

Loneliness In High School Students -A Case Study

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Abstract -Loneliness has been defined as an unpleasant experience that derives from important deficiencies in the lonely person's network of social relationship. It is increasingly becoming a major concern in modern societies. The researchers found a relation between loneliness and physical and mental health and academic achievement. A total of 3485 students were participated, out of them 1368 are studying (8th to 10th classes) in rural schools and 2117 in urban schools. Statistical tools were used to analyze the data. The study found that the loneliness problem is more in rural students than urban.

Keywords: Loneliness, effects, coping strategies, rural and urban, high school students

I. INTRODUCTION

Loneliness has been defined as 'the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is significantly deficient in either quality or quantity (Perlman and Peplau, 1984).

Lin and Huang (2012) reviewed the various definitions for loneliness. Loneliness is a common problem for many students. It has been defined as an unpleasant experience that derives from important deficiencies in the lonely person's network of social relationship. Research indicates that loneliness is associated with relatively poor physical health and depression among students. Long term loneliness can easily have adverse effects on students, such as low satisfaction in life and learning achievements, and a negative impact on their physical and mental health.

Loneliness or perceived social isolation is a subjective experience relating to dissatisfaction with one's social relationships. Most research has focused on the experience of loneliness in old age, but levels of loneliness are also known to be high among teenagers and young adults. While poor health may be associated with increased feelings of loneliness, there is now considerable evidence on the role of loneliness as a risk factor for poor mental and physical health (Shankar, 2017). Human beings have a fundamental need for belongingness (Sunny et al., 2018).

Sawir et al., (2008) stated that not every lonely person has the "same" loneliness. The perception of loneliness, and the way people cope with it, vary among individuals and between cultural groups: not only by personality but also because of differing practices in relationships. Between two people in much the same circumstances, the incidence and intensity of loneliness can vary. In fact, one may feel lonely and the other not. Loneliness is a subjective experience in that it does not necessarily simply isolation, but instead is the result of self-perceived deficiencies in social relationships. The factors which relate to the loneliness at the cognitive level can be listed as: one's own negative feeling about himself/herself, the increase of the irrational opinions, not being able to control the life and fatalism (McWhirter, 1997).

Loneliness is increasingly becoming a major concern in modern Western societies. Severe loneliness (reporting feeling lonely 'almost all of the time' or 'most of the time') affects 6% of the adults in the UK (Victor & Yang, 2012) with further estimates suggesting that loneliness is a chronic state (often conceptualised as an enduring experience that has lasted for at least 2 years; Young, 1982) for 15%–30% of the general population (Hawkey & Cacioppo 2010; Heinrich & Gullone, 2006).

The present study was carried out to observe the level of loneliness among the Government rural and urban high schools, located in and around Guntur Municipal Corporation, India.

II. CAUSES

According to Sawir et al., 2008 the main causes were the absence of intimate persons and lack of cultural fit. A smaller number referred to difficulties in securing social networks and Personal Psychology. A lack of belonging in the group, feeling lonely, and self-denial are three major factors that cause loneliness (Wang, 1989). In brief, when an individual experiences surrounding social interaction that is not what they expected, loneliness will occur. Loneliness is not just limited to social isolation; it is possible that an individual can still feel lonely among groups (Pinquart and Sorensen, 2001).

III. EFFECTS

People may experience problems like anxiety, frustration, emotional disturbances, depressions and various other psychosomatic difficulties (Sunny et al., 2018). Vasileiou et al., (2019) presented various effects of loneliness from literature. Defined as the distressing experience arising from discontent with the level and quality of social connections (Perlman & Peplau, 1981), loneliness is linked to a series of adverse mental health outcomes. It is associated with depression, deliberate self-harm, suicidal ideation and engagement with unhealthy behaviors (e.g. smoking, alcohol use). Loneliness are also related to poor physical health outcomes, such as high blood pressure, poor sleep quality, an increased likelihood of mortality and increased risk of developing coronary heart disease and stroke.

Theeke et al., (2019) reviewed the effects of loneliness, a significant biopsychosocial stressor with a prevalence of 17% in U.S. adults, is linked to poor outcomes for multiple chronic health conditions and poor health behaviors. Loneliness elicits a

stress related inflammatory and neuroendocrine response and has been identified as a major risk factor for hypertension. In addition, loneliness is predictive of depression and reported as a contributor to functional decline and mortality. Experiencing loneliness is traumatic as lonely people experience significant social stigma is more likely to be inactive and engage in substance use. Loneliness is a costly health care problem with lonely persons visiting emergency services clinics and long-term care facilities more frequently than those who are not experiencing loneliness.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A total of 3485 students was participated, out of them 1368 are studying (8th to 10th classes) in rural schools and 2117 in urban schools (Table 1). Students were assembled in a classroom of the respective schools and asked them to give their response to a question-“Do you feel comfort when state alone? Three options were provided, i.e., Always, Sometimes and Never. The purpose of the study and the details regarding loneliness were explained in their mother tongue. The response was analyzed using statistical analysis. Percent variation was observed and presented under results and discussion.

