

INTELLECTUALLY GIFTED ADULTS: LIFE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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Abstract. Difference in groups of gifted individuals, having undergone and not having undergone enriched educational programme (EEP) was investigated. Males, identified as gifted in school age, 27 from EEP and 26 from normal schools were studied in their late thirties. Standardized intelligence test, and factual data were used to measure their academic, practical and social accomplishments. The experimental and control groups and their subgroups were compared statistically and qualitatively. Out of statistically compared 18 variables, five were found to be significantly different. The groups differed on variables from academic and social accomplishments; EEP contributed to difference in academic and social areas- especially, school to academic and youth activities to social. This can be implemented to design and modify existing EEP.

Keywords: India, intellectually gifted, enriched educational environment, life accomplishment

Introduction

After combining several results of studies, conducted in USA Marland Report described concept of giftedness more precisely. Gifted are “the youth who are identified at the pre-school, elementary or secondary school level, as possessing, demonstrating or showing, potential that gives evidence of high performance or capabilities in areas such as intellectual, creative thinking, academics, leadership, visual and performing arts, and, requires services or activities, not ordinarily provided by the school.” (Passow, 1979). The

definition addresses the age of identification and also the need for special educational programme.

The need for special education of the gifted has been considered by many of the educationists and psychologists. A large number of educational programmes for gifted have been suggested by different researchers. Cruickshank & Johnson (1975), Passow (1979), Kitano & Kirby (1986) Southern (1991) have elaborated some of the major provisions for the special education of gifted. Telescoped programmes, curricular compacting, individualized studies, self-paced instruction, learning centers, early admission to school, grade skipping, subject matter acceleration, accelerated enriched classes, advanced placement, extracurricular programmes are some of these. Through all these notions acceleration, segregation and enrichment of curriculum – horizontal and vertical seem to be the main directions of gifted education.

Some of the experiments focused on enriching the curriculum and were considered to be beneficial. The Calasanctius School located in Buffalo, New York, Major Work Programme in Cleveland, Ohio, the Marlborough and the Yehudi Menuhin School are examples of special enrichment programmes. Feldhusen (1998) provides a detailed account of Renzulli's Enrichment Triad/Revolving Door Model.

Countries, other than USA also seem to have made some special provisions for the special education of the gifted. McCann (2000) has highlighted some special provisions regarding educating gifted in various Asian countries. Extracurricular supplements, segregated classes, separate special schools for gifted students are commonly mentioned. Acceleration implemented in China, holistic approach in Australia, separate special schools in Taiwan and Korea, enrichment programme in Hong Kong are stated by McCann (2000). Japan is running special schools, based on Guilford's (1967) Structure of Intellect (SOI) model since around 30 years. Indonesia has been running 'High-schools of Excellence' since 1994. Thailand has established the 'Centre for the Development of Giftedness in Children'. In Great Britain, Brentwood College of Education, Essex schools were implementing some type of special education programmes. Evaluations of these programmes after short intervals were found to be effective; long-term influences were not studied thoroughly (Passow, 1979). What is the policy of Indian Government in this regard?

Legislative position in India

In its report Indian Education Commission (1964-66) criticized segregation and hence did not appear very enthusiastic to have separate education for gifted. A special committee, appointed to evaluate the existing educational system, known by name as Kothari Commission, made many valuable recommendations including a few about gifted-education. It admitted the importance of enrichment programmes and vacation programmes.

In 1986 the government realized need for widening horizons in gifted education and established 275 segregated schools, for identified gifted, in 22 states. They are known as 'Navodaya Vidyalayas'. Equal opportunity, rather than equality, of education to all, especially from disadvantaged section, was the purpose behind these schools. All sorts of residential and other educational facilities are provided. The objectives are said as "to foster national integrity, to preserve and nurture intelligence in socially and economically disadvantaged group, to give education for all-round development of children" and so on. The entrance to school is given on the basis of scores on intelligence tests.

