trainees. Lenka and Kant (2012) research shows that there was a significant relationship between EI of male and female secondary school teachers. Rawat, A. & Surana, A. (2014) also found that the majority of B.Ed. teacher trainees have above average emotional Intelligence and gender has a significant effect on Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. teacher trainees. Kore, V. (2016) study concluded that all the B.Ed. Student teachers do not have the same Emotional Intelligence and Gender has significant influence on Emotional Intelligence of Student teachers. Location and type of management also have a significant influence on the Self-concept, Adjustment and Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. Student teacher.

Ahmad, J. (2015) investigates the relationship between Emotional Intelligence, level of aspiration and self-concept of B.Ed. student teachers in terms of their gender and discipline and found that there was no difference between the EI of Male and Female B.Ed. Student Teachers. Chauhan, A. & Verma, S.L. (2018) study on Emotional Intelligence of Pre-service Teacher Trainees also found that there is no significant difference in Emotional Intelligence of Male and Female.

Vimal, A.P.K.& Jaiswal, S. (2016) study on Emotional Intelligence of scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste students found that there was a significant difference between EI of Scheduled caste and Non-scheduled students. The EI of non-scheduled caste was better than scheduled caste students. Sultana, A. & Islam, N (2024) conducted a study on Tribal and Non-tribal students and found that Tribal students showed a higher level of Emotional Intelligence than non-tribal students. It also showed that Gender significantly affects Emotional Intelligence. Males have higher Self-concept and Emotional Intelligence than Females. But Pundir, S.K. et al. (2025) study explained that there was no difference among Emotional Intelligence on the bases of caste category.

Jamadar, C. & Sindhu, A. (2015) study revealed that High socio-economic status students have more Emotional Intelligence than Low socio-economic Status and Girls and Boys have same level of Emotional Intelligence. Meena, K. (2022) in her study found significant differences in Emotional Intelligence between Urban and rural Female Elementary Teacher Trainees. Urban Female pre-service teachers demonstrated higher EI compared to their rural counterparts. While rural male trainees are reported to have predominantly high Emotional Intelligence.

Huidrom, D. (2018) conducted a study on Teacher Educators' perception on Emotional Intelligence in Manipur and revealed that perceptions of EI among teacher educators differ based on gender and type of institution. Lourembam, T. (2024) on the other hand analyzed the overall level of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers based on Gender, subject stream, place of residence and reported that student-teachers in Manipur generally exhibit high EI but noted considerable differences between tribal and non-tribal trainees. This suggests that socio-cultural background plays a role in shaping emotional intelligence.

Khuraijam, K. (2024) conducted a comparative study on the Emotional Stability Amongst Adolescent Students in Manipur, highlighted emotional instability among adolescents, suggesting emotional development gaps during school years.

Existing studies on Emotional Intelligence (EI) have largely overlooked pre-service teachers in Manipur, North-East India, leaving their socio-cultural and educational context unexamined. Notably, no research has compared EI levels among D.El.Ed and B.Ed. trainees across key variables such as district (Imphal East/West), type of institution (government/private), caste, or gender. Given the distinct educational levels these future teachers will serve, identifying variations in their emotional competencies is essential for tailoring curricula and training methods.

Furthermore, teaching in Manipur—a region characterized by rich diversity and complex socio-political dynamics—places unique emotional demands on educators. The lack of region-specific EI research hampers the development of targeted training programs in teacher education institutions. Aligned with the National Education Policy 2020's focus on socio-emotional learning, this study addresses the existing gap by offering a comparative analysis of pre-service teachers' emotional intelligence in Imphal. The findings aim to inform both academic understanding and the design of relevant teacher preparation policies.

5.METHODOLOGY

For the present study a descriptive survey method was adopted. Through proportionate sampling method, a sample size of 300 pre-service student-teachers studying D.El.Ed and B.Ed. programme in Teacher Education Institutions in Imphal East and Imphal West were taken. To make the sample size appropriate, 60% of the pre-service D.El.Ed student-teachers from the population i.e. 150 and 20% of the Pre-service B.Ed. student-teachers from the population i.e. 150, together 300 is taken as a sample. This sampling method is used to give more precise estimation and generalization in findings about the whole population, also to give every element in the population equal chance of being selected. The sample data has been collected from the first year and second year student-teachers enrolled in the academic session 2024-2025.

