Study of socio-personal determiants and level of loneliness of undergraduate students in Ludhiana district

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on undergraduate students of Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. Total sample comprised of 400 students studying in four different colleges. General information sheet was used to procure the necessary information on socio-personal characteristics of the respondents. Perceived loneliness scale developed by Jha (1971) was used to assess the perceived loneliness of students. Results indicated that students of less educated parents perceived more loneliness followed by parents who were educated upto graduation level. In all colleges majority of the respondents' mothers were homemakers and majority of fathers were engaged in government services. In all colleges majority of students were belonged to nuclear families except in College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology and majority of students were from moderate size of families. Students studying in College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology perceived less loneliness as compared to other colleges. In rest of the three colleges, College of Home Science perceived more loneliness followed by students in College of Basic Sciences and Humanities and College of Agriculture. Gender-based perceived loneliness among respondents results concluded that in all colleges majority of male respondents perceived less level of loneliness as compared to females, except in COAE and T where both male and female respondents perceived less level of loneliness.

INTRODUCTION

The arrival of new technology industrialization and globalization have led to breaking of joint families. This breakage is largely responsible for emergence of nuclear or extended families. This transition was actually a catalyst in changing the value system of Indian society. Children reared in joint families had live example to watch how their parents exercised authority over them and willfully obeying their grandparents. It is anticipated that children grew with this traditional value system when shift to another place (willing or unwilling) and develop as nuclear families, find themselves helpless in creating opportunities in which their children could observed the phenomena of power delegation as well as power submission (Vandeleur *et al.,* 2009). The era in human life in which the greater part of the physical, emotional and social changes happens is adolescence. Moving from school to college is a transitional phase in every one's life. Though the academic pressure is of great concern during this phase students are greatly influenced by the

social and emotional changes. According to Panda (2016) loneliness as a psychological phenomenon is a state of mind rather than an objective condition. According to his individual who feel loneliness remain in the state of sadness and the world seem to be without joys. Loneliness is therefore threatening to teenagers. Loneliness may be a big psychological hurdle in the path of skill development of youth.

Kager *et al.* (2000) proposed that people who lack family harmony are more likely to have lower quality of life, subjective well being, have more problems in social relationships and they learn ineffective communication or interpersonal skills in the family. The skills thus affect individual's social interactions with others, social functioning and relationships. When such individuals move out of their family and start interactions in society, they may display uncooperative and antisocial behaviour. According to Medora *et al.* (2000) the Indian family is subjected to the effects of changes that have been taking place in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of the society. As the members of the family are moving away from the family and living as individuals or members of a nuclear unit in urban areas, the patterns or loyalties, obligations and expectations have changed. The cases of the children and the aged in particular have become a problem for many due to structural changes in the family. Shaheen *et al.* (2014) found that the present situation of changing social structures, social qualities, industrialization, and globalization, feeling of loneliness is turning into a major issue among youngsters *i.e.* control of self and occasions, joy, social inclusion, self-regard, mental adjust mental health and sociability. Liu *et al.* (2014) defined loneliness as a painful subjective experience or psychological feeling, which is characterized by the lack of satisfactory relationships. DeWall and Pond (2011) studied that loneliness has been characterized as the subjective impression of either quantitative or subjective inadequacies in an individual's system of social relations. Parlee (1979) reported that loneliness was highest among young people and young adults and lowest among the older individuals. Katrina (2007) found that those youngsters experience with chronic loneliness had more definitely weaker social relations than those with having good social relations. Sharma (2012) reported that the first year undergraduate students were found to have low level of adjustment in social, emotional and educational areas. Students are