Some public schools in Delhi, Navayug Vidyalaya and Vidya Niketan schools are a sort of gifted schools. Netturhut in Bihar and also Bangalore have schools for gifted. The criteria of selection, however, are not necessarily the same. There are some schools, run by non-governmental agencies, all over India, each one implementing its own criteria for selection and picking up the cream of society. All of them have major focus on academic excellence and performance in examinations.

Jnana Prabodhini, a Pune based institute in Maharashtra State, was set up by an educational psychologist, Late Dr. V.V.Pendse, with special intention to impart enriched educational programme by segregating the intellectually gifted students after passing standard 4. The institute was conducting after-school classes in the evening for selected gifted from secondary and higher secondary schools since 1962. Then a special high school for gifted was started in 1969. The school provided an altogether different pattern of school education. It emphasized enrichment to nurture multiple facets of intelligence and personality. In April 1972 London Times¹⁾ published an interview of Dr. Pendse in the light of a new experiment he started in India- the Jnana Prabodhini: a special school for gifted. The article highlighted the 'venture without Government help' and many other newspapers in Britain received it well. All-round development of students, to give eminent leadership in various areas to fulfill nation's needs was the main objective. Selection was

based on a battery of standardized intelligence tests. The enrichment consisted of motivated teachers, special methods of teaching, some unique extra curricular and co-curricular programmes, and celebration of some special occasions. Thus it is a classic example of segregation and enrichment.

A retrospective study of past students of Jnana Prabodhini was undertaken. The purpose was to see if the students who were selected as gifted, studied in the Jnana Prabodhini have become different than those who studied in normal schools. This paper presents the report regarding comparison of life accomplishments of gifted from Jnana Prabodhini and the gifted from normal schools. Comparison of personality, life perspectives and life goals will be covered in separate paper.

Method

Design

The study follows ‘only post test nonequivalent control group quasi-experimental’ design.

Variables

Independent Variable: Enriched Educational Programme – A segregated school programme for the gifted with addition of uncommon extra curricular activities;

Dependent Variable: Life accomplishments in academic, practical and social areas- named as Academic Accomplishments, Practical Accomplishments and Social Accomplishments;

Controlled Variables: Gender, selection criterion and intelligence level as measured by the Raven’s (1947) Standard Progressive Matrices test(RSPM), age at the time of intelligence testing, age at the time of data collection, and parents’ socio economic status.

Hypotheses

The study proposes to test the following null hypothesis: there is no significant difference between the life accomplishments – the Academic, Practical and Social, of the EEP-gifted group and the non EEP-gifted group, where

1. Academic Accomplishments include educational qualifications, additional educational achievements, courses and training programmes attended, acquisition of languages, literature published, presentation of papers in conferences, seminars, etc.;

2. Practical Accomplishments include occupational status, achieved level of occupational status, income, material-possessions, type of dwelling, tours to foreign countries;

3. Social Accomplishments include membership of groups related to social work, membership of groups other than social work (discussed qualitatively), leadership performed, special recognitions achieved, participation in unique activities, talks delivered, training programmes conducted for others.

Participants

The sample consisted of 53 individuals, all men, in the age group of 30–40 years. They had been, in their school years (1970–74), selected by an authorized psychological agency (Jnana Prabodhini's Psychology Department- now known as Jnana Prabodhini's Institute of Psychology) on the basis of standardized intelligence tests and standing 95 PR or above, on Raven's Standard Progressive Matrices test. Those who satisfied the criterion of having experienced the enrichment educational programme for at least six years, formed the Study group (enriched educational programme EEP) and those, who had not experienced the EEP at all, formed the C group (non enriched educational programme group). The S group was further subdivided into two groups as group S1 (of 17) who experienced the EEP school programme for six years and S2 (of 10) who experienced the EEP through three years in school and three more years through the youth activity programme. Similarly matched on age of identification and the age at the time of data collection, groups C1 (of 12) and C2 (of 14) were formed.