Programme	Name of the Institution	District	No. of Students	Caste					Gender	
				Gen	ST	OBC	SC	MOBC	M	F
D.El.Ed	1. DIET Imphal East	Imphal East	75	17	23	24		11	30	45
	2. DIET Imphal West	Imphal West	25	3	6	15	1		10	15
	3. Ibotombi Institute of Education (IIE)	Imphal West	50	18	2	19	3	8	20	30
	Total D.El.Ed Students		150	38	31	58	4	19	60	90
B.Ed	1. DM College of Teacher Education	Imphal West	25	3	12	6	3	1	10	15
	2. Department of Teacher Education (Manipur University)	Imphal West	25	1	3	14	5	2	10	15
	3. Ibotombi Institute of Education (IIE)	Imphal West	25	8		15	2		10	15
	4. R.K. Sanatombi Devi College of Teacher Education	Imphal East	20	2	4	13		1	10	10
	5. The Ideal Teachers Training Academy	Imphal East	15	3	1	9		2	7	8
	6. Kanan Devi Memorial College of Education	Imphal East	20	7	1	10	1	1	10	10

	7. Trinity Teachers Training College	Imphal East	20	3	3	10	3	1	9	11
	Total B.Ed Students		150	27	24	77	14	8	66	84
				65	55	135	18	27	126	174
Grand Total			300							

To assess the Emotional Intelligence of pre-service student-teachers, researcher employed the standardized questionnaire, the "Emotional Intelligence Scale" (Hyde, Pethe, & Dhar, 2002). This 34-item questionnaire identifies ten core components of Emotional Intelligence- Self-awareness, Empathy, Self-motivation, Emotional stability, Managing-relations, Integrity, Self-development, Value orientation, Commitment, Altruistic behaviour.

Also, to ensure timely and spontaneous responses, the questionnaire was administered using a mixed-mode approach. A digital version was disseminated via email and messaging platforms using Google Forms, while physical copies were distributed in person during scheduled sessions. All pre-service D.El.Ed. and B.Ed. student-teachers across Imphal East and Imphal West districts were targeted. Online submissions were automatically collected, whereas paper responses were collected manually.

Descriptive Statistics, Mean, Standard Deviation (SD) and percentage were calculated for each group. Inferential Statistics, Independent t-test and ANOVA were used to examine differences between the groups. Graphical Representation, bar graphs were used to visually compare the mean EI scores across the groups.

6. MAIN FINDINGS

The study was carried out with the aim to compare the level of Emotional Intelligence in the pre-service student-teachers of Manipur with respect to the variables- gender, caste, and geographical location. After data collection, the responses to the questionnaire were entered and computed for data analysis using Microsoft Excel-2021 Software.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF NULL HYPOTHESIS 1:

H_0: There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level of D.El.Ed student-teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West.

Table no. 1.1: Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and t-ratios of Emotional Intelligence of D.El.Ed student-teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West.

Geographical location (District)	N	Mean (M)	SD	SEM	SED	df	t-ratios	P values	Sig. level at 0.05.
Imphal East	75	135.506	11.777	1.348	1.966	148	0.540	0.590	NS
Imphal West	75	136.573	12.401	1.431					

Interpretation

As observed from the table no.1.1 the mean scores of the Emotional Intelligence of D.El.Ed student-Teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West were found to be 135.506 and 136.573 respectively. The standard deviation of the D.El.Ed student-

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teachers of Imphal East was 11.777 and that of Imphal west was 12.401. From the table no.4.4, It is observed that the calculated 't' value is -0.540. The negative sign of t-value indicates that the mean of the first group (D.El.Ed Imphal East) is lower than the second group (D.El.Ed Imphal West), but the absolute value is what matters in Significance. Since the t-value, 0.540 is less than the table value for degree of freedom (df) 148 at 0.05 level of significance, which is 1.976. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the geographical location (district), Imphal East and Imphal West is not associated with a difference in Emotional Intelligence levels among D.El.Ed student-teachers.