expected to encounter more adjustment related problems especially in the social and emotional context. The first year students are less emotionally mature and thus faced difficulty in adjusting emotionally to the changing demands of the environment than the final year undergraduates. Abdullah *et al.* (2009) studied students be significantly predicted by college overall adjustment, academic adjustment, and personal-emotional adjustment. McWhiter (1997) studied that 625 colleges students, found that girls are more likely to experience loneliness and social isolation than their boys. This study found that girls had a more difficult time fitting into the college environment and were less likely to be involved in campus activities and less likely to have leadership positions in campus organizations. Trockel *et al.* (2000) studied that College life can be distressing and change the educational experience of a student, it is along these lines key to be in the organization of family and friends while being in college. In the college students are required to change in accordance with the new condition and to work out their concerns specifically with the educators. To the extent the academic adjustment is concerned students are relied upon to be free learners in college where student need to conform with the new academic demands. Patker and Pardiwalla (2016) studied that the issue emerges when a man's infrequent loneliness transforms into chronic loneliness, particularly if there is no awareness about the circumstance. Cassidy and Asher (1992) reported that feeling of loneliness and social dissatisfaction can be consistently assessed with third-through sixth class students. Kumaraswamy (2013) studied that every nation invests lot of money on education. Student population between 10 to 20 per cent experiencing mental issues. This study focused on worry among students, nature of psychiatric morbidity, emotional issue and adjustment, mental issues of undergraduates.

Objective :

– To assess the level of loneliness in respondents belonging to four colleges.

– To assess the socio-personal characteristics of respondents across different levels of loneliness.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research design :

The sample was purposively selected from four

colleges namely College of Home Science, College of Agriculture, College of Basic Sciences and Humanities and College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. The total sample comprised of 400 respondents. General information sheet was prepared and administered to procure the necessary information on socio- personal characteristics of the respondents. The information included, name of the respondent, name of parents, parental education, parental occupation, type of family and size of family etc. Perceived loneliness scale developed by Jha (1971) was used to determine the degree and extent of loneliness perceived by the individuals. Loneliness scale is a uni-dimensional self-report research tool which gives holistic estimate of loneliness of an individual in a five-point Likert format. Scores of the scale was categorized as high, average and low. Interpretation of the scale is higher the score higher is the loneliness perceived by the individual.

A statistical analysis was done using SPSS (statistical package for the social sciences) programme.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

Gender-based per cent distribution of respondents across different categories of perceived loneliness :

Table 1 and Fig. 1 represents gender based per cent distribution of respondents across different categories of perceived loneliness. In 1st year of COHSc, majority of male respondents (67%) were experiencing average-high level of loneliness. In case of female respondents, more than half proportion (59%) of them were perceiving loneliness at average-high level of loneliness. In 2nd year of COHSc, most of the male respondents (83%) were perceiving loneliness at average-low level. In case of female respondents results indicated that large proportion (47%) of female respondents were found to have average-low level of loneliness. In 3rd year of COHSc, all the male respondents were experiencing average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents, slightly more than half proportion (52%) of female respondents were perceiving loneliness at average-low level. In 4th year of COHSc, no male respondents were enrolled. Among female respondents, more than half proportion (52%) of

them were perceiving loneliness at average-high level of loneliness.

Overall results indicated that in COHSc, majority of male respondents (73%) were experiencing an average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents half proportion (50%) of them perceived an average-high level of loneliness.

In 1st year of COA, more than half proportion (56%) of male respondents were experiencing average-low level of loneliness. In comparison to male respondents, more than half proportion (57%) of female respondents perceived an average-high level of loneliness.

In 2nd year of COA, half proportion (50%) of male respondents were experiencing either average-high level or average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents, an equal proportion (43%) of them perceived either average-high or average-low level of loneliness. In 3rd year of COA, majority of male respondents (67%) were experiencing average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents, half proportions (50%) of female respondents were in the category of either average-high or average-low level of loneliness. In 4th year of COA, majority of the male respondents (65%) were perceiving loneliness at average-low level. In comparison to male respondents, majority of female respondents (63%) were perceiving an average-high level of loneliness.

Overall results indicated that in COA, majority of male respondents (60%) were perceiving loneliness at average-low level. Among female respondents more than half proportion (54%) of female respondents were experiencing an average-high level of loneliness. It is important to highlight that 4 per cent of female respondents were perceiving loneliness at high level.

