

Loneliness among School-going Adolescent boys and girls of East Sikkim

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Abstract:

The present study was conducted to study the prevalence of loneliness and factors (Self-esteem, Personality traits -Agreeableness, conscientiousness, open-mindedness, extraversion, negative emotionality, and Academic stress) related to it among school-going adolescent boys and girls of Sikkim. Loneliness is an isolated feeling that a person perceives which often leads to unwanted and emptiness. Loneliness has been seen to be associated with different psychological issues and this area requires to be explored in relation to self-esteem, personality and academic stress among school-going adolescent boys and girls. In this study, school-going adolescents of 4 Govt. schools (150 boys and 150 girls) of East Sikkim were evaluated based on their response on scales of loneliness, self-esteem, personality and academic stress. The sample was collected by the method of random sampling technique. The presence of loneliness was found among school-going adolescent boys and girls. The presence of loneliness was found among school-going adolescent boys and girls. The descriptive distribution of school-going adolescents was observed. Boys have higher self-esteem in comparison to girls with mean difference. Loneliness and academic stress was found to have a significant and positive relationship among school-going adolescent boys and girls.

Keywords — Loneliness, school-going, adolescent, academic stress

I. INTRODUCTION

Loneliness has been defined varyingly through various psychological theoretical approaches and perspectives. The rationale feeling of being alone and living the life alone defines the loneliness. The social psychologist states loneliness when a person is not satisfied with the unmet needs of privacy and attachments. The cognitive psychologist has a perspective of loneliness as unsatisfactory feelings due to disagreeable situations faced between one's desires and actual establishments of social relations. According to existential/humanistic approach loneliness is an

unavoidable and unpleasant situation of life [1]. It has been reported by some countries that 1 in 4 older people are suffering from social isolation and 5-15% of adolescents from loneliness. Many researchers have shown that it has a great effect on physical, mental, leading a positive life and the lifespan of the older people. It has been recognized as a public health emergency and national policies are being made to tackle it [2]. The person who has concept of individualism experiences increase in feeling of loneliness with time which may turn to dreadful in the long run, this was more prevalent among the younger men [3]. The competition nowadays is tough and everyone wants to prosper

in studies, work, relationship and status as well; in the process they keep themselves away from relationships with a believe that they will be able to do better but when they look back they have already reached a long way and feels difficult to catch up with many things results in increase in the feeling of loneliness. The level of loneliness among adolescents has been reported to vary in outcome of different researches and reports but overall the loneliness has been found to be increasing with passage of time and irrespective of any age group. The reason responsible is mainly demanding lifestyle, living situation, places, fear of being misunderstood or judged, hesitant nature, physical and psychological issues and internet addiction [4]. The males were more reluctant to confirm experiencing loneliness than females as they fear to face certain consequences and called weak as the stereotype believe is carried on that males are interpersonally sensitive but emotionally less expressive [5]. The males are often labeled as strong and apt to address any kind of distress which creates a problem and raises the affective disorders among them.

Adolescent

Adolescent is the most important and crucial phase of life ranging from 10 to 19 years of age between childhood and adulthood; this stage of life dictates the rapid changes in physical, cognitive and psychosocial growth. For the positive growth the adolescence needs proper information regarding age appropriate education of sexual health, chance to enhance life skills, adequate health services that are fair, practical, safe and supportive in nature. The worldwide population of 7.2 billion people comprises of 3 billion people younger than 25 years of age which is 42% of the total world population and out of which 1.2 billion are of adolescents' age group between 10-19 years of age [6]. The changes in the thought pattern start with the pubertal change at the beginning of the adolescent phase of life. During puberty with the physical changes the conscience of 'self' develops in adolescence which are highly influenced by the type of relationships with the parents, siblings, awareness about the

various natural changes in body structure and physiological changes along with the emotional feelings one because of this changes. The adolescents are treated according to the age of the siblings, personalities and nature of the siblings by the parents or legal guardians [7] which gradually influences the conflict between the siblings [8], behavior of the siblings and negative mental health such as depression and antisocial behavior [9]. During adolescence and late adolescence ages the intensity of the feeling of loneliness is higher than the other phases of developmental ages [10].

Self-esteem

The loneliness and self-esteem are influenced by each other and it increasingly enhances the adolescents' deception to family or closed ones [11]. The loneliness is associated with low self-esteem leading to negative mental health among adolescents the targeted interventions are necessary to avoid this factors [12]. Self esteem is a positive psychological well being which fills up an individual with a sense of self-worth, confidence; satisfied in the way they look after themselves but it is debatable whether the high self-esteem has always been a portray to success, better relationship, education, job, or untowardly behavior in among the adolescents [13].