Measures

Tool No. 1. "Personal Information Form"

It included personal information about name, address, birth date, date of filling the form, qualification, profession, etc.;

Tool No. 2. "Brief Bio-Data"

This was a descriptive form encompassing information regarding general and special achievements;

Tool No. 3 "About Your Family"

The three instruments collected data on Life Accomplishments in three areas – academic, practical and social.

Data Collection

Individuals were requested to come for the test in a classroom setup. Dates were decided by mutual convenience. Data was collected by administering the tests in small groups or individually. Two groups- Experimental and Comparison- were requested separately. The information was gathered with the help of above-mentioned tools. The data was treated as follows.

Treatment to the data

In case of *educational qualifications (1.1)* the individuals wrote the highest qualifications they had achieved. The qualifications were categorized into 8 levels.

- Ph.D and above –8
- post graduation –7,
- graduation –6,
- diploma –5,
- certificates after XII –4,
- only Standard XII or X with certificate–3,
- Standard X–2 and
- below std. IX–1.

The combined median of two groups was 6; hence *Educational qualifications* were divided into two classes-

- high i.e. post graduation and above it, and
- low i.e. below post graduation.

The number of individuals in each of these two categories was noted.

For *additional qualifications (1.2)*, *courses taken and training programmes attended (1.3)*, *acquisition of any language (1.4)* other than the three specified languages viz.– Marathi, Hindi, and English, *different types of publications (1.5)*, and *presentation of papers (1.6)*. Individuals were classified into two discrete classes, those who had these achievements (yes group) and those who did not have (no group).

Two classes for *occupational status (2.1)*, were decided, namely

- self-employment and
- service.

The number of individuals in each of these categories was noted. For *level of occupation (2.2)* there were 8 categories. These were arranged in descending order of responsibility or the status in the occupation, from a, b,

c, to h. All the individuals were found to be in the top three categories, i.e. a, b and c. Those from 'a' category were considered as 'high' and the others, i.e. 'not a', as 'low'. The number of individuals in each of these categories was noted.

Standard of living, here, was considered by *income* (2.3), *material possessions* (2.4), and the *type of dwelling* (2.5). For *income* the individuals were classified into two categories depending on the monthly income—high for income above Rs.15 000 (\$320 approximately, according to the average currency rate in the period 1995–1998) were classified 'high' and Rs. 15 000 and below it were classified as 'low'. The number of individuals in each of these categories was noted.

For *material possessions* such as vehicles, home appliances and items of recreation, the total number was counted and individuals were classified into two classes, 'high', having more than 8 items, and 'low' having 8 or less items. The number of individuals in each of these categories was noted.

For *type of dwelling*, individuals were classified initially, into three classes—staying in 'Bungalow or house', 'Flat or apartment' and 'Wada' (*Wada* is a big building in which many families stay separately. Nowadays they are converted into flats, and the previous occupants are given preference to purchase flat with some sort of discount).

Usually bungalows or own houses are supposed to indicate a higher standard of living, wadas the lower and flats or apartments as the middle category. Those who were staying in bungalows or houses were separated from those who were staying in apartments, flats or *wadas*. The number of individuals in each of these categories was noted.

For *tours to foreign countries* (2.6) the individuals were classified into two categories, those who had traveled abroad and those who had not.

As the research intended to focus on the social aspect of group membership, the groups were classified into two types –

- those working in the area of social service and
- those in the areas other than social service.

Membership of groups related to social work (3.1a) was further classified in two categories –

- those who had membership and
- those who had not.

Membership of groups, other than social work (3.1b) was treated qualitatively in describing the groups and only percentages were shown to get a feel of the group. As all the individuals were found to work in top position, appointed leadership was not taken into account. In case of emergent leader-

ship, the leadership outside the place of work was only noted; hence according to *leadership activities (3.2)* (outside the place of work) the individuals fall into two categories—those who had played the role of leader for any of the activities and those who had not.

For *special recognition achieved (3.3)* the information regarding awards, prizes, honors or any sort of approval from society were considered and classified into two categories – those who had achieved recognition and those who had not.

Participation in unique activities (3.4) such as campaigns, social service, social movements, relief work, etc., was taken into consideration. Individuals were classified into two categories, those who had participated in such activities and those who had not.