In 1st year of College of Basic Sciences and Humanities, most of the male respondents (86%) had an average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents, 56 per cent of them were experiencing average-high level of loneliness. In 2nd year of COBS&H, all the male respondents were perceiving loneliness at an average-high level of loneliness. Among female respondents, more than half proportion (57%) of them were perceiving an average-high level of loneliness. In 3rd year of College of Basic Sciences and Humanities, majority of male respondents (67%) were perceiving loneliness at an average-low level of loneliness among female respondents, comparatively large proportion *i.e.*

58 per cent of female respondents had an average-low level of loneliness. In 4th year of College of Basic Sciences and Humanities, all the male respondents were perceiving loneliness at high level of loneliness. Whereas among female respondents, more than half proportion (50%) of them were perceiving loneliness at an average-low level.

Overall results depicted that in College of Basic Sciences and Humanities, more than half proportion (59%) of male respondents were perceiving loneliness at an average-low level of loneliness. In case of female respondents, an equal proportions (48%) of female respondents were perceiving either average-high or average-low level of loneliness.

In 1st year of College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, results depicted that 55 per cent of male respondents were perceiving loneliness at an average-

low level. In case of female respondents, majority of female respondents (60%) were perceiving an average-low level of loneliness.

In 2nd year of College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, results revealed that majority of male respondents (63%) were perceiving average-low level of loneliness. In comparison to male respondents, majority of female respondents (78%) were perceiving an average-low level of loneliness.

In 3rd year of College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, majority of male respondents (78%) were experiencing average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents, more than half proportion (57%) of them were experiencing average-low level of loneliness.

In 4th year of College of Agricultural Engineering

Table 1 : Gender-based per cent distribution of respondents across different categories of perceived loneliness									(n=400)	
Categories of perceived loneliness	Year wise classes									Total n=100
	1st year(n=25)		2nd year (n=25)		3rd year (n=25)		4th year (n=25) *		Total	
	Males n_1= 3	Females n_2 =22	Males n_1=6	Females n_2=19	Males n_1=2	Females n_2=23	Males n_1=0	Females n_2=25	Males n_1=11	Females n_2=89	
College of Home Science (n_1= 100)										
High	0	5	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
Average-high	67	59	17	42	0	48	0	52	27	50	48
Average-low	33	36	83	47	100	52	0	48	73	46	49
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
College of Agriculture (n_2= 100)										
	Male n_1= 18	Female n_2 =7	Male n_1= 18	Female n_2 =7	Male n_1=21	Female n_2=4	Male n_1=17	Female n_2 =8	Male n_1=74	Female n_2 =26	
High	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	4	1
Average-high	44	57	50	43	33	50	35	63	40	54	44
Average-low	56	43	50	43	67	50	65	37	60	42	55
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (n_3= 100)										
	Male n_1=7	Female n_2 =18	Male n_1= 2	Female n_2 =23	Male n_1=6	Female n_2=19	Male n_1=2	Female n_2 =23	Male n_1=17	Female n_2 =83	
High	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	4	0	4	3
Average-high	14	56	100	57	33	42	100	39	41	48	47
Average-low	86	44	0	35	67	58	0	57	59	48	50
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (n_4= 100)										
	Male n_1= 20	Female n_2 =5	Male n_1= 16	Female n_2 =9	Male n_1= 18	Female n_2 =7	Male n_1= 23	Female n_2 =2	Male n_1=77	Female n_2 =23	
High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average-high	45	40	37	22	22	43	39	0	36	30	35
Average-low	55	60	63	78	78	57	61	100	64	70	65
Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chi-test	^{2}= 36.18*		^{2}= 34.50*		^{2}= 42.27*		^{2}= 65.22*				

* indicates significance of value at P=0.01

*Note: Male respondents were not enrolled

and Technology, majority of male respondents (61%) were perceiving loneliness at an average-low level of loneliness. Among female respondents, all the female respondents perceived an average-low level of loneliness.

Hence, it could be inferred that in College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology, majority of male respondents (64%) perceived an average-low level of loneliness. In comparison to male respondents, majority of female respondents (70%) perceived an average-low level of loneliness.

Overall results that in all colleges majority of male respondents perceived an average low level of loneliness but towards lower side. In all colleges, majority of female respondents perceived an average high level of loneliness but it is toward higher side except in College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology where both male and female respondents perceived an average low level of loneliness. As compare to male, female respondents perceived more loneliness. Similar findings were reported by Vig and Gill (2016) in comparison to adolescent boys the girls perceived loneliness at higher level. Statistically analysis of the data found to be significant at 1% level. Which means there is significant association of year-wise of classes and perceived loneliness in all colleges. Wheeler *et al.* (1983) conducted a study on loneliness and found that gender is significantly associated with loneliness. More number of girls as compared to boys were found to have high level of loneliness. Same results have been reported by Kaur (1990); Biswas and De (1993) and Bhatia (2007).