TABLE 1 SCHOOL WISE STUDENT’S STRENGTH

Rural Schools	Class			Urban Schools	Class		
	8th	9th	10th		8th	9th	10th
Chinakakani	59	56	49	SK	173	159	189
Namburu girls	30	21	30	SGNKR	66	89	77
Namburu	97	96	86	SJRR	130	93	93
Ponnekallu	92	78	86	SKS	100	94	116
Takkellapadu	64	47	47	P	92	83	77
Tadikonda girl	49	57	49	KSR	51	77	53
Venigalla	79	69	101	SCMP	93	76	76

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A percent variation of the rural and urban students, those feeling loneliness was shown in tables 2 to 5 and figures 1 to 4. In this section level of loneliness among the rural and urban schools is explained.

TABLE 2 STUDENTS WITH LEVEL OF LONELINESS –RURAL SCHOOLS

Class→ Loneliness→ Schools	8th			9th			10th		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
Chinakakani	2	24	33	7	17	32	7	22	34
Namburu girls	4	2	0	12	6	15	14	13	15
Namburu	11	27	63	7	18	71	8	24	60
Ponnekallu	4	32	56	9	36	33	9	33	47
Takkellapadu	8	17	39	12	9	26	8	10	29
Tadikonda girl	5	22	23	8	21	28	5	30	14
Venigalla	6	26	53	7	20	42	16	32	55
Total	40	150	267	62	127	247	67	164	254

TABLE 3 STUDENTS WITH LEVEL OF LONELINESS –URBAN SCHOOLS

Class→ Loneliness→ Schools	8th			9th			10th		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
SK	16	92	71	18	52	94	19	74	96
SGNKR	5	17	46	9	19	61	12	32	37
SJRR	12	65	53	17	52	56	11	52	30
SKS	11	47	42	9	42	43	13	64	41
P	8	43	41	4	48	31	7	51	19
KSR	5	20	27	12	31	30	11	29	25
SCMP	10	45	38	5	35	36	4	46	26
Total	67	329	318	74	279	351	77	348	274

Rural Schools 8th class

High percent of Namburu girls’ school students (13.33) expressed that they prefer to stay alone (Figure 1), followed by Takkellapadu (12.50) and Namburu (11.34). Low percent of students from Chinakakani (3.39) and Ponnekallu students (4.35) marked the problem. 44.90 % of Tadikonda girls’ followed by 40.68% of Chinakakani pointed that sometimes they prefer loneliness. As a whole, high percent of students preferred to stay with friends (Figure 2), i.e., they cannot bear the loneliness (Ex: Venigalla: 67.09; Namburu: 64.95; Takkellapadu: 60.94)

TABLE 4 STUDENTS WITH LEVEL OF LONELINESS –RURAL SCHOOLS (%)

Class→	8th			9th			10th		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
Chinakakani	3.39	40.68	55.93	12.50	30.36	57.14	14.29	44.90	69.39
Namburu girls	13.33	6.67	0.00	57.14	28.57	71.43	46.67	43.33	50.00
Namburu	11.34	27.84	64.95	7.29	18.75	73.96	9.30	27.91	69.77
Ponnekallu	4.35	34.78	60.87	11.54	46.15	42.31	10.47	38.37	54.65
Takkellapadu	12.50	26.56	60.94	25.53	19.15	55.32	17.02	21.28	61.70
Tadikonda girl	10.20	44.90	46.94	14.04	36.84	49.12	10.20	61.22	28.57
Venigalla	7.59	32.91	67.09	10.14	28.99	60.87	15.84	31.68	54.46

TABLE 5 STUDENTS WITH LEVEL OF LONELINESS –URBAN SCHOOLS (%)

Class→	8th			9th			10th		
	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
SK	9.25	53.18	41.04	11.32	32.70	59.12	10.05	39.15	50.79
SGNKR	7.58	25.76	69.70	10.11	21.35	68.54	15.58	41.56	48.05
SJRR	9.23	50.00	40.77	18.28	55.91	60.22	11.83	55.91	32.26
SKS	11.00	47.00	42.00	9.57	44.68	45.74	11.21	55.17	35.34
P	8.70	46.74	44.57	4.82	57.83	37.35	9.09	66.23	24.68
KSR	9.80	39.22	52.94	15.58	40.26	38.96	20.75	54.72	47.17
SCMP	10.75	48.39	40.86	6.58	46.05	47.37	5.26	60.53	34.21