The mean scores and standard deviations of Emotional Intelligence of D.El.Ed student-teachers of Imphal East and West are also presented in the following figure.
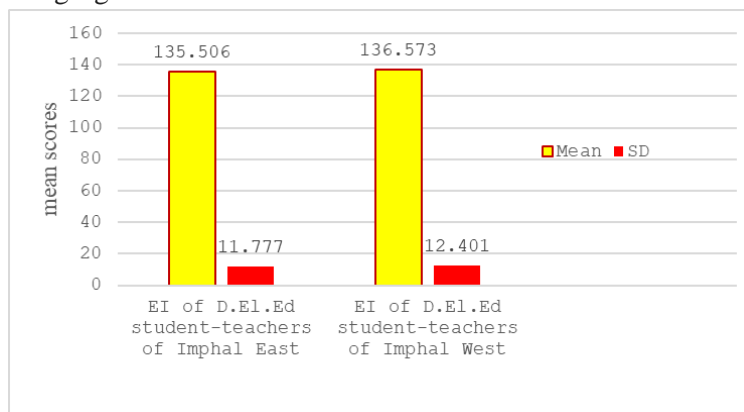

Fig 1.1 Comparison of mean and Standard deviation of Emotional Intelligence of D.El.Ed student-teachers based on geographical location (district).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF NULL HYPOTHESIS 2:

H_0: There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level of B.Ed. student-teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West.

Table no. 1.2: Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and t-ratios of Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. student-teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West.

Geographical location (District)	N	Mean (M)	SD	SEM	SED	df	t-ratios	P values	Sig. level at 0.05.
mphal East	75	136.16	11.758	1.357	1.80	48	0.755	0.452	NS
mphal West	75	134.8	10.265	1.185					

Interpretation

As observed from the table no.1.2 the mean scores of the Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. student-Teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West were found to be 136.16 and 134.8 respectively. The standard deviation of the B.Ed. student-teachers of Imphal East was 11.758 and Imphal west was 10.265. From the table no.4.5, It is observed that the calculated 't' value is 0.755 which is less than the table value for degree of freedom (df) 148 at 0.05 level of significance, 1.976. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the geographical location (district), Imphal East and Imphal West is not associated with a difference in Emotional Intelligence levels among B.Ed. student-teachers.

The mean scores and standard deviations of Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. student-teachers of Imphal East and West are
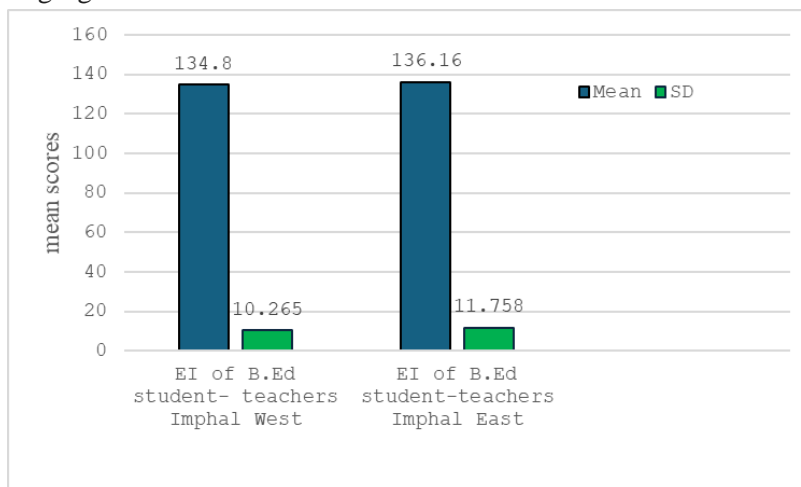
also presented in the following figure.

Fig 1.2 Comparison of mean and Standard deviation of Emotional Intelligence of B.Ed. student-teachers based on geographical location (district).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF NULL HYPOTHESIS 3:

H₀: There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level between male and female student-teachers of Imphal.

Table no. 1.3: Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and t-ratios of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers based on Gender (male and female).

Gender	N	Mean (M)	SD	SEM	SED	df	t-ratios	P values	Sig. level at 0.05.
Male	26	137.634	11.496	1.024	1.34	298	2.414	0.016	Sig.
Female	74	134.402	11.410	0.865					

Interpretation

As observed from the table no 1.3 the mean scores of the emotional Intelligence of male and female student-teachers were found to be 137.634 and 134.402 respectively. The standard deviation of the male student-teachers was 11.496 and that of female was 11.410. From the table it is observed that the calculated 't' value is greater than the table value for degree of freedom 298 at 0.05 level of significance. Also, the calculated 'P' value, 0.016 is less than 0.05 when compare to a common significance level (α). This means that p-value (0.016) < α (0.05). Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis (H₀) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H1). Hence there is a statistically significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence of the student-teachers based on Gender (male and female).