In case of *talks delivered (3.5)* the talks, which were given on subjects other than their academic area and were not part of their work in routine practice (inferred from the topics they indicated) were taken into consideration. The individuals were classified into two categories,

- those who had delivered such talks and
- those who had not.

In case of *training programmes conducted (3.6)* individuals were classified into two categories,

- those who had conducted training programmes and
- those who had not.

The data was in the form of frequencies in two discrete classes. The comparison was to be made between ‘two independent’ samples of ‘small’ numbers. The measurement had a status of ‘nominal’ (yes and no, self-employed and service, or bungalow or flat, etc.) or an ‘ordinal’ scale (high and low).

Analysis of the data

The groups compared were

- ◆ S with C,
- ◆ S1 with C1, and
- ◆ S2 with C2.

As this separation was *ad hoc* it was necessary to test comparability among them. The study being quasi-experimental, selection of the individuals was not under control of the researcher. Variables, which possibly could have influenced the profiles of these individuals, namely, gender,

intelligence, age at the time of identification (test-age), age at the time of getting information (data-age), and socioeconomic and educational status of parents were taken into account to verify comparability of groups. Socio-economic status of parents, which was then inferred from the home addresses at the time of intelligence testing, the names and geographical locations of the schools in which they have studied, and the information gathered regarding parents' (father and mother separately treated) education and vocation from the data.

Table 1. Names of the variables under study, hypothesis number, scale of measurement, tool number, and corresponding question number

Name of the Variable	Hypothesis No.	Scale of Measurement	Tool and the Question No.
Educational qualifications	1.1	Ordinal	Tool No. 1 Q.No. 8
Additional qualifications	1.2	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 1
Courses & Training attended	1.3	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 2
Acquisition of languages	1.4	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 7
Literature published by individuals	1.5	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 5
Presentation of papers	1.6	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 5
Occupational status	2.1	Ordinal	Tool No. 1 Q. No. 10
Level of occupation	2.2	Ordinal	Tool No. 3 Q. No. 2
Income	2.3	Ordinal	Tool No. 3 Q. No. 3
Material Possessions	2.4	Ordinal	Tool No. 3 Q. No. 4
Type of dwelling	2.5	Nominal	Tool No. 3 Q. No. 5
Tours to foreign countries	2.6	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 6
Membership of groups related to social work	3.1.a	Nominal	Tool No. 3 Q, No. 6
Membership of groups other than social work	3.1.b	Ordinal	Tool No. 3 Q, No. 6
Leadership performed	3.2	Nominal	Tool No. 1 Q. No. 11
Special recognitions achieved	3.3	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 3
Participation in unique activities	3.4	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 4
Talks delivered	3.5	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 8
Training programmes Conducted	3.6	Nominal	Tool No. 2 Q. No. 9

Null hypotheses (H_0) for all the variables from 1.1 to 3.6 were tested, A table containing variables, corresponding hypothesis number, the tools and respective question numbers used to assess the variables, the scale of measurement and type of analysis along with indication of significant difference is attached (Table 1). Considering the small number of participants Fisher's Exact Probability test was used to see the significance of difference between frequencies (number of individuals falling in the category, described above). The results and the significance level of differences are given in (Table 2).

Table 2. Fisher's Exact Probability Values for the differences in frequencies on accomplishments

<u>Variables</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>1.3</u>	<u>1.4</u>	<u>1.5</u>	<u>1.6</u>	<u>2.1</u>	<u>2.2</u>	<u>2.3</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>2.5</u>
S1-C1	*0.01	0.202	0.683	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.403	1.000	0.403
S2-C2	0.197	0.393	0.393	0.085	0.670	1.000	0.211	0.339	0.214	0.168	0.099
S-C	*0.019	*0.045	0.241	0.080	0.770	1.000	0.413	0.517	0.080	0.359	0.070