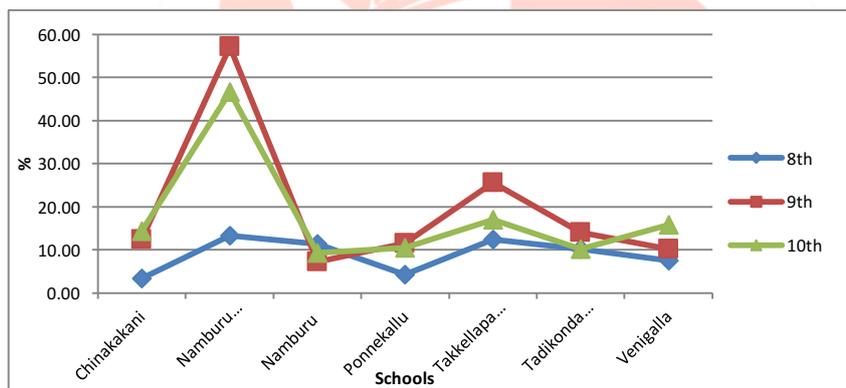


Figure 1 High Level of Loneliness in Rural Schools

9th class

High percent of Namburu girls’ school students (57.14) expressed that they prefer loneliness (Figure 1), followed by Takkellapadu (25.53). Low percentage of Namburu (7.29) and Venigalla students (10.14) marked the problem. 46.15 % of Ponnekallu followed by 36.84% of Tadikonda girls’ pointed that sometimes they like loneliness (Figure 2). As a whole, high percent of students do not prefer loneliness (Ex. Namburu:73.96; Namburu girls’ 71.43).

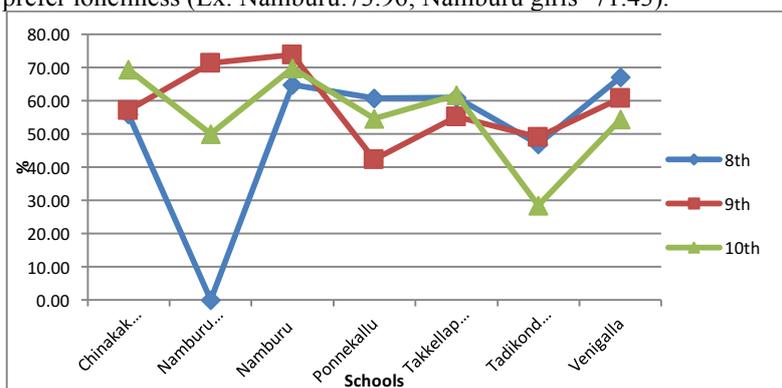


Figure 2 Low Level of Loneliness in Rural Schools

10th class

46.67 % of Namburu girls' school students, pointed out that they feel comfort when stay alone (Figure 1). Namburu (9.30%) and Tadikonda girls' students (10.20) recorded with less problem. 61.22 % of Tadikonda girl followed by 44.90% of Chinakakani students felt that they prefer loneliness sometimes (Figure 2). Similar to 8th and 10th class students, many students expressed that they are happy with more friends.

Urban Schools

8th class

High percent of SKS school students (11.00) expressed that they prefer to stay alone (Figure 3), followed by SCMP (10.75). Low percent of students from SGNKR (7.58) and P students (8.70) marked the problem. 53.18 % of SK, followed by 50.00% of SJRR pointed that sometimes they prefer loneliness. As a whole, high percent of students preferred to stay with friends (Figure 4), i.e., they cannot bear the loneliness (Ex: SGNKR: 69.70; KSR: 52.94).