The mean scores and standard deviations of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers of Imphal based on gender (male and female) are also presented in the following figure.
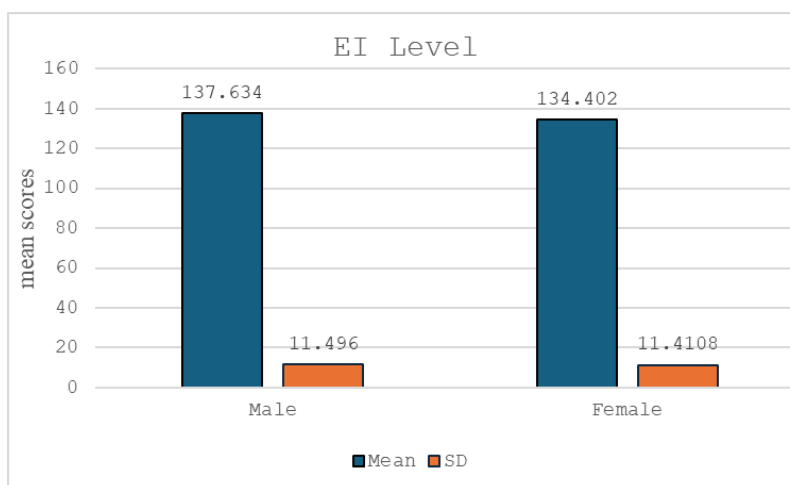
Fig 1.3 Comparison of mean and Standard deviation of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers based on gender (male and female).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF NULL HYPOTHESIS 4:

H_0: There is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level between the Caste groups of pre-service student-teachers of Imphal.

Table no. 1.4: Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and Source of variance of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers based on Caste (Gen, ST, OBC, SC, MOBC).

Caste	N	Mean(M)	SD	Source of variance	SS	df	MS	F	P value	F crit
Gen	65	36.2154	13.8904	Between groups	52.2132	-	8.05329			
ST	55	33.8	12.7556							
OBC	35	36.4815	58.1023							
SC	8	34.0556	9.58497	within groups	9458.51	95	33.7577	0.658305	0.621447	
MOBC	7	36.1852	68.9259	Total	39810.72	99				2.402248

Interpretation

From the table 1.4, F is 0.658, F critical is 2.402 and p value is 0.621. Since F is less than F crit and p value is greater than 0.05, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, there is no significant difference in the Emotional Intelligence level between the Caste groups of pre-service student-teachers of Imphal at the 0.05 significance level. The observed differences in sample means (ranging from 133.80 to 136.48) are likely due to random sampling variation rather than any real difference in population means.

The mean scores and variance of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers of Imphal based on caste (Gen, ST, OBC, SC, MOBC) are also presented in the following figure.
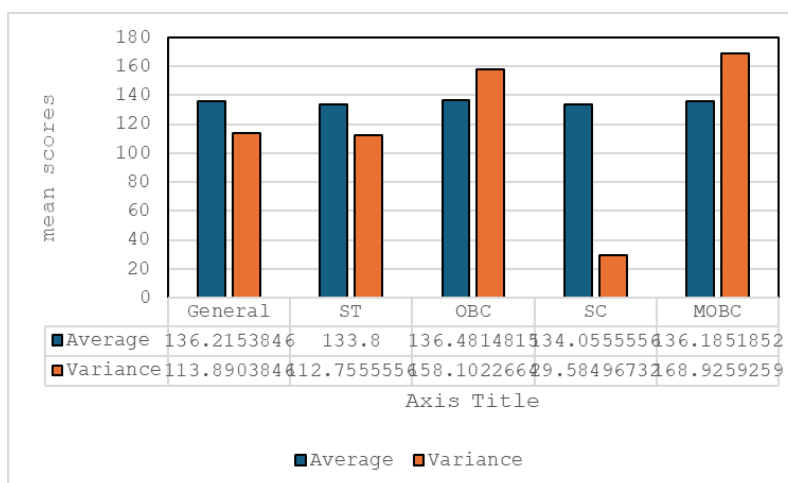
Fig 1.4 Comparison of mean and Standard deviation of Emotional Intelligence of student-teachers based on caste (Gen, ST, OBC, SC, MOBC).

