

Perceived loneliness in relation to gender and area of adolescents

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ABSTRACT:- *The present study was conducted to study the perceived loneliness of adolescents in relation to their gender and area. For this purpose " Perceived Loneliness" scale constructed by by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha was administrated to the sample of 100 girls and boys of age group 16 to 22 years (50 rural and 50 urban). The results of this study revealed that there is no significant difference in the perceived loneliness of urban and rural adolescents. We also do not find significant difference in terms of their gender and area but both are feeling loneliness sometime so we should consider this issue. However there are certain limitation in this study the data is quite small some other variable must also be studied with this variable.*

Keywords: *Perceived loneliness, gender and area.*

Adolescence is a transitional period involving many biological, psychological, mental and social developments and changes (Eccless, et. al., 1993). This period initially starts with sudden physical development and change, followed by psychological and social changes. During this period, adolescents are faced with numerous physical, psychological and social role changes that challenge their sense of self and capacity to live happily. The social expectations inexorably push the adolescent toward unneeded independence and autonomy and sometimes to experience a sense of boredom that inevitably lead to loneliness. While adolescence can be an opportunity for making new friends, developing new interests and bring happiness, it can also lead to loneliness as a result of their age, relationships, family dynamics, religious affiliation, residential status, environment where they live and their parental status. Much of this research has examined how stress arising from life events and daily hassles may influence health outcomes. Researchers have also found that stress related to interpersonal conflict also increases the risk of behavioural problems in adolescents (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989; Coyne & Downey, 1991). Studies have found that most adolescents tend to encounter several conflict situations every day (Laursen & Collins, 1994) and that more adolescent conflict is closely associated with negative affect (Elgar & Arlett, 2002). Thus, conflict, daily hassles and life events are three salient sources of adolescent stress.

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Loneliness is a subjective, unpleasant experience that can have life threatening consequences (Peplum & Perlman, 1982). Loneliness is linked to alcoholism, suicide, and physical illness. Like alienation, high divorce rates, and widespread crime, loneliness is seen by some as a cause of social decay. Loneliness is strongly correlated with anxiety (Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona, 1980). Weiss (1973) distinguished emotional loneliness from social loneliness. Emotional loneliness is based on the absence of personal, intimate relationship or attachment. Social loneliness on one hand is the result of lack of social connectedness or sense of community. Weiss believed that emotional loneliness is the more acutely painful form of isolation, while social loneliness is experienced as a mixture of feeling rejected or unacceptable, together with a sense of boredom. Young (1982) also distinguished among three types of loneliness: transient, situational, and chronic loneliness. Transient or everyday loneliness includes brief and occasional lonely moods. Situational loneliness involves people who have satisfying relationship until some specific change occurs, such as divorce, bereavement or moving to a new town. Situational loneliness can be a severely distressing experience. Situational loneliness often follows major life stress events, such as the death of a spouse or ending of a marriage. Chronic loneliness evolves when, over a period of years, the person is not able to develop satisfying social relations for a period of years. Loneliness may be part of a normal developmental process for older adolescents in transition to young adulthood (Erikson 1968), but for many adolescents the loneliness that results from school, families, and peer difficulties can lead to even more serious problems such as depression, suicide ideation, and violence. Several studies indicate that that loneliness is felt more intensively in adolescence and late adolescence rather than the old developmental stages

of life (McWhirter et al, 2002). Once students feel isolated, they are less likely to seek and receive guidance and support within schools, which places them at an even greater risk for further problems, such as associating with more deviant peer groups. The study estimated that about 10 to 15% of these adolescents were “seriously lonely” as defined by a pattern of simultaneously high scores on self-reported loneliness, emotional and social isolations, as well as other indicators of loneliness. Nearly 45% suffered from somewhat less severe levels of chronic loneliness. Growth during adolescence is characterized by striving for personal autonomy (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). The adolescent attempts to achieve behavioral, moral, ideological, and cognitive autonomy. The youth is one confronted with a large range of possibilities, with concomitant confusions and ambiguities, physical, cognitive, and moral growth, in addition to social expectations inexorably push the adolescent toward unneeded independence and autonomy. A common problem for lonely adolescents is a sense of boredom. Among other findings, lonely adolescents reported higher levels of parental rejection, more parental use of rejection as a form of punishment, and greater parental dissatisfaction with their choice of friends (Peplau & Goldston, 1982). In another study by Peplau & Goldston, (1982), loneliness was positively related to past real and threatened separations from one’s father and inversely related to the number of hours per week fathers were available to interact with their sons. Loneliness is an important predictor of life satisfaction among adolescents. Loneliness is an important predictor of life satisfaction among adolescents (Chipuer, Bramston & Pretty, 2003). The cause of loneliness may be found in unpleasant childhood experiences that lead to unfulfilled needs for intimacy, such as the loss of a parent through divorce or death (Le Roux, 2009). Children of divorced parents are at a greater risk of developing loneliness as adults, compared to the children of intact families (Taylor et al., 2003). However, if the father remains involved in the child’s life, even if he is estranged from the child’s mother, the negative consequences of the divorce are considerably reduced. Richaud de Minzi, M. C. & Sacchi, C. (2004) indicate that family relationships and family structure affect adolescents’ feeling of loneliness. Loneliness may be considered as deficiencies in the systems of interpersonal interactions (Cristina, Minzi, & Sacchi, 2004); and has higher negative effects on life satisfaction among adolescents with divorced parents (Civitci, Civitci, & Fiyakali, 2009) than are adolescents with non-divorced parents.

