



## **Emotional Intelligence: As a booster of Personal Relationships in the Context of Nepali Society**

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Emotional intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in shaping interpersonal relationships, particularly in collectivist societies like Nepal, where familial and social bonds are deeply valued. This article explores the influence of EI on personal relationships within Nepali society considering cultural factors, familial expectations, and socio-emotional dynamics. Through a review of existing literature and cultural analysis, the paper highlights how EI contributes to conflict resolution, marital satisfaction, social cohesion in Nepal; attempting to unfold how EI can be harness in socio-cultural context of Nepal.

**Methods:** A qualitative approach was chosen to gain in-depth understandings, experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of emotional intelligence and how it influences their personal and professional interactions. In order to regulate and in-depth exploration of the topic-research aligns with three major theories of EI; Daniel Goleman's Mix Model, Bar-On Mix Model and Mayer – Salovey ability-based model.

**Results:** Study unfolds, emotional intelligence has a significant contribution to strengthen and improve the quality of personal relationships in Nepal. By emphasizing empathy, emotional regulation, and effective communication within the framework of Nepali cultural factors, EI helps individuals build deeper and more resilient bonds in both familial and community



settings. The study replicates Emotional Intelligence as a booster to cultivate deep personal and social relationship.

**Conclusion:** Study directs ability to balance emotional expression balancing cultural values are possible to individuals who possesses higher EI skills. Conflict settlement without breaking family and social structure has direct connection with sense of empathy and ability to indirect communication. Furthermore, stronger and intense interpersonal influence adheres following hierarchal structures where elder members are respected. In a society deeply rooted in collective values, familial ties, community harmony, and social respect are central; emotional intelligence enhances the ability to empathize and communicate effectively. It also discusses the methods and practices on how education programs can be helpful to harness EI to Nepali cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, personal relationships, Nepali society, collectivism, interpersonal dynamics

## **Introduction**

Emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1997), significantly influences personal relationships. It encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, manage and utilize emotions effectively in oneself and others. Research has demonstrated that individuals with higher EI tend to experience fulfilling personal relationships due to enhanced empathy, conflict settlement abilities and emotional control (Brackett et. Al., 2011). However, most studies on EI and its practical impact on relationship have been conducted in western societies and contexts which may not necessarily applicable to a different context such as Nepali society. Which leaves a clear gap in understanding how cultural factors shape these dynamics in collectively different societies like Nepal. Nepal, a collectivist society with strong familial and communal ties (Hofstede, 2001), EI may play a unique role in maintaining harmony and resolving conflicts. Despite growing research on EI globally, few studies have examined its impact within Nepali socio-cultural frameworks.

Nepal, with its own socio-cultural values which prioritise family bond, social harmony and hierarchical relationships (Dahal et. Al, 2018) directs a completely different social setting for examining EI's rove in personal relationships. Generally, emotional expression and interpersonal influences are mostly guided by the cultural norms; unfolding EI and its effect in interpersonal relationship in Nepalese context could offer fruitful insights into how non-western societies can be influenced from emotional skills for relational success.

Though numerous research has been conducted om EI and relationship outcomes; a few studies have only worked under Nepali cultural framework –existing resources intensively focusing on western setting where individual identity and emotional autonomy is predominant than collective (Schuttle et. Al, 2001). Meanwhile, in collective settings interdependence and emotional restraint are mostly focused (Upadhyay & Gupta, 2020) may result in significantly different influence of EI on personal relationship.

1. How does emotional intelligence influence personal relationships in Nepali context?



2. What cultural factors mediate the relationship between EI and interpersonal influence in Nepal?

This paper attempts to investigate how EI functions in Nepali personal relationships, emphasizing cultural values such as shared understanding and social respect.

### **Literature Review**

A study conducted by researchers in two Universities Makerere University (MAK) and Uganda Christian University (UCU) explores the connection between emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal relations (IR) among university teacher students pursuing further studies at both institutions. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to recognize, utilize, and regulate their emotions in constructive ways—helping to reduce stress, communicate clearly, empathize with others, handle difficulties, and resolve conflicts. Interpersonal relations refer to the emotional and social interactions that occur between two or more people (Waiswa et al., 2024).

