



## Impact of lonelines on mental health of the adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

The investigation aimed to explore the level of loneliness among male and female adolescents and its impact on their mental health. The sample comprised of 200 adolescents in the age range of 14-16 years that belonged to middle socio-economic status, were randomly drawn from four Government High and Senior Secondary Schools of Ludhiana district. The socio-economic status scale developed by Meenakshi (2010), Perceived loneliness scale developed by Jha (1971) and Mental health battery developed by Singh and Gupta (1983) were used to collect the relevant information from the adolescents. The results of this study revealed that loneliness was negatively and significantly affecting the overall adjustment and security-insecurity among male adolescents. While in female adolescents, loneliness was negatively and significantly affecting the emotional stability, overall adjustment and total mental health. Further the results revealed that loneliness was significantly affecting the emotional stability, overall adjustment and total mental health of the adolescents. It was also found that loneliness affects the other dimensions of mental health such as autonomy and intelligence, although its effect was found to be non-significant. Loneliness was further found to be contributing positively yet non-significantly towards self-concept of adolescents, but it is considered as a risk factor for emotional stability, overall adjustment and total mental health of the adolescents.

## INTRODUCTION

Loneliness may be defined as response to the absence of an adequate positive relationship to persons, places or things. Loneliness is caused not by being alone but by being without some definite needed relationship (Weiss, 1973). Loneliness is a state of mind relating to lack of companionship or separation from others. It is different from being alone, which is a question of choice. It is this lack of choice that makes loneliness so filled with anxiety. Loneliness is to be considered an integral part of human development, which makes the various stages in the process of acquisition and individuation of the self and the gradual separation from the parents (Mahler *et al.*, 1975).

It comes as no surprise that adolescence has been identified as the peak period of risk as some young people who experience loneliness may consider it to be persistent and painful. Loneliness is a barrier to social development and consequently can have an impact on mental and therefore physical health.

Loneliness as an important personality variable in current

psychological literature and is of particular interest to social psychologists. Probably most people experience painful feeling of loneliness at some time in their lives. Because life is filled with social transitions that disrupt personal relationships and set the stage for loneliness. It is believed that as the societies become more affluent and advanced, the quantity and intensity of loneliness tend to increase in more proportionality (Jha, 1971).

Our behaviour and physiology processes are governed by our mental faculties or mind. Therefore, it is of prime importance that one should have a good or sound mental health. Mental health implies the capacity to form harmonious relations with others (WHO Expert Committee, 1950) as a psychic condition which is characterised by mental peace, harmony and content (Schneiolers 1964), maintain a balance between the individual and the surrounding world and the ability to establish and nurture loving relationship with relevant and others (Singh *et al.*, 2008).

Mental health commutates those behaviours, perceptions and feelings that determine a person's overall level of personal effectiveness, success, happiness and excellence of