



ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF GENDER STEROTYPE IN SHAPING GENDER SPECIFIC EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

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Abstract : This study explores the impact of gender stereotypes in shaping gender-specific emotional expression among males aged 25–40 working in the unorganized sector within Chittur-Tattamangalam Municipality. It investigates how societal norms, reinforced through socialization agents like family, education, media, and peer groups, influence men's emotional behavior. A descriptive research design was adopted, and data were collected from 60 male respondents using a structured questionnaire, including the standardized Gender Stereotype Scale. The findings reveal that traditional stereotypes continue to restrict emotional expression in men, promoting emotional suppression and reinforcing the stigma around vulnerability. Media and family play significant roles in normalizing these norms, affecting mental health and social interactions. Despite some progressive shifts in attitudes, many respondents still associate emotional strength and restraint with masculinity. The study highlights the need to foster emotional authenticity and challenge rigid gender norms for better psychological well-being and societal balance.

IndexTerms - Gender Stereotypes, Emotional Expression, Masculinity, Socialization, Emotional Suppression, Mental Health

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, emotional expression is not just a psychological act but also a deeply social and gendered one. The gender stereotypes and cultural standards that surround people have a significant impact on how they are taught to feel, express, or repress their emotions. As a social construct, gender establishes roles, obligations, and anticipated behaviors for both men and women. It affects everything from emotional behavior to job choices. Contrarily, emotions are fundamental to interpersonal communication and self-awareness, but how they are expressed is influenced by gender-specific social norms. Men are supposed to be stoic, strong, and emotionally controlled, while women are supposed to be nurturing, sensitive, and emotionally expressive, according to the standards of masculinity and femininity. These deeply rooted norms

are not just personal opinions; they are supported and upheld by a number of organizations, such as the media, companies, educational institutions, and families. Children are conditioned into gendered emotional roles from an early age; boys are taught to repress weakness and exhibit emotional toughness, while girls are frequently encouraged to be expressive and sympathetic. Such conditioning leaves lasting impacts that affect an adult's relationships, behavior, and mental health. When people fall short of these strict standards, this socialization process frequently causes internal conflicts that lead to stress, emotional repression, and a reluctance to ask for emotional support. This has significant ramifications, especially for men, who are frequently stigmatized for expressing "unmanly" feelings like fear or grief. In addition to impeding individual emotional development, these stereotypes uphold harmful social norms and prevent both men and women from completely experiencing real emotions.

Recognizing how education and the media shape emotional expectations is also crucial. Media portrayals frequently perpetuate binary emotional roles, portraying women as emotionally expressive caregivers and men as proactive problem solvers. Similarly, through peer relationships, classroom dynamics, and teacher expectations, educational institutions quietly uphold these standards. Girls may be discouraged from being forceful or ambitious, while boys may be punished for displaying vulnerability, creating a paradox in emotional development. This study illuminates the lived reality of emotional expression influenced by gendered expectations by investigating the perspectives of men employed in Chittur-Tattamangalam Municipality's unorganized sector. The emphasis on men between the ages of 25 and 40 draws attention to a group that is frequently torn between traditional roles and changing social norms. This research is especially significant because emotional suppression and gendered emotional expectations have serious consequences for mental health, relationship quality. Understanding the barriers created by gender stereotypes allows us to challenge traditional views and advocate for a more inclusive and emotionally intelligent society. The study further seeks to empower individuals by promoting emotional authenticity and awareness, encouraging both men and women to transcend restrictive roles and embrace a fuller spectrum of emotional expression.