Personality

The loneliness significantly has a greater impact on the development of personality traits like neuroticism and extraversion in different age criteria. The increase in loneliness highly influences the extraversion in comparison to neuroticism trait of the personality [14]. The childhood personality traits affects on the way our health acts and outcome in education with progress in our age. The children with high agreeableness, conscientiousness and intellectual traits of personality are able to do better in the school and health behaviours in future life which is applied both in male and female [15]. Self-criticism and dependency were found to be present among adolescence who reported to have been suffering from loneliness [16]-[17]. The

negative thought of self prohibits a person to socialize and establish a relationship with others in the society [18].

Academic Stress

There are various factors like childhood or adolescence without friends and significant individuals, broken relationships, difficulty in communication, stress and anxiety shapes loneliness in a negative way. The loneliness was found to be positively related to the academic stress of the students [19]. The high level of stress is caused due to environmental or internal emotional problems among students leading to low academic performances and negative health effects [20]-[21].

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Loneliness is alarmingly rising in many countries technically hindering the social system. It is being identified as either a gateway to the other mental health issues or vice versa. The processes of identifying the factors related to the loneliness are being observed by various researchers. The age factor was limited to old age during the earlier studies but it has been found out loneliness is not confined to one age group. Anyone from any age group at some point of life could suffer from loneliness, it doesn't matter whether the person is alone, family man with normal life and work with friends and social contacts. It is rapidly spreading from one age group to another group.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the prevalence of loneliness among school-going adolescent boys and girls of Sikkim.
2. To study the factors (Self-esteem, Personality traits Agreeableness, conscientiousness, open-mindedness, extraversion, negative emotionality, and Academic stress) related to loneliness among school-going adolescent boys and girls of Sikkim.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Sample

The study was carried out among 300 (150 boys and 150 girls) school-going adolescents of East Sikkim district of Sikkim. The random sampling technique was used to collect the data for the study. The school-going adolescents were of age group of 16-19 years and studying in 11 and 12 standards of government schools. The permission for data collection at 4 Government Senior Secondary Schools (Chujachen Senior Secondary School, Ranka Senior Secondary School, Luing Senior Secondary School and Makha Senior Secondary School) of East Sikkim was obtained from Department of HRDD, Government of Sikkim and from Principals of the School. The ethical consideration for the study was passed by Sikkim University, Gangtok. The consent from students was also taken from the school-going adolescents before the questionnaire was given to them.

- Participant Inclusion Criteria:
 - Students who were studying in Class XI and XII.
 - Students who were regular in school.
 - Students who were willing to participate in the study.
- Participant Exclusion Criteria:
 - Students having psychiatric disorders.
 - Students who were not willing to participate in the study.

B. Tools Used For Study

The Socio-demographic datasheet was prepared to record each of the participants' personal information like age, sex, name, education, residential address, ethnicity, information of religious affiliation, household, socio-economic status like employment, income of the parents. The Perceived Loneliness Scale (L-Scale) developed by Dr. Praveen Kumar Jha (1997) [22] used to measure feeling of loneliness comprising of 36 items out of which 28 items are positive and 8 items are negative. The items were in five-point likert format responses ranging from "Totally Agree" to "Totally Disagree". The age group of this scale is between

16 to 22 years. The test-retest reliability of the scale is 0.84 and 0.82 respectively. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Dr Morris Rosenberg (1965) [23] a unidimensional scale used to measure self-worth and it consists of 10-items. All the items are in a 4-point likert scale format ranging from “Strongly Agree” to ‘Strongly Disagree’. A self-report inventory Big Five Factor Inventory developed by C. J. Soto and O. P. John (2017) [24] consists of 60-items and evaluates the big five personality domains such as structure, development and life outcomes. The five major personality domains are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, negative emotionality and open-mindedness. The Academic Stress Scale developed by Kim and standardized by R. Rajendran and K. V. Kaliappan (1990) [25] is a rating scale comprising of 40 items and each items response ranges from “No Stress” to “Extreme Stress”. The high score in the scale indicates the academic stress and has a test reliability of 0.82.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The participants’ personal information like age, education, residential address, social group, information on religious affiliation, household, socio-economic status like employment and income of the parents are analyzed descriptively. The data collected during the study was calculated by ‘t’ test and Pearson’s correlation to find out the significance. The socio-demographic information of School-going adolescent boys and girls were calculated descriptively and discussed below:

TABLE I
 Socio-demographic characteristics of the School-going Adolescent boys and girls of East Sikkim (N=300)

Socio-demographic Variables		Frequency and Percentage of Socio-demographic Variables
Frequency (%)		
Age of Student	16 years	74 (24.7%)
	17 years	116 (38.7%)
	18 years	74 (24.7%)
	19 years	36 (12%)
Education of Student	XI	174 (58%)
	XII	126 (42%)

Social Group of Student	General	30 (10%)
	SC	19 (6.3%)
	ST	63 (21%)
	OBC	184 (61.3%)
Religion of Student	Others (if any)	4 (1.3%)
	Hindu	191 (63.7%)
	Buddhist	65 (21.7%)
	Christian	37 (12.3%)
	Muslim	7 (2.3%)
Occupation of the Parents	Government Service	79 (26.3%)
	Non-government Service	166 (55.3%)
	Any Other	55 (18.3%)

From, TABLE I, it has been observed that 116 (38.7%) school going adolescent boys and girls mostly belonged to 17 years of age followed by 74 (24.7%) of 16 years, 74 (24.7%) of 18years of age and 36 (12%) of 19 years. According to the age criteria for completion of higher secondary level study of education system of India generally the students should complete Class 12 i.e. Higher Secondary at the age of 17 years and the students would be appearing for entrance examinations for higher education’s [26]. In the study it has been found out that 12% of the students were of 19 years and it could be said that many students are appearing for the higher secondary examination late to the age criteria as per the government rule. The age criteria are different for every State or Union Territory and it is determined by the government of the respective States or Union Territories [27]. The education level of the school-going adolescent boys and girls was 174 (58%) of the XI standard and 126 (42%) of XII standard. The difference in the number of school-going adolescent boys and girls students were randomly selected from both the standards. Social group plays a very important role in feeling the closeness and belongingness among people from same group and giving a sense of worth. In this study it was found out that 184 (61.3%) of the school-going adolescent boys and girls were of Other Backward Class (OBC), 63 (21%) of Scheduled Tribe (ST), 30 (10%) of General group, 19 (6.3%) of Scheduled Caste (SC) and 4 (1.3%) of others (if any) group. The students who responded as others (if any) group were found to be from other places and not sure of which group they belong. The sacred belief is a meaningful and

personal for everyone belonging to various religions; the concept of religion highly influences a person’s life dynamically in a different ways such as personally, in household, culturally, communally and politically. In this study 191 (63.7%) of school-going adolescent boys and girls belonged to Hindu religion, 65 (21.7%) to Buddhist religion, 37 (12.3%) to Christian religion and 7 (2.3%) to Muslim religion. The person with good occupation holds a very important place in a family it brings a sense of being supported securely by means of finance and high social status. The parents of many school-going adolescent boys and girls in this study was found that 166 (55.3%) belonged to Non-government services, 79(26.3%) to Government services and 55 (18.3%) to any other category of occupation.

TABLE II

Mean, SD and ‘t’ Value of loneliness, self-esteem, personality traits and academic stress of school going adolescent boys and girls of East Sikkim (N=300)

Variabl es	Gende r	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ value	Signific ant
Lonelin ess	Boys	150	4.60	.63	-2.02	Signific ant at 0.05 level
	Girls	150	4.73	.50		
Self-esteem	Boys	150	3.68	3.87	.16	NS
	Girls	150	3.61	3.46		
Extrave rsion	Boys	150	4.77	4.85	.05	NS
	Girls	150	4.75	4.61		
Agreea bleness	Boys	150	5.27	5.84	.12	NS
	Girls	150	5.19	5.32		
Conscie ntiousn ess	Boys	150	5.11	5.43	.01	NS
	Girls	150	5.11	5.00		
Negativ e Emotio nality	Boys	150	4.51	4.28	.14	NS
	Girls	150	4.57	3.95		

Open-mindedness	Boys	150	5.17	5.61	.24	NS
	Girls	150	5.02	4.94		
Academic Stress	Boys	150	2.26	.72	-1.72	Significant at .05 level
	Girls	150	2.41	.75		