Another survey gathered 202 valid responses from academic staff across four higher education institutions in southern Brazil. The data were examined using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings revealed a generally positive correlation between various aspects of Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Communication Skills, with the exception of the "Assessment of Own Emotions" and its influence on assertiveness, which showed a negative correlation. Additionally, some dimensions showed no significant correlation (Campos-García et al., 2025). The study highlights that self-awareness and emotional regulation (self-control), empathy (recognizing others' emotions), and channellings emotions toward achieving goals positively influence the ability to manage interpersonal communication. Moreover, being able to identify and interpret both verbal and non-verbal cues enhances communication and supports the development of interpersonal relationships, which in turn contributes to both personal and professional growth (Campos-García et al., 2025).

A study involving 210 participants in Indonesia found that greater emotional intelligence (EI) strongly enhances the quality of interpersonal relationships (IRQ) and overall life satisfaction (LS). This indicates that developing EI can strengthen personal relationships and improve general well-being (Rachmi et al., 2024). The findings emphasize the important impact of emotional intelligence and effective communication in building better interpersonal connections.

Research conducted under the title “Interpersonal Emotion Regulation and Emotional Intelligence” - shows a clear link between emotional intelligence and the ability to regulate emotions in social situations. People with high emotional intelligence tend to manage both their own feelings and those of others more effectively, which positively impacts areas like stress control and relationship quality (Roy, 2023). The study also revealed that these individuals are more skilled at managing workplace conflict and stress, leading to improved job performance and stronger relationships with colleagues and supervisors.

Despite numerous researches on EI and personal relationship has conducted within western socio-cultural setting, researches considering how socio-cultural factors affect implications of EI has not conducted in large amount. Especially, country like Nepal with complex social and

cultural values has significant consequences in application of EI and influence in interpersonal relationships.

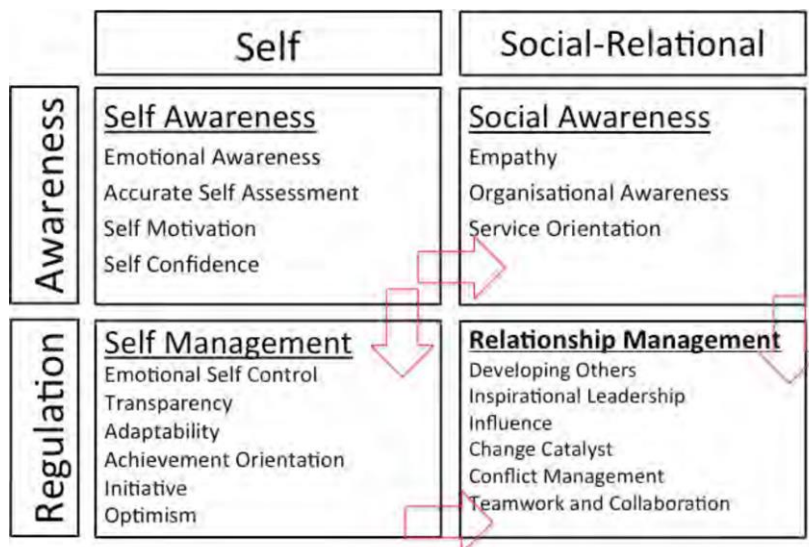
## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to unfold the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships within the Nepalese cultural and social context. qualitative approach in research to gain in-depth understandings, experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of emotional intelligence and how it influences their personal and professional interactions (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Qualitative research has been considered suitable for exploring subjective experiences, cultural nuances, and interpersonal dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Since emotional intelligence involves self-awareness, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 1995), a qualitative approach allows for an in-depth examination of how these elements manifest in Nepali relationships considering cultural factors. In collectivist social setting such as Nepal, where familial and social bonds are dominant, qualitative research helps to reflect how emotional awareness, empathy, and relationship management boost personal relationships (Hofstede, 1980). Unlike quantitative methods, which may overlook contextual factors, qualitative research captures lived experiences through narratives, interviews, and observations (Braun & Clarke, 2006) in order to get into the theme and summary of the study. Some of the renown Models of EI are followed to pursue conclusion.

