

## The Role of Cultural Expectations in Emotion Regulation among Nepali Adolescents

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**Abstract :** Nepali adolescents report tension and negative emotion due to perceived expectations of both academic and social achievement. These societal goals, which are internalized through early-life socialization, drive the development of self-regulatory processes such as emotion regulation. Emotion dysregulation is linked with adverse psychological outcomes such as depression, self-harm, and suicide, which are public health concerns for organizations working with Nepali adolescents. This study examined the relation among socialization, internalized cultural goals, and emotion regulation to inform interventions for reducing depression and suicide in this population. Participants included 102 students in grades 7 through 9 in a post-earthquake school setting in rural Kathmandu valley. All participants completed a tablet-based battery of quantitative measures, comprising transculturally adapted assessments of emotion regulation, depression, and self-harm/suicide ideation and behavior. Qualitative measures included two focus groups and semi-structured interviews with 22 students and 3 parents. A notable proportion of the sample reported depression symptoms in the past 2 weeks (68%), lifetime self-harm ideation (28%), and lifetime suicide attempts (13%). Students who lived with their nuclear family reported lower levels of difficulty than those who lived with more distant relatives ( $z=2.16$ ,  $p=.03$ ), which suggests a link between family environment and adolescent emotion regulation, potentially mediated by socialization and internalization of cultural goals. These findings call for further research into the aspects of nuclear versus extended family environments that shape the development of emotion regulation.

**Keywords :** adolescent mental health, emotion regulation, Nepal, socialization

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