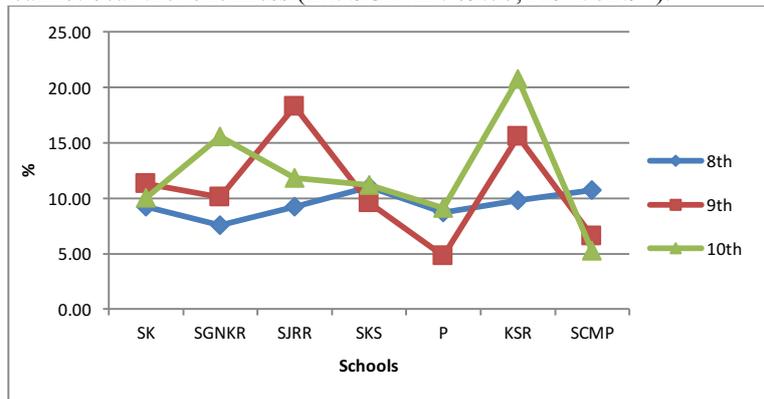


Figure 3 High Level of Loneliness in Urban Schools

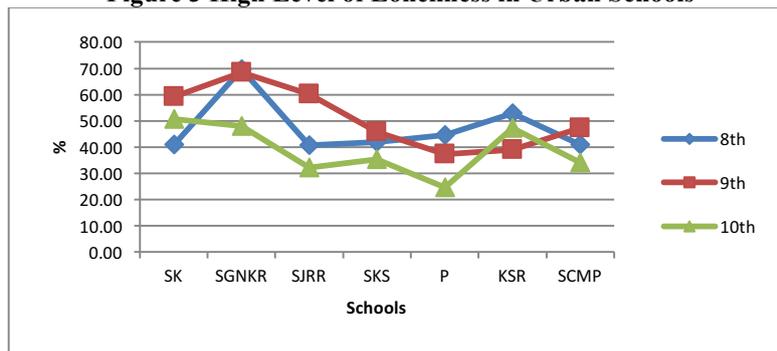


Figure 4 Low Level of Loneliness in Urban Schools

9th class

High percent of SJRR school students (18.28) expressed that they prefer to stay alone (Figure 3), followed by KSR (15.58). Low percent of students from P (4.82) and SCMP students (6.58) marked the problem. 57.83 % of P, followed by 55.91% of SJRR pointed that sometimes they prefer loneliness (Figure 4). As a whole, high percent of students preferred to stay with friends, i.e., they cannot bear the loneliness (Ex: SGNKR: 68.54; SJRR: 60.22; SK: 59.12).

10th class

High percent of KSR school students (20.75) expressed that they prefer to stay alone (Figure 3), followed by SGNKR (15.58). Low percent of students from SCMP (5.26) marked the problem. 66.23 % of P, followed by 60.53% of SCMP pointed that sometimes they prefer loneliness (Figure 4). As a whole, high percent of students preferred to stay with friends, i.e., they cannot bear the loneliness (Ex: SK: 50.79; SGNKR: 48.05).

Comparison between Rural and Urban (8th to 10th)

A minimum of 8.59% (Ponnekallu) to a maximum of 37.04% (Namburu girls') expressed the loneliness problem in rural schools (Table 6 and Figure 5). These percentages are 7.54 (P) and 15.47 (KSR) respectively. It is found that the problem is low in Ponnekallu, Namburu and Chinakakani among the rural and P, SJRR, SCMP and SKS in the case of urban schools (Figure 6).

TABLE 6 COMPARISON OF LONELINESS - RURAL AND URBAN

Residence →	Rural (%) (8 th to 10 th)		Schools	Urban (%) (8 th to 10 th)	
	Loneliness			Loneliness	
Schools	High	Low	Schools	High	Low
Chinakakani	9.76	60.37	SK	10.17	50.10
Namburu girls	37.04	37.04	SGNKR	11.21	62.07

Namburu	9.32	69.53	SJRR	12.66	43.99
Ponnekallu	8.59	53.13	SKS	10.65	40.65
Takkellapadu	17.72	59.49	P	7.54	36.11
Tadikonda girl	11.61	41.94	KSR	15.47	45.30
Venigalla	11.65	60.24	SCMP	7.76	40.82