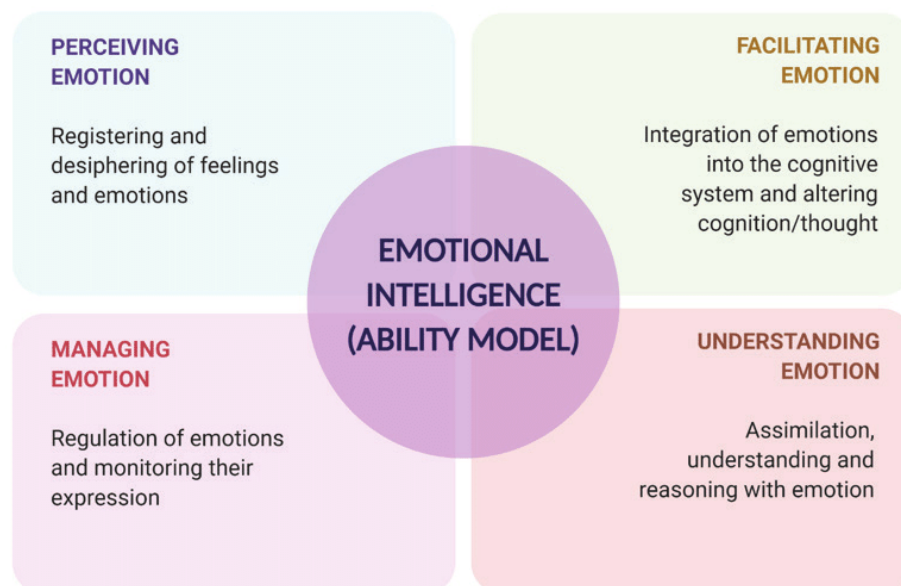
### 1. Goleman's Mixed Model:

(Daniel Goleman, 1995) noted, late 90s noticed the sense of EI inside organizations and their leaders which made him to publish an article in New York Times under the title of "Emotional Intelligence". Inspired by Solvey and Mayer's finding, he started to conduct his own research in emotional intelligence and eventually had written the emotional intelligence in 1995, the book that familiarized both the private and public zone with the idea of Emotional Intelligence. He perceives EI as "abilities such as being able to motivate oneself and persist in the face of frustration; to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate one's moods and keep distress from swamping the ability to think; to emphasize and to hope" (Goleman, 2006, p. 34).



## 2. Mayer – Salovey ability-based model of EI

Very first article and new concept of EI was introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) reviewing the study in intelligence neurology and clinical psychology Wiegand (2007). They reflect the idea of emotional intelligence shows a link with mental health also practice of empathy Mayer et. al. (1990). On upcoming studies, they made a view in EI “the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the abilities to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004). They also mentioned the joint and cooperative relationship between emotion and intelligence. They made a first attempt to test EI empirically as a cognitive ability inside personality traits (Wiegand, 2007).



## 3. Bar-on mixed model

Reuven Bar-on introduced the word “Emotional Quotient” in his Doctoral dissertation as an equivalent to Intelligent Quotient (IQ) and his model of emotional intelligence can be shown or viewed as a Mix Intelligence that is also comprising of cognitive ability and aspects of trait personality, health and well-being (Bar-on, 2010). He defined emotional intelligence as a skills, competencies and non-cognitive abilities that influence one’s ability to achieve success with coping environmental demands and pressures. This definition covers the area of emotional self-awareness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence, empathy, problem solving, social responsibility, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance, flexibility, happiness and optimism (Bar-on, 2006). Although it encompasses these all area in EI, researcher advocates mixed model of EI with the importance of personality factors, especially with empathy and self-stem.



Aspects of Emotional Intelligence	Five Areas of Emotional Intelligence				
	<b>Intrapersonal Skills</b> (inner self)	<b>Interpersonal Skills</b> (people skills)	<b>Stress Management</b> (deal with stress or losing control)	<b>Adaptability</b> (recognize/respond to diverse situations)	<b>General Mood</b> (overall outlook on life; enjoy oneself and others)
	<i>Self-regard</i> Respect and accept oneself as basically good	<i>Empathy</i> Aware of, understand and appreciate feelings of others	<i>Stress tolerance</i> Withstand adverse events and stressful situations	<i>Reality testing</i> Assess the difference between the expected and what exists	<i>Optimism</i> Look at the brighter side of life
	<i>Emotional self-awareness</i> Recognize one's feelings	<i>Social responsibility</i> Be cooperative, contributing, and constructive member of group	<i>Impulse control</i> Resist or delay an impulse, drive, or desire to act	<i>Flexibility</i> Adjust one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors to changing settings	<i>Happiness</i> Feel satisfied with one's life, enjoy life and others
	<i>Assertiveness</i> Express feelings, beliefs and thoughts and defend one's rights	<i>Interpersonal relationships</i> Establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships		<i>Problem solving</i> Identify and define problems with potential for effective solutions	
	<i>Independence</i> Self-directed and self-controlled				
	<i>Self-actualization</i> Realize one's potentiality				

