

Emotional Intelligence, Social Freedom and Women's Personal Space

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With a view to investigate into the impact of working and non-working status of women on emotional intelligence (EI) as well as on desire for social freedom as also to examine the differential impact of emotional intelligence, social freedom and working -non-working status on women's personal space, data was collected from 100 working and 100 non-working women using Mangal's Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII) and Bhushan's Women's Social Freedom (WSF) scale together with experimental measures of personal space. The obtained results revealed that i) Working women excelled over non-working women in terms of emotional intelligence (EI) and desire for social freedom, and ii) the respondents belonging to high EI group, high desire for social freedom group and working group preferred smaller personal space (PS). Findings have been discussed in the light of related literature.

Keywords : Emotional Intelligence (EI), Social Freedom (SF) , Personal Space (PS), Working / Non-working women, Unobtrusive Measure.

Personal space (PS) refers to the area individuals actively maintain around themselves into which others can not intrude without arousing discomfort. Myers (1983) has defined personal space as the buffer zone we like to maintain around our bodies. As the term suggests, personal space is a subjective factor and thus a wide range of individual differences can be observed in preference of personal space. Some like to maintain wider personal space both in personal and social life, others like to maintain a minimum space with others.

Wide personal differences have been observed in preference of personal space. Various personal factors like age, sex, education, familiarity / unfamiliarity etc. have deep impact on the preference of PS. Aiello (1976) found that crowded children demonstrated rise in skin conductance (indicating stress), and reported feelings of annoyance and discomfort. Older people prefer less personal space. Aiello and Aiello

(1974) reported that elderly people prefer smaller PS as teenagers do. Men prefer more PS than women (Willis, 1966; Edwards, 1972). People of both sexes place themselves closer to women than a man (Altman, 1975). Willis (1966) found preference of less personal space with friends. Bell, Kline and Barnard (1988) found that friends maintained closer distances than strangers influencing PS. Cook (1970) reported that introverts preferred large PS whereas Myers (1983) found that extroverts preferred less PS. There is, however, a clear deficit as regards the role of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence (EI) is concerned with the feelings of others emotions, comfort-discomfort and the like. Naturally, a person having more EI is more likely to be attracted toward other person's problems as well as needs. As such, more the EI, lesser the PS. EI and women's desire for social freedom, likewise, seem to be related to a significant extent. EI, as the ability to monitor one's own as well as others