7.DISCUSSION

The results of the current study are interpreted in the light of Emotional Intelligence theory offered by Salovey and Mayer according to which the EI is thought of as the capacity to perceive, comprehend, control, and use emotions appropriately in social situations (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Mayer and Salovey, 1993). The fact that there are no significant differences in Emotional intelligence between the pre-service teachers of Imphal East and Imphal West implies that the geographical location in a common socio-academic setting does not have a significant impact on the emotional competencies. Institutional forms, pedagogy, and social exposures may have been similar in both districts, which is likely attributable to this uniformity as in previous research (Kore, 2016; Meena, 2022). Similarly, the insignificant difference in EI between caste groups is a sign that caste affiliation might not be a key differentiating variable in the development of emotions under the modern conditions of higher education with the presence of inclusive academic and learning spaces that have a tendency of diminishing traditional socio-cultural differences (Pundir & Singh, 2025).

On the contrary, the large gender disparity in Emotional Intelligence whereby male pre-service teachers showed higher EI scores as compared to their female counterparts is a notable and context-independent finding. This finding is inconsistent with those reporting either female advantage on EI or gender lack, (Ahmad, 2015; Chauhan and Verma, 2018; Lourembam, 2024) but consistent with those claiming that males have an advantage in some emotional competencies (Kore, 2016; Sultana and Islam, 2024). In the socio-cultural environment of Manipur, male student-teachers can be provided with more incentives to become leaders, engage in the community, and take active social actions, which can boost the aspects of Emotional Intelligence, including the ability to control oneself and interact with other people (Jamadar and Sindhu, 2015; Khuraijam, 2024). Such results indicate the need to be gender responsive in the development of emotional intelligence in teachers through teacher education programmemes in a bid to achieve a holistic professional development.

- **Educational Implications**

The implications of the current research on teacher education policy and practice are significant especially upon the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that focuses on the socio-emotional learning, holistic teacher development and competency-based training. The fact that there are no significant differences in Emotional Intelligence within districts and caste categories implies that at the state level, standardized modules of enrichment of Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be easily introduced into the D.El.Ed and B.Ed curriculum without any distinction based on the region or caste level. Regulatory as well as educational establishments like State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Manipur University, and teacher education institutions can thus aim at devising standardized EI-based pedagogical models that facilitate the growth of emotional awareness, empathetic as well as interpersonal competence in all pre-service teachers.

The high gender disparity in the Emotional Intelligence demonstrates the necessity of gender-sensitive socio-emotional learning methods in teacher education programmes. To meet NEP-2020 priorities of inclusivity and equity, teacher educators are recommended to review specific interventions, including reflective practices, mentorship programmes, leadership simulations, and workshops on emotional self-regulation, to enhance EI competencies in female pre-service teachers. Also, balancing between genders in regard to emotional development can be achieved by incorporating the elements of experiential learning, such as role-play, peer cooperation, and facilitated emotional reflection. Incorporating Emotional Intelligence measurement and training into pre-service teacher education will help to create an emotionally competent teacher who is able to create a supportive, inclusive, and learner-centred classroom.

8.CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The current research study is part of the ever-increasing literature of Emotional Intelligence; it offers empirical results of the less represented North-Eastern part of India, i.e. among pre-service teachers in Imphal, Manipur. The study provides some context-specific data on the emotional competencies of future educators due to the analysis of Emotional Intelligence by gender, socio-cultural background, and geographical districts. The results show that although the level of Emotional Intelligence of pre-service teachers does not change much depending on the district location and caste affiliation, gender becomes an important distinguishing variable, which indicates the impact of the socialization patterns of socio-cultural socialization in the teacher education.

The findings report the significance of considering structured and systematic Emotional Intelligence development programs as part of teacher education programs, in accordance with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which prescribes a comprehensive and competency-oriented teacher training. To enhance the Emotional Intelligence levels among all trainee groups, teacher education institutions ought to integrate such learning approaches as experience and reflective learning, in which mentoring, emotional self-awareness, and collaborative learning are some of the strategies that can be employed.

The longitudinal and mixed-method studies are suggested as the future research to investigate the developmental pattern of Emotional Intelligence in pre-service and in-service teachers. A more comprehensive consideration of rural and hilly districts of Manipur and even comparative analysis to other states would add to the overall generalizability and policy implication of results.

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