## Discussion and Analysis

### Emotional Intelligence in Nepali Cultural Context

In Nepal, cultural factors play a significant role in mediating the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and interpersonal influence. These factors shape how emotions are expressed, perceived, and managed in personal relationships. Unlike other parts of the world, Nepali society still runs within the own legacy of joint communication and decisions while dealing with any personal as well as family issues (Bista, 1991). Nepali society still functions as: Collectivism where, decisions are often family-oriented rather than individualistic. Hierarchical relationships refer to respect for elders and authority figures influences emotional expression (Dahal et al., 2018). And, Indirect communication shows emotions may be suppressed to maintain social harmony (Sharma, 2020). Equipping own-self with high EI helps individuals navigate these cultural expectations by fostering empathy (*Sahanubhuti*) and emotional restraint (*Sanyam*), which are critical aspects which helps in preventing interpersonal conflict. Nepali society is highly collectivists, prioritizing family and community over individual needs (Dahal et al., 2018). Also, emotional expression is often regulated to maintain family harmony and avoid conflict. High EI individuals may navigate these hierarchies better by showing respect to elders and using indirect communication to influence decisions. Indirect and closed emotional displays (e.g., anger, extreme joy) are likely be encouraged to maintain social dignity. Members with high EI are likely more skilled at masking emotions strategically to fit societal expectations while still influencing others subtly shows social and emotional restraints. Traditional gender norms such as men to suppress vulnerability plus not expressing it unnecessarily has different significance. Likewise, women to display nurturing emotions (Upadhyay & Gupta, 2020). Ability of indirect Communication such as hints, non-verbal cues convey information in positive way. EI helps to interpret tone, facial expressions, and silence, allowing individuals to influence others without overt demands. A Nepali husband or wife express dissatisfaction through withdrawal of the issue rather than words, requiring the partner's EI to detect and address issues. Religious and Philosophical Beliefs (*Dharma*



*Darshan*) Hindu and Buddhist values promote high EI individuals may leverage compassion and patience to resolve conflicts, aligning with cultural ideals.

### **EI and Personal Relationships in Nepal**

Emotional intelligence (EI), which encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others, plays a significant role in shaping personal relationships, particularly within the sociocultural context of Nepal. In a society where interpersonal harmony and collective values are deeply ingrained, individuals with high EI are better equipped to navigate familial expectations, social obligations, and community dynamics (Parajuli, 2019). Research suggests that emotional intelligence fosters empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution—skills essential for maintaining strong personal bonds (Goleman, 1995). In the Nepalese context, where relationships often extend beyond the nuclear family to include extended relatives and community members, EI can be crucial in preserving social cohesion and promoting psychological well-being. As such, enhancing emotional intelligence through education and awareness may strengthen personal relationships (Ghimire & Chhetri, 2021) and contribute to greater social harmony in Nepal. How EI tends to put a brick to pave a strong emotional relationship (Karki, 2022) in Nepalese society can be linked with following aspects:

#### **Family Dynamics**

Managing conflicts has been a crucial to implement EI, As Nepali families prioritize emotional solidarity first, it assists to eliminate parent-child (inter-generational) disagreements over marriage choices, career persuasion or any long-term future planning. Balancing individual with familial obligations (Parajuli, 2019) has been a legacy to Nepali society and harnessing EI skills has a lot to do to balance individual and family simultaneously.

#### **Marital Relationships**

Emotion regulation, which is a pillar of EI helps during disputes (Ghimire & Chhetri, 2021) and ultimately correlates with marital satisfaction. Non-verbal emotional understanding between spouses (Karki, 2022) has a lot to do with successful marriage.

#### **Social Relationships**

In Nepali communities, EI tends to maintain social harmony (*Samajik Melmilap*) is second important wheel of Nepalese society. Settlement of social conflicts and issues through empathetic conflict resolution can be obtained from EI. Likewise, workplace relationships, has a lot to do with task completion and job satisfaction. Employees with higher degree of emotional sensitivity always pushes for improved teamwork (Joshi, 2023).

#### **How Emotional Intelligence Strengthens Personal Relationships in Nepali Society:**

Emotional intelligence (EI), or the ability to recognize, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others, is increasingly recognized as a vital skill in maintaining healthy personal relationships (Karki, 2022). In the Nepali context—where collectivism, family values, and community ties are highly emphasized—emotional intelligence plays a particularly important role. It helps individuals foster harmony, resolve conflicts, and maintain respectful and emotionally supportive relationships across generations and social structures.