College-based per cent distribution of respondents as per their socio-personal characteristics :

The socio-personal characteristics of the respondents belonging to different colleges of PAU are analytically presented in Table 2 under following sub-headings:

Mothers' education:

An overview of educational level of mothers of both respondents belonging to College of Home Science (COHSc) revealed that large proportion (37%) of mothers of both male and female respondents were matriculates. Total results indicated that large proportion (37%) of mothers of both males and females were educated upto matric level followed by 30 per cent of mothers were graduates.

In College of Agriculture (COA), educational level of mothers indicated that half proportion (50%) of mothers of male respondents were educated upto matric level. Whereas, among female respondents, higher percentage (35%) of the mothers were educated upto graduate level. Total results indicated that large proportion (43%) of mothers of both males and females were matriculates.

In College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (COBS&H) results indicated that large proportion of mothers of both males (35%) as well females (28%) were educated upto senior secondary level. Total results indicated that large proportion (29%) of mothers were educated upto senior secondary level.

In College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (COAE&T), results depicted that large proportion of the mothers of male respondents (35%) were graduates whereas among female respondents higher percentage of mothers (35%) were below matric level.

Total results indicated that large proportion (29%) of mothers of both males and females were graduates.

Fathers' education :

In College of Home Science (COHSc) results revealed that large proportion of fathers of both males (28%) as well as females (32%) were matriculates. Total results indicated that large proportion (31%) of fathers of both males and females were matriculates followed by 29 per cent of fathers were graduates.

In College of Agriculture (COA), results showed that more than half of the proportion (57%) of fathers of male respondents were educated upto matric level. Among female respondents, comparatively higher percentage of fathers (42%) were graduates. Total results indicated that more than half proportions (52%) of fathers of both males and females were matriculates.

In the College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (COBS&H), results revealed that maximum number of the fathers of male respondents (41%) were educated graduate level. In case of females, comparatively higher percentage of fathers (35%) were educated upto matric level. Total results indicated that large proportion (28%) of fathers of both males and females were educated upto senior secondary level followed by 25 per cent of fathers were graduates.
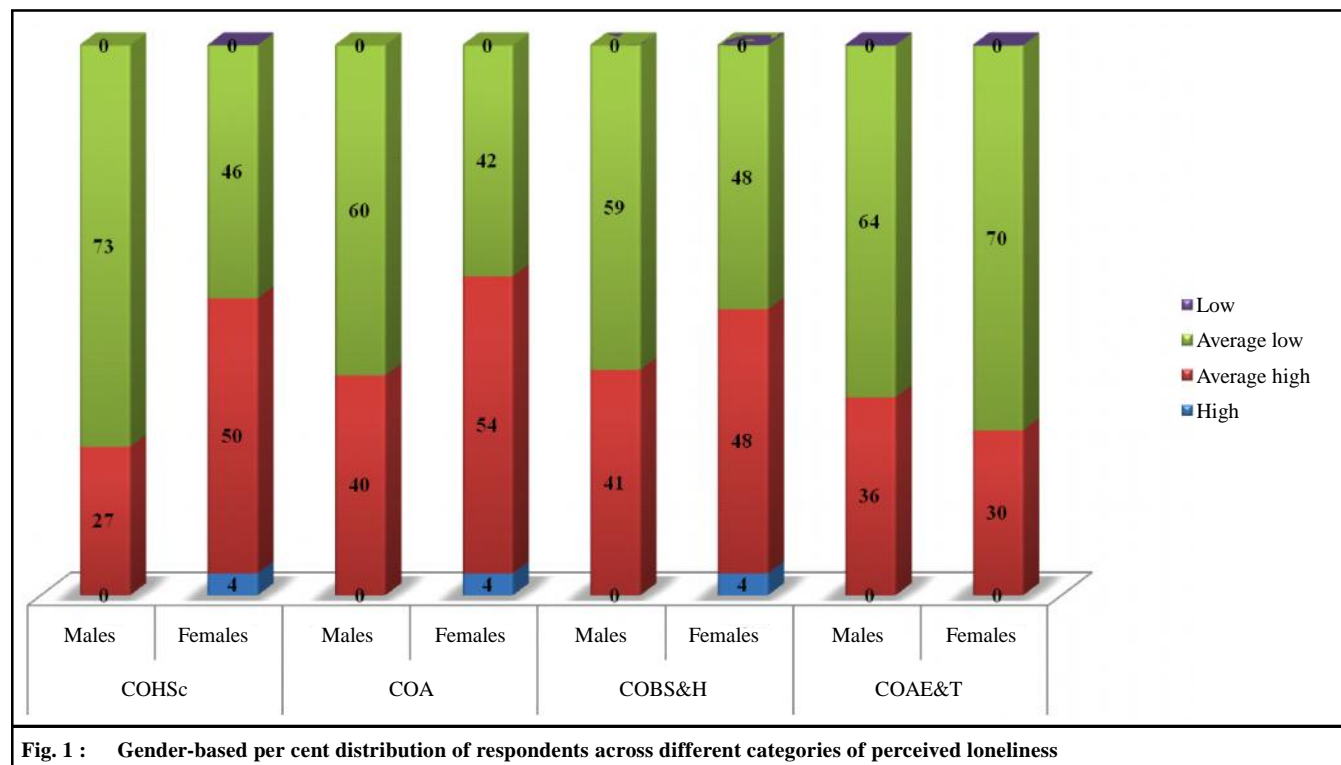
In College of Agricultural Engineering and