The influence of culture on loneliness has also found that cultural background does, in fact, have an effect on the experience of loneliness (Le Roux, 2009). Triandis (1989) notes that desire to remain with parents and extended family is stronger in collectivist than individualist cultures. Correspondingly, collectivists will tend to suffer more deeply the absence of such relationships. There are contradictory findings regarding gender and loneliness. Weiss (1973) states that women are more apt to be lonely than men. Women are said to have lower self-esteem (Hojat, 1982), which given the association between loneliness and low self-esteem means they are more prone to loneliness. But Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) find no gender differences in relation to loneliness. However, a Borys and Perlman (1985) argue that reported gender differences in loneliness result from men’s greater reluctance to disclose socially undesirable feelings. While other scholars argue that women place a higher importance than men on relationships and are more strongly affected by deficiencies in them. According to Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992) people who believed in God, and have relationship with God are secure, less lonely and less depressed. Loneliness is an important predictor of life satisfaction among adolescents (Chipuer, Bramston & Pretty, 2003). Loneliness is affected by not only the number of social relationships and the frequency of social interaction, but also the quality of relationships. In Cutrona’s (1982) study of UCLA students, dissatisfactions with one’s friendships, dating life, and family relationships were all significant predictors of loneliness. In a study conducted by Brage and Meredith (1993) on adolescents, it was found that family effectiveness and communication between mothers and adolescents are negatively related to loneliness. Because divorce leads to many changes in the family structure and relationship patterns between family members, it can be expected that it decreases the effectiveness of family relationships. According to Guttmann and Rosenberg (2003) and Amato (1987), children with divorced parents feel less closeness to their fathers perceive less support from the father, experience more conflicts with their siblings and perceive poorer family cohesion than do children with non-divorced parents. As these studies indicate, divorce causes changes in the family system and quality of parent-children relationships and increases the risk of straining emotional ties between parents and children (Guttmann & Rosenberg, 2003).

Many studies were conducted in this direction. It is very important issue which adolescent face. Seeing the importance of this problem present study is intended to measure perceived loneliness in relation to gender and area of adolescent.

II. OBJECTIVES

The present study undertaken to achieve the following objectives-

- 1 To study the level of perceived loneliness among adolescents.
- 2 To study the perceived loneliness among adolescents in terms of gender and their inhabitant.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been formulated to achieve the objectives-

1. There will be no significant difference between perceived loneliness of adolescents in terms of gender.
2. There will be no significant difference between perceived loneliness of adolescents in terms of their inhabitant.

III. METHODOLOGY

Sample

In the present study, sample consisted of 100 adolescents in which 50 were boys and 50 were girls. Out of 50 boys 25 were from urban area and 25 from rural area and out of 50 girls 25 were from urban area and 25 from rural area. The age range of adolescents is 16 to 22years. Sample is collected from Haridwar urban area and interior area.

Tool Used

The standardized tool has been used to collect the data; the specification of the tool is as: Perceived loneliness scale developed by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha is used for measuring loneliness in adolescents. This scale consist of 36 item. Loneliness scale is an unidimensional self-reporting research tool which gives holistic estimate of loneliness of an individual on a five point likert formate. Five response categories are: fully agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and fully disagree. The mimimum and maximum possible range of score in this scale is 36 to 180.