<u>Variables</u>	<u>2.6</u>	<u>3.1a</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>3.3</u>	<u>3.4</u>	<u>3.5</u>	<u>3.6</u>
S1-C1	1.000	0.214	0.622	1.000	0.661	0.129	0.673
S2-C2	0.214	0.09	0.673	1.000	0.240	*0.02	*0.033
S-C	0.563	*0.02	0.745	1.000	0.770	*0.003	0.400

* Significant at 0.05 level in favor of the initial group (S, S1 or S2)

Findings and Discussion

Academic Accomplishments

Motivation to achieve success in academics gets manifested through educational qualification. H_0 was rejected for the pair S–C, and S1–C1 and was accepted for the pair S2–C2. This means that S and S1 groups are significantly different from C and C1, but S2 does not differ significantly from C2. Thus there are greater chances of a highly qualified person to fall in S group as against its counter group. The trend indicates superiority of S and S1 groups over C and C1 in achieving basic educational qualifications.

Acquiring additional qualifications in support to basic educational qualifications and attending courses and training programmes, show an urge for enhancement of self and perseverance in attaining knowledge and skills, which form one of the prime aspect of personality, indicating self-actualizing trend. H_0 was rejected for the pair S–C. The trend indicates superiority of S over C in securing additional educational achievements

H_0 were accepted for all the three pairs for rest of the variables, the training programmes attended, the acquisition of languages, the publishing of articles, research papers or books, and the presentation of research papers in conferences, seminars or symposia.

Comparisons within groups suggested that though the ratios did not indicate significant difference between two groups, they differ qualitatively. Many of the individuals appeared to go for training in skills, related to profession, but some of the individuals showed inclination to go for other-than-professional courses, like leadership, interpersonal relations, creativity, communication skills, achievement motivation, personality development, meditation, *Vipassyana* (a school of thought regarding introspection), nature trails, nature camps, trekking, mountaineering, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha (a social group based on some political ideology), social service, etc.

In case of language acquisition Indian languages like Kannad, Gujarathi, Marwadi, Tamil, Urdu and Bengali were listed. In case of foreign languages there were special and purposive efforts. The languages studied were Arabic, German and Japanese.

Publications included research papers published in national and international journals, some well documented empirical projects, articles in magazines in English and regional language-Marathi, photographs in academic volumes, letters to editors of newspapers, editing of books, editing of house magazines in work places, editing scripts, writing of books based on

academic topics, *Kulvruttant* (history of family or a family tree), as well as books having literary value, translation of English books into regional language with specific academic purpose and so on. Mention of publication for laypersons is more in the C group and that of scientific articles is more in S group – the significance is not tested.

Practical Accomplishments

H_0 was accepted for all the three pairs, namely, S–C, S1–C1 and S2–C2 indicating that there is no significant difference between these groups on accomplishments in all variables under the Practical area.

Income though is considered as an indicator of practical success, it is also a manifestation of person's values to earn. Income in a way is a product of competence and some personality variables, such as value for money, perseverance, practical intelligence, etc.

Material-possessions included vehicles in the family, home appliances, and entertaining items. Though there are many practical issues in choosing type of dwelling, it may reflect some of the personal qualities like social adaptability of a person and also his liking to share with others.

Tours and trips are a means of increasing knowledge as well as they reflect on personality. Travel within country has become common because of ample traveling facilities; hence traveling abroad was taken into account. In all 27 countries by S group and 12 countries by C group were reported.

Social Accomplishments

While considering social accomplishments inclination to become members of social groups was studied. People who have desire to do something for mankind generally get associated themselves with some voluntary organizations, which provide opportunity to offer service for people in need. Thus for variable 3.1a (Membership of groups related to social work), H_0 was rejected for the pair S–C and H_0 was accepted for the pair S1–C1 and S2–C2. Thus society orientedness of S over C is revealed.