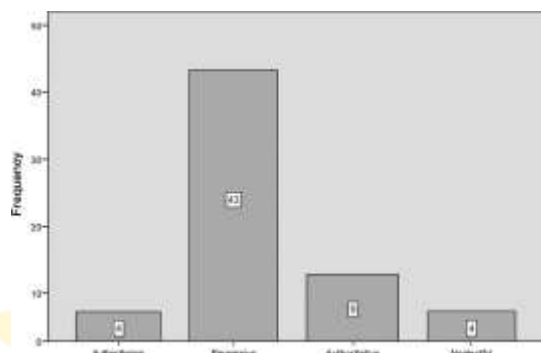
METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a descriptive research design to explore the impact of gender stereotypes on emotional expression among males aged 25–40 in Chittur-Tattamangalam Municipality, focusing on those working in the unorganized sector. Sixty respondents were selected using simple random sampling. Both primary and secondary data sources were used; primary data were collected via a structured questionnaire comprising 50 close-ended questions, which included the Gender Stereotype Scale by Arjun Sekhar PM and J. Parameswari and a self-designed tool. A pilot study was conducted with 10 respondents to test feasibility, resulting in minor revisions to enhance clarity. The questionnaire examined perspectives on gender norms, socialization influences, emotional behaviors, and media impact. Pre-testing ensured the tool's reliability and validity. Data were analyzed using SPSS software, with findings presented through tables, pie charts, and bar graphs. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly followed throughout the research process.

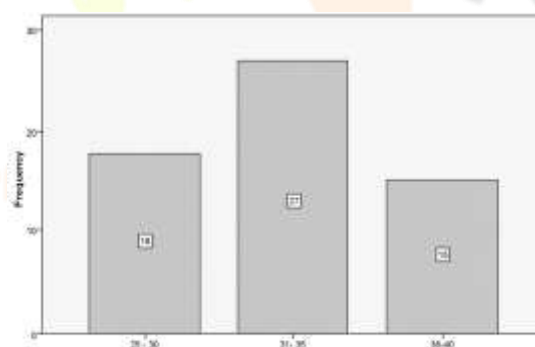
RESULTS

The Socio Demographic Profile of the Respondents.

The socio-demographic profile of the 60 male respondents from Chittur-Tattamangalam Municipality reveals diverse characteristics. Marital status showed that most participants were married, followed by single and separated individuals. Regarding family structure, 58.3% belonged to nuclear families, 35% to joint families, and 6.7% to extended families, indicating a dominance of smaller household units.



The bar graph titled Authority visually represents different types of authority based on frequency. Permissive authority dominates with 43 occurrences, suggesting a flexible or lenient approach is most common. Authoritative authority follows with 13 occurrences, reflecting a balanced leadership style. Meanwhile, Authoritarian and Neglectful authority share the lowest frequency, indicating minimal strict authority. This distribution highlights the prevalence of permissive control in the given context, with authoritative leadership being present but significantly less frequent.



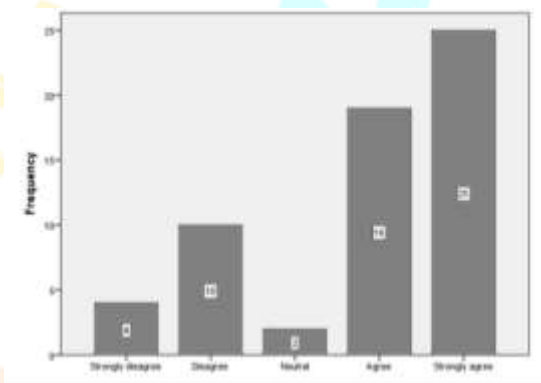
Age of the Respondents

In terms of age distribution, the majority (45%) were aged between 31–35 years, followed by 30% in the 25–30 years range and 25% in the 36–40 years bracket. Educationally, 36.67% held diploma qualifications, 30% completed higher secondary education, 20% had SSLC or equivalent, and only 13.33% possessed a degree. Occupationally, 81.7% were employed in unorganized sectors, 10% were self-employed, 5% unemployed, and 3.3% were students. The data reflects a population that is mostly middle-aged, married, and economically active, with a moderate level of educational attainment and predominantly living in nuclear family settings. This profile provides important context for analyzing how gender stereotypes influence emotional expression among working-class men.