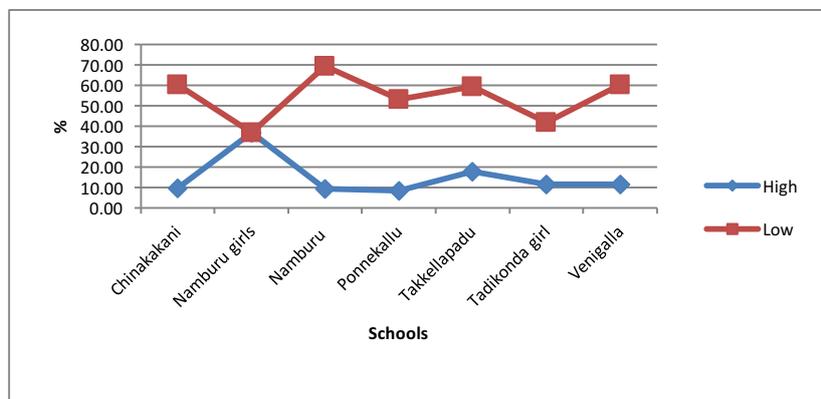


Figure 5 Comparison of Level of Loneliness –Rural Schools

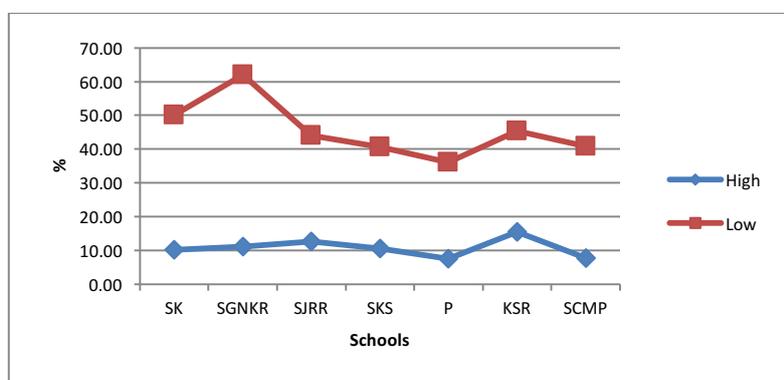


Figure 6 Comparison of Level of Loneliness – Urban Schools

Hebecci and Shelley (2018) studied the relationship between problematic Internet use and loneliness. The findings of the study revealed that while university students’ social benefit/social comfort of Internet has a direct effect on their excessive Internet use and negative consequences, it is related to the loneliness level indirectly. In addition, it is seen in the research model that with an increase in the negative consequences of the Internet, the loneliness level was raised. Another result from the study is that when university students’ excessive Internet use increased, their loneliness level decreased.

Sutin et al., (2018) examined whether loneliness is associated with risk of dementia in the largest sample to date and further examines whether the association is independent of social isolation, a related but independent component of social integration, and whether it varies by demographic factors and genetic vulnerability. The results indicated that loneliness was associated with a 40% increased risk of dementia.

Rosenstreich and Margalit (2015) examined whether the mindfulness practice may moderate the relations between perceived loneliness and academic performance. The results suggested that mindfulness practice may reduce the outcomes of loneliness on academic achievements in the first year of college.

Shankar (2017) show that loneliness is associated with an increased risk of developing dementia and chronic diseases, and also with a higher rate of mortality. Richardson studied in relationship between loneliness and menatal health in students with reference to British undergraduate students. The results showed that greater loneliness predicted greater anxiety, stress, depression and general mental health over time. There was no evidence that mental health problems increased loneliness over time.

Massoom and Bajestani (2016) examined loneliness and depression in students who regularly care for themselves after school (latchkey students) and compared with students who enjoy the parent’s company in Mashhad. Using the Pearson correlation test, significant correlation between depression and loneliness was observed among latchkey students ($r = 0.59, P \leq 0.05$). However, no significant difference between loneliness and depression was observed ($r = 0.02, P \geq 0.05$) in non-latchkey students.

Daniel (2013) examined the predictive role of attachment styles on loneliness and depression. Attachment styles were found to be significantly correlated to loneliness and depression. A significant relationship was also found between loneliness and depression.

Coping Strategies

Vasileioua et al., (2019) reported that participants used a variety of coping strategies to manage the distressing experience of loneliness. Accommodation, mainly in the form of distraction, support-seeking, social isolation, self-reliance, and problem-solving behaviours were the most prevalent coping strategies mentioned. Coping reflecting helplessness, escape, submission, and more rarely, opposition, were also found, albeit less often.

Massoom and Bajestani, (2016) concluded that mothers who spend most of their time working out of the house and deprive their children of their presence at home may cause some form of mental distress like loneliness and depression in youngsters. Ahmad Gul (2017) studied to loneliness levels and their academic anxiety at the college level. He suggested that researchers suggest that the psychological counselling and guidance services of colleges must be functionalized and improved to moderate students' academic anxiety and to decrease loneliness level.

Various Coping Strategies were reviewed by Sawir et al., (2008). The strategies and resources people use in coping with loneliness, which vary among individuals and among cultural groups, are the object of much research.

The present study found that considerable percent of both rural and urban students suffering from loneliness problem. It is also observed that the problem is more in rural students comparatively.

IV. CONCLUSION

Loneliness problem is commonly found in students. Out of the total 1368 rural students responded, 169 students expressed high level of loneliness (12.35%). In the case of urban 218 students marked high against the total 2117 (10.30%). As the problem is correlated with physical and mental health, in addition to the student's academic achievement, counseling shall be arranged in the schools.

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