Conducting training programmes (3.6) for others requires particular characteristics. The trainer has to have good oratory, resourcefulness, creativity, flexibility, versatility, empathy, openness, quick responding, swiftness, pleasantness, and convincing but friendly style. He should have genuine urge to develop and foster the commodities of participants. Moreover the trainer should have respect for individuality and belief in developing it. He is generally a good performer, rather than a thinker. H_0 was rejected for the pair S2–C2 and was accepted for the pair S–C and S1–C1. This means

that S2 group is significantly different from C2, but S and S1 do not differ significantly from C and C1 respectively. Hence more proportion of S group individuals is likely to be creative, dynamic, and empathetic by nature.

Reaching the audience to deliver information, thought, knowledge or philosophy is a way of relating to society and can be considered as a willingness to present self in front of others. As these individuals hold top positions in their profession, most of them seem to give informative talks on their subjects; but there are a few of them who deliver talks on subjects other than their academic or professional topics, where purpose is of passing or expressing views in general. Some times there could be a desire to come and be in limelight. Talking over an issue requires consistency and integrity of thoughts and expression. Presence of mind, flexibility of expression and originality of thinking adds to the quality of this sort of oratory. He should be a good thinker. The trend indicates superiority of S and S2 groups over C and C2 in delivering talks. This indicates that the S group individuals have the above-mentioned qualities; they are putting more efforts to create awareness about their subjects and trying to revise the views of people.

On rest of the variables in this area no significant differences were observed. Some points still have to be highlighted.

For 3.1b the membership of groups, unrelated to social work were considered. The groups for S were related to work in the area of education and professions while for C were related to culture, philosophy, research, entertainment and sports. Statistical significance not tested.

The leadership (3.2) could be considered as a further step showing urge to bring together people to form groups, belief in team work, initiative and capacity for handling groups, etc. S group individuals were found to be leading two social organizations, three youth groups, a farmers' organization, three health groups and so on. The C group individuals were found to be heading two statewide social organizations (on temporary posts), a medical group, two mountaineering groups, an educational trust and likewise. The picture shows focus of S group is more on youth activities and most of the groups they run seem to be ongoing activities.

Getting special recognition (3.3) for some achievement is included in this area. Appreciation, praise, prizes, awards, honors, etc. are the markers, which are considered here.

It is difficult to describe unique accomplishments (3.4) of all the individuals; but some may be mentioned here to see the quality wise difference. In case of S group one got award for his academic excellence, one for professional performance, the other two were felicitated by so-

cial organizations. S group individuals give activities such as anti political emergency movement, blood donation camps, relief works, eradication of liquor, literacy of people, farmers' movement, challenging injustice on people, and so on. C group individuals also list some of them, such as anti political emergency movement, blood donation camps, relief works, and some others like strikes against government policy. This indicates that S group individuals are more involved in some constructive activities and issues relevant to basic human rights.

Overall findings

1. Total S group differed from total C group on Academic and Social Accomplishments; but not on Practical Accomplishments;
2. S1 group differed from its counter group in the area of Academic Accomplishments;
3. S2 group differed from its counter group on Social Accomplishments.

Conclusions

Enriched Educational Programme implemented at school level is likely to have influenced accomplishments in educational and social areas. This means that the individuals who got input of six year schooling were benefited more in academic area; and those who could get input in terms academics as well as youth activities became more contributing to society.

In rest of the areas, on which these groups were not found to be significantly different, qualitative difference was observed.

These findings speak of the differences between the S group and the C group. In this 'only post test nonequivalent control group quasi-experimental' study lack of pre test measures do not allow the researcher to say that this effect is only due to the intervention, i.e. EEP. However the variables on which significant differences were observed seem to be logically more related to the school activities. Hence the differences could be said to have begun at this point of life.

Implications

The study will help in designing appropriate EEPs at high school level. The findings suggest need of supplementing youth activities to special school programme while designing EEP for gifted students. The current EEP may be modified to give more emphasis on instruction in academic and social expression so as to make the EEP useful for giving able leadership in various fields. Similar studies can be conducted with selected variables for intellectually gifted girls from the same EEP.

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Notes

¹ Pendse, V. V. The Jnana Prabodhini: A Special School for Gifted. *London Times*, Issue No. 162, 1972.

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