Procedure

The study employed a non- experimental design. Incidental sampling technique was employed for selecting the adolescents. A brief introduction was given to them about the purpose of study and testing. Rapport was established with the boys and girls. Their doubts were also clarified in between. Also informed the children are that whatever answer they give will be kept confidential, and will be used only for research purposes. The data collected was then analyzed using various statistical procedures, which allow the researcher to determine whether data supports or refuse or elaborates upon existing theory. The study involved the gathering of information about the level of loneliness among adolescent in two different areas urban and rural. After collecting the data, score of both group divided into two group below median group and above median group and further non-parametric statistic median test is used to analysis the data.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION-

Table-1 perceived loneliness in urban and rural adolescents' median test.

	Below median	Above median	Total	X2
Rural adolescents	24	26	50	.64
Urban adolescents	28	22	50	
	52	48		

Table-2 perceived loneliness in urban and rural boys' median test.

	Below median	Above median	total	X2
Urban boys	13	12	25	.72
Rural boys	10	15	25	
	23	27		

Table-3 perceived loneliness for urban boys and urban girls' median test.

	Below median	Above median	total	X2
Urban boys	13	12	25	.32
Urban girls	15	10	25	
	28	22		

Table-4 perceived loneliness urban girls and rural girls' median test.

	Below median	Above median	total	X2
Urban girls	15	10	25	.82
Rural girls	14	11	25	
	29	21		

Table-5 perceived loneliness in rural boys and rural girls median test.

	Below median	Above median	total	X2
Rural boys	10	15	25	1.28
Rural girls	14	11	25	
	24	26		

The perusal of table-1 reveals the fact that majority of rural adolescent lie in above median group 26 out of 50 and in urban group it is 22 out of 50. We can see those rural adolescents are more prone to loneliness' as compare to urban adolescents. Chi-square value found for these is ($\chi^2 = .64$) which is insignificant at both level of confidence 0.5 and 0.01. An observation of the finding as presented in table-2 would reveal that in urban boys 13 are below median and 12 are above median and their comparative group 10 are below median and 15 are above median .we found a little difference between two groups regarding perceived loneliness and it is also supported by X2 value($\chi^2 = .72$) which is insignificant at both level of confidence 0.5 and 0.01. The perusals of table-3 reveal the fact that in urban boys group 13 boys are below median and 12 boys are above median and in urban girls group 15 girls are below median and 10 girls are above median group and found χ^2 value was .32 which was insignificant at both level of confidence. So we can say that urban boys and girls both feel loneliness in average level. Table-4 result indicate that in urban girls group 15 are below median group and 10 girls are above median group and their counterparts rural girls group 14 are in below median group and 11 are in above median group. Chi-square value for median and above median ($\chi^2 = .82$) found to be insignificant at both level of confidence. Table-5 result indicate that in rural boys group 10 boys are in below median group and 15 boys are in above median group and their counterparts rural girls group 14 are in below median group and 11 are in above median group. . Chi-square value for median and above median ($\chi^2 = .1.28$) found to be insignificant at both level of confidence. However insignificant finding in variable namely gender and area warrant us to reach any conclusive remark. The finding regarding perceived loneliness in relation to gender and area of adolescents are not very encouraging. The result are not in hypothesized direction. The found chi-square value for all table are (.64, .72, .32, .82, and 1.28) are not significant at any level of confidence. On the basis of whole discussion regarding perceived loneliness in terms of gender and area, it can be concluded that adolescent are lonely at some occasion there is no difference in urban and rural children, but rural adolescent are more lonely as compare to urban adolescents. The finding of present study were also supported by following studies. Devi, Verma and Shekhar (2013) conducted a study of exploring strengths, difficulties and loneliness among children living in socioeconomically deprived environment and found that children living in BPL families had more difficulties and low strengths as compared to APL children and no significant gender differences were found. Agarwal (2014) conducted a study of adjustment, emotional control and perceived loneliness among adolescents and results of this study revealed that there was a significant effect of type of schooling and gender on perceived loneliness. Studies have found that rural adolescents, compared to urban adolescents, experience more loneliness (Woodward & Frank, 1988; O'Grady, 1996), are more family-oriented (Esterman & Delva, 1995), and have smaller peer groups (Woodward, 1990). Russell, Peplau, and Cutrona (1980) find no gender differences in relation to loneliness. However, a Borys and Perlman (1985) argue that reported gender differences in loneliness result from men's greater reluctance to disclose socially undesirable feelings. While other scholars argue that women place a higher importance than men on relationships and are more strongly affected by deficiencies in them.

V. CONCLUSION-

On the basis of result we found we can say that perceived loneliness is a serious issue it leads many difficulties in life of adolescents. We don't find any significant difference between urban and rural adolescents, but both are feeling loneliness sometime so we should consider this issue. However there are certain limitation in this study the data is quite small some other variable must also be studied with this variable.

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