In Nepal, the importance of relationships within families and communities is deeply rooted in cultural norms. High emotional intelligence can help individuals navigate the hierarchical structures present in many Nepali households, where respect for elders and obedience are key values. Emotionally intelligent individuals are better able to manage their emotions when facing pressure to conform or when dealing with intergenerational conflicts, leading to more constructive dialogues and mutual understanding (Baral, 2018).

Furthermore, empathy—one of the core components of EI—is essential in a culture that often prioritizes group well-being over individual desires. For example, during community gatherings, festivals, or rituals such as Dashain and Tihar, emotionally intelligent people can maintain social harmony by being sensitive to others' emotional states and practicing self-regulation in emotionally charged situations (Poudel, 2020). This strengthens social bonds and contributes to a cohesive family or community environment.

Additionally, emotional intelligence supports effective communication, which is particularly important in Nepal's diverse cultural and multi-language background. With over 100 ethnic groups and multiple languages, the ability to perceive emotional cues and communicate respectfully across cultural lines is essential (Gurung, 2015). Emotional intelligence helps bridge these differences and fosters trust and collaboration among individuals from various backgrounds.

Therefore, emotional intelligence significantly contributes to the strength and quality of personal relationships in Nepal. By promoting empathy, emotional regulation, and effective communication within the framework of Nepali cultural values, EI helps individuals build deeper and more resilient bonds in both familial and community settings.

### 1. Enhancing Emotional Awareness and Empathy

**Self-awareness:** High EI helps individuals recognize their own emotions (*Aatmabishleshan*), which helps to reduce impulsive reactions during disagreements (Goleman, 1995). In Nepali joint families, identifying the sense of frustration before speaking prevents disrespect (*Apamaan*) toward elders and ultimately directs towards strong relationship.

**Empathy (*Sahanubhuti*):** Understanding others' emotions is a key to strengthen trust. An act of a partner sensing other partner's stress from financial or emotional pressures requires supportive response. Instead of criticizing each-other, accepting them fuels for strong bond and improved relationship Fitness, (J. 2000).

### 2. Improving Communication and Emotional Expression

**Adapting to Indirect Communication Styles:** Nepalese often avoid direct confrontation about the mistakes or problems in order to maintain social dignity. EI helps to convey emotions diplomatically by using metaphors "We would be happier together" softens marital complaints Fitness, (J. 2000).

**Non-verbal Sensitivity:** Over 60% of emotional meaning in Nepal is conveyed through tone and body language (Karki, 2022). EI aids in interpreting subtle cues arising from unintentional acts.

### 3. Facilitating Conflict Resolution





Emotion Regulation (*Sanyam*): Sometimes suppressing harmful outbursts, which is pretty common in Nepalese society preserves family harmony. If a daughter-in-law or Mother-in-law is able to manage anger temporarily, for traditional gender roles and actions is likely to maintain rupturing household unity.

Problem-solving with Compassion: As Nepalese society is based on collective efforts and success, harnessing EI encourages members for collaborative solutions. Siblings accepting parental care duties fairly by acknowledging each other's emotional and financial burdens ultimately keeps their bond sound.

#### 4. Strengthening Marital and Familial Bonds

Marital Satisfaction: As, Nepalese still believe in arrange marriage, couples' patience during adjustments is needed in joint or even in single families. Spouse with high EI report 30% higher satisfaction in arranged marriages (Ghimire & Chhetri, 2021) due to:

- Patience (*Dhairya*) during adjustments.
- Emotional support during crises such as infertility, migration.
- Parent-child Relationships: Parents practicing EI are likely to balance discipline (*Anusasan*) with warmth (*Maya*) reducing inter-generational conflict.

#### 5. Promoting Social Cohesion (*Samajik Melmilap*)

- Community Dispute Mediation: As a multi-cultural society, our elders and senior citizens who are accepted as social mediator/leader, are supposed to settle various social tensions and issues. EI enables them to act with empathy and harmony consider while resolving caste/ethnic tensions arising in the society.