Respondents' Perspective on Gender Stereotypes

The study revealed mixed yet insightful perspectives. Regarding women's financial autonomy, 31.7% of respondents strongly disagreed that women need permission to spend money, while 28.3% disagreed, showing

that 60% did not support this stereotype. However, 25% agreed and 3.3% strongly agreed. On the topic of virginity, 33.3% agreed with traditional views, and 18.3% strongly agreed, whereas 25% disagreed and 21.7% strongly disagreed—indicating nearly equal support and resistance. About 61.7% of respondents said they make their own financial decisions, reflecting confidence and autonomy. Regarding societal attitudes, 68.3% disagreed that women should not laugh loudly in public. In terms of gender identity, 60% believed there are only two genders (male and female), while 36.6% disagreed. Notably, 58.3% disagreed that transgender women cannot rear children like mothers. When asked if men are mentally stronger than women, a significant portion—nearly 50%—agreed or strongly agreed, showing that some masculine superiority notions persist. Regarding gender roles in household work, 71.7% disagreed that only women should cook or do housework, suggesting progressive attitudes. Yet, 70% agreed that men need more sports involvement, reflecting lingering stereotypes in physical competency.



Perceptions of Men's Socialization Levels

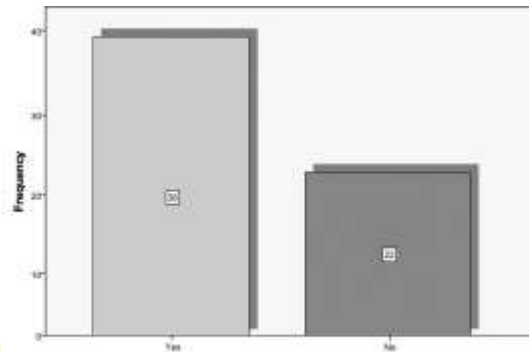
The bar graph titled men have more socialization presents the distribution of responses to the statement Men are social. The majority of respondents strongly agree 25 with this statement, indicating a general perception that men tend to socialize more. In contrast, 10 respondents disagree, suggesting a minority who reject this notion. The overall trend in the graph highlights a prevalent belief among respondents that men engage in more social interactions compared to others.

Sl. No	Virginity Perceptions	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Disagree	13	21.7
2	Disagree	15	25.0
3	Neutral	1	1.7
4	Agree	20	33.3
5	Strongly Agree	11	18.3
	Total	60	100.0

The table shows different views on virginity perceptions among 60 individuals. Most people agree with the statement, showing support for traditional views. A fair number also disagree, suggesting differing beliefs. Strong agreement and strong disagreement are both present but less common. This suggests that opinions on the topic are divided, with agreement being slightly more common than disagreement.

The Role of Socialization in Reinforcing Gender-Specific Emotional Expression

Socialization agents were found to play a vital role in shaping emotional behavior. A majority (66.7%) of respondents stated they learned how to express emotions from their families. Likewise, 53.3% admitted that friendships influenced how they hid emotions, while 50% said they learned emotional expression from friends. Schools influenced emotional expression in 58.3% of the participants, aligning with research that educational institutions reinforce gender norms.



School Influence on Emotional Expression

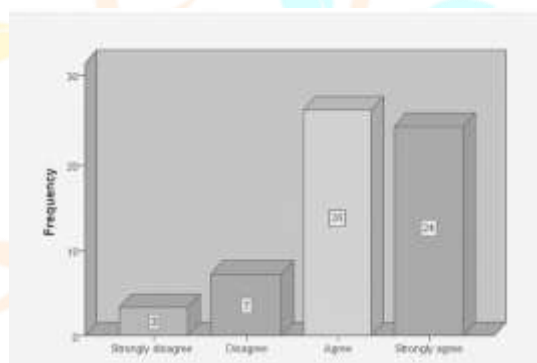
This bar graph supports this, showing most respondents felt influenced by school rules in how they express emotions, highlighting the school's role in gendered emotional socialization. Social media also played a major role: 70% of respondents stated media influenced how they express emotions. Moreover, 61.67% admitted to mimicking emotional expressions from celebrities and influencers. Additionally, 55% of respondents said they often compare their emotional responses with media portrayals. These findings confirm that emotional norms are deeply embedded during childhood and continuously reinforced through peer groups, school dynamics, and digital exposure.

Sl. No	Copying Emotion	Frequency	Percent
1	Yes	37	61.67
2	No	23	38.33
	Total	60	100.0

The table titled learn family shows that 40 respondents reported learning emotional expression from family, while 20 did not. This suggests that familial influence plays a strong role in shaping emotional behavior, with many individuals adopting emotional responses based on observed family interactions. The data shows that 61.67% of respondents admit to mimicking emotional expressions from celebrities or influencers, while 38.33% do not. This highlights the influence of media personalities on emotional behavior, likely driven by their visibility, relatability, and the widespread appeal of their expressions in popular culture.