From, TABLE II, a significant difference could be observed between school-going adolescent boys and girls on loneliness and academic stress at 0.05 level of significances but no significant difference was observed on self-esteem, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness negative-emotionality and open mindedness was found between school-going adolescent boys and girls of East Sikkim. The increase in loneliness often leads to the poor academic results in school-going adolescent boys and girls; one of the main reasons of such downfall is the immense pressure of performance and high expectations of the parents [28]-[29]. However, it could be observed that the school-going adolescent boys have high mean score on self-esteem, extraversion, agreeableness and open mindedness to the mean score of school-going adolescent girls. The higher scores were indication that the school-going adolescent boys and girls have a greater sense of self worth and which is beneficial for them as well as for their positive development in life [30]. The school-going adolescents were found to be excited and ready to explore their new journey in life as it could be seen from the result. The mean score of conscientiousness was found out to be similar in both school-going adolescent boys and girls. The conscientious school-going adolescent boys and girls groom themselves, and try to follow the rules of the society and maintain social decorum [31]. The school-going adolescent girls’ mean score of negative-emotionality was greater than the school-going adolescent boys. The feelings of low mood, being anxious, moody, anger, jealous, envious are the primary causes of negative emotions in school-going adolescent boys and girls. This affects the school-going adolescent boys and girls thought process which further enhances in developing functional, physical and psychological disorders [32].

Table III
Descriptive statistics and Correlation for Loneliness, Self-esteem, Personality traits and Academic Stress (N=300)

Variabl es	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Loneli ness	4.67	0.57	-							
2.Self-esteem	3.65	3.67	.05	-						
3.Extra version	4.76	4.72	-.05	.97**	-					
4.Agree ableness	5.23	5.57	-.05	.97**	.98**	-				
5.Consc ientious ness	5.11	5.21	-.06	.97**	.98**	.98**	-			
6.Negat ive Emotio nality	4.54	4.11	.34	.95**	.95**	.95**	.95**	-		
7.Open-minded ness	5.09	5.28	.04	.98**	.98**	.98**	.97**	.94**	-	
8.Acade mic Stress	2.33	.72	.23**	.01	.01	.01	.02	.05	.03	-

**Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From, Table III, it could be observed that loneliness has a significant and positive relationship with academic stress (0.23**) at a 0.01 significance level among school-going adolescent boys and girls of East Sikkim. The increase in academic stress was observable with the increase in loneliness; learning is never-ending and should be joyful and meaningful. When it comes to academic learning for school-going adolescents if it cannot impart a sense of holistic development one's body starts responding to it. The higher secondary education level is a crucial part of academic growth it is often seen that school-going adolescent boys and girls are frustrated, anxious, withdraws from socializing, complaints of low concentration and headaches [33]-[34]-[35]. Loneliness and academic stress is the strong predictor of the psychological distress in school-going adolescent boys and girls. Self-esteem has been observed to have a significant and positive relationship with extraversion (0.97**), agreeableness (0.97**), conscientiousness (0.97**),

negative emotionality (0.95**) and open-mindedness (0.98**) at a 0.01 significance level among school-going adolescent boys and girls. The significant and positive relationship of extraversion was found out with agreeableness (0.98**), conscientiousness (0.98**), negative emotionality (0.95**) and open-mindedness (0.98**) at a 0.01 significance level among school-going adolescent boys and girls. Agreeableness has a significant and positive relationship with conscientiousness (0.98**), negative emotionality (0.95**) and open-mindedness (0.98**) at a 0.01 significance level among school-going adolescent boys and girls. Conscientiousness has a significant and positive relationship with negative emotionality (0.95**) and open-mindedness (0.97**) at a 0.01 significance level among school-going adolescent boys and girls. There exists a significant and positive relationship between negative emotionality and open-mindedness (0.94**) at a 0.01 significance level among school-going adolescent boys and girls. The school-going adolescent boys and girls were enthusiastic, compassionate, organized, trustworthy and helpful in nature; some were steady and productive, able to take responsibility and always ready to explore new things. The production of negative emotions in school-going adolescent boys and girls are the result of various problems related to academic stress, inability to cope with the rise in competition, insecurity, their adolescent age which is filled with physical and physiological changes. The factors related to various socio-demographic variables such as economic background, income level of the parents, area of residence, religion and social status the school-going adolescent boys and girls belong to also plays an important role in determining the smooth changes in the life of school-going adolescent boys and girls.

V. CONCLUSION:

Loneliness plays a crucial role when it comes to school-going adolescent boys and girls not only from East Sikkim but the entire Sikkim needs to be elaborately studied. The adolescent boys and girls who were vulnerable to be carried away

towards the development of negative emotions making them easier to target or feel the compulsion to take steps which will make them regret later on. The increase in academic stress due to rise in loneliness among school-going adolescent boys and girls are a consequential reason for the stakeholders to undertake this seriously. The important reformations should be developed to resolve such cases of loneliness.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

There is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship and publication of this article.

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