Role of Emotional Intelligence to Strengthens Personal Relationships in Nepali Society can be illustrated through an example of iconic Nepali novel "*Seto Dharti*"- by Amar Neupane. The novel unfolds themes of love, loss, and resilience in a traditional Nepali society considering cultural factors. It subtly portrays how emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal sensitivity shapes personal relationships within the Nepali cultural context. Empathy and Compassion in Grief: the main character, Tara (a widow), goes into deep societal stigma and emotional isolation. Characters who show her kindness (her father-in-law and few villagers) demonstrate high emotional intelligence by understanding her pain and sorrow without judgment. Their act of empathy to her in a traditional social norm helps sustain meaningful relationships in a conservative social setting. Self-Awareness and Emotional Control: her journey through out the novel reflects emotional resilience—a key aspect of EI. Despite social pressure, she learns to grasp grief without losing herself to despair or anger. Other characters, e.g her in-laws, sometimes fail in EI by suppressing emotions; leading to strained relationships. Cultural Sensitivity in Relationships: Nepali society values familial and communal harmony, characters who navigate relationships with emotional tact (e.g., speaking carefully in order to minimize or even avoid conflict) exemplify EI in a collectivist culture. Conversely, those who denied others' emotions (such as rigid traditionalists) create discord, showing how low EI damages personal relationship bonds. Communication and Conflict Resolution: the novel highlights how indirect communication (common in Nepali culture) simultaneously protect feelings and create misunderstandings but emotionally intelligent characters show the balance



with honesty and kindness. For example, Tara's father-in-law covers her from harsh truths at times, demonstrating situational awareness an aspect of EI. Resilience and Adaptability emotional intelligence involves adapting the adversity. The gradual acceptance of Tara's own reality by empathetic relationships, reflects how EI fosters growth in personal relationship in rigid and unshakeable Nepali society frameworks (Neupane,2012).

### **Practices to Foster Emotional Intelligence (EI)**

Emotional Intelligence (EI) can be cultivated through structured programs that focus on self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills. The following are evidence-based programs and interventions that help individuals enhance their EI:

#### **1. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs**

Description: SEL programs are widely used in schools to help students understand and manage emotions, set positive goals, and establish healthy relationships. CASEL Framework (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning): A comprehensive model that integrates EI into school curricula through five core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (CASEL, 2020).

#### **2. Mindfulness-Based Emotional Intelligence Training (MBEIT)**

Description: Combines mindfulness practices with emotional regulation strategies to enhance emotional awareness and control. Search Inside Yourself (SIY): Originally developed at Google, this program teaches mindfulness and EI to improve emotional regulation, empathy, and leadership effectiveness (Tan, 2012).

#### **3. Emotion-Focused Therapy (EFT)**

Description: Primarily used in counselling, EFT helps individuals recognize and express emotions in a healthy way, improving relationships and self-regulation. It is very useful in marital counselling and family settings in both Western and non-Western cultures, including Nepal, where emotional expression may be restrained due to cultural norms (Baral, 2018).

#### **4. Leadership and Workplace EI Training**

Description: Primarily targeted for professionals, these programs aim to improve communication, empathy, and team collaboration inside the workplace as well as in the family. Daniel Goleman's EI Training Programs: Focus on developing the four EI domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, 2006).

#### **5. Cultural Adaptation and Community Workshops (Nepalese Context)**

Description: Locally tailored programs that respect cultural values and community structures can effectively develop EI in Nepal. Community-based emotional skills workshops run by NGOs, Youth Clubs integrating traditional values like collective thinking (*sajha soch*) and sensitivity/empathy (*sambedansheelata*) with modern emotional education (Poudel, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in shaping strong personal and social relationships in the Nepalese context but real influence is deeply rooted in socio-cultural sphere. Findings suggests individuals with higher EI demonstrate greater relational harmony where balancing



emotional expression with cultural norms happens smoothly. Also, Conflict resolution is backed by sense of empathy and indirect communication without any distortion in family or social cohesion. Furthermore, stronger and intense interpersonal influence adheres following hierarchal structures where senior or elder members are respected. In a society deeply rooted in collectivist values, where familial ties, community harmony, and social respect are central, emotional intelligence enhances the ability to empathize, communicate effectively, and manage conflicts peacefully. It supports respectful inter-generational interactions, promotes cultural sensitivity, and fosters social cohesion across Nepal's diverse ethnic and linguistic communities. As Nepal continues to modernize while preserving its traditional values, the cultivation of emotional intelligence becomes increasingly important for building emotionally resilient families and inclusive social environments.

In Nepal, EI's impact on interpersonal influence is deeply intertwined with cultural expectations around collectivism, indirect communication, gender roles, and emotional restraint. Understanding these mediators is crucial for applying EI theories in the Nepali context. Therefore, integrating emotional intelligence into education, family life, and community development can significantly contribute to personal well-being and social unity. Developing emotional intelligence is not only possible but essential for personal and societal well-being. Programs like SEL, mindfulness training, and culturally adapted community workshops provide structured paths of emotional and social individuals to grow emotionally and socially.



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