The Role of Gender Stereotypes in Shaping Emotional Expression and Behavioural Patterns of the Respondents

The results showed that 73.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that men face judgment when expressing emotions openly. Additionally, 85% believed men are expected to suppress their emotions after breakups, with 48.3% agreeing and 36.7% strongly agreeing. When asked about emotional expression, 65% of the participants stated that men express emotions more through actions than words. On the contrary, women were perceived as more affectionate, with 68.3% agreeing or strongly agreeing that women express joy through physical touch. Furthermore, 60% of respondents agreed that emotional suppression increases mental health issues among men. Regarding crying, 51.6% of participants agreed that boys are discouraged from crying in society, while only 11.6% disagreed. Finally, 55% agreed that assertive women are often perceived as aggressive, highlighting how gender norms continue to shape public perception and behavior. These findings illustrate how entrenched gender stereotypes condition men toward emotional restraint and women toward emotional expressiveness, ultimately affecting psychological well-being and interpersonal relationships.



Respondents View About Men Crying

The bar graph titled men crying highlights societal attitudes toward male emotional expression. Majority of the respondents agree that boys are discouraged from showing emotions, reinforcing this norm. However, 7 disagree indicating some pushback. The data suggests traditional masculinity ideals still influence emotional expectations for men.

Sl.No	Handling stress	Frequency	Percent
1	Strongly Disagree	4	6.7
2	Disagree	8	13.3
3	Neutral	6	10
4	Agree	25	41.7
5	Strongly Agree	17	28.3
	Total	60	100.0

The table titled stress and emotion illustrates perceptions of whether men naturally handle stress and pressure better than women. Data suggesting a majority believe men are better at managing stress. Research suggests that men and women experience stress differently due to hormonal and neurological factors, with men often favouring problem-solving approaches while women engage in emotional coping strategies.

Correlations

		men_crying	breakup_men
Spearman's rho	Correlation	1.000	.323*
	Coefficient		
	men_crying		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012
	N	60	60
	Correlation	.323*	1.000
	Coefficient		
	breakup_men		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.
	N	60	60

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Spearman's rho correlation analysis revealed a moderate positive relationship between emotional expression in men (specifically crying) and their experiences related to breakups, with a correlation coefficient of $\rho = 0.323$ and a p-value of 0.012. This result is statistically significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that as the likelihood or acceptance of men crying increases, there is a corresponding increase in the emotional intensity or impact associated with breakups among men.

DISCUSSION

Gender stereotypes have a big impact on how males express their emotions, according to the study "Assessing the Impact of Gender Stereotypes in Shaping Gender-Specific Emotional Expression." It is commonly accepted for men to be assertive and angry, but they are discouraged from showing feelings such as melancholy or weakness. The emotional expression often leads to stress, reduced mental wellbeing. According to the research, the majority of male respondents think that society still strongly discourages emotional expression, particularly vulnerability like breaking down or displaying sadness. Many of the participants stated that they had learned to suppress particular feelings from friends, family, or school. Family, school, and the media were found to be significant factors that either encourage or restrict emotional expression. It was also noted that emotional role modelling by media personalities and celebrities had an impact. Facilitators like education, changing family roles, and increased exposure to a wider range of emotional displays in the media provide optimism, even as obstacles like peer pressure, societal criticism, and rigid masculine standards continue to restrict emotional freedom.

CONCLUSION

The study "Assessing the Impact of Gender Stereotypes on Gender-Based Emotional Expression" among males states that social conventions around masculinity have a substantial impact on how men perceive, control, and express their emotions, according to Men are frequently taught from a young age that emotional control, strength, and stoicism are characteristics of a man, which discourages the expressing of emotions like vulnerability, fear. Internal conflict, psychological pain, and strained relationships can arise from this

emotional suppression, which is supported by friends, family, and culture. Despite being aware of these social influences, many participants persisted in conforming for fear of being perceived as weak or unmanly. The study suggests encouraging open family communication, incorporating emotional literacy into education, educating mental health professionals on gender-sensitive care, and modelling various, emotionally expressive male identities in the media.

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