3

of fathers (46%) were involved in farming.

In College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (COBS&H), the results revealed that comparatively higher percentage of fathers of males (35%) were engaged in government sector. Among female respondents, 47 per cent of their fathers were in government services. Total results showed that large proportion (45%) of fathers were engaged in government services.

In College of Agricultural Engineering and

Technology (COAE&T), results depicted that majority of the fathers of male respondents (61%) and large proportion of fathers of female respondents (39%) were engaged in business. Total results indicated that more than half proportions (56%) of fathers were engaged business.

Type of family :

In College of Home Science (COHSc) most of the respondents of both gender (male respondents 82% and

Table 2: College-based per cent distribution of respondents as per their socio-personal characteristics												(n=400)
Socio-personal characteristics	College of Home Science (n$_1$=100)			College of Agriculture (n$_2$=100)			College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (n$_3$=100)			College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (n$_4$=100)		
	Males n$_1$= 11	Females n$_2$= 89	n=100	Males n$_1$= 74	Females n$_2$= 26	n=100	Males n$_1$= 17	Females n$_2$= 83	n=100	Males n$_1$= 77	Females n$_2$= 23	n=100	Total
Mothers' education													
Illiterate	9.00	2.00	3	4.00	4.00	4	0.00	4.00	3	0.00	0.00	0	10
Below matric	18.00	7.00	8	11.00	15.00	12	12.00	18.00	17	9	35.00	15	52
Matric	37.00	37.00	37	50.00	23.00	43	29.00	24.00	25	14.00	9.00	13	118
Senior secondary	0.00	16.00	14	20.00	19.00	20	35.00	28.00	29	30.00	17.00	27	90
Graduate	27.00	30.00	30	14.00	35.00	19	24.00	19.00	20	35.00	9.00	29	98
Post graduate	9.00	8.00	8	1.00	4.00	2	0.00	7.00	6	12.00	30.00	16	32
Fathers' education													
Illiterate	18.00	3.00	5	2.00	4.00	3	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0	8
Below matric	9.00	7.00	7	3.00	4.00	3	6.00	12.00	11	5.00	9.00	6	27
Matric	28.00	32.00	31	57.00	38.00	52	12.00	35.00	31	14.00	13.00	14	128
Senior secondary	18.00	20.00	20	27.00	12.00	23	35.00	26.00	28	25.00	17.00	23	94
Graduate	27.00	29.00	29	7.00	42.00	16	41.00	22.00	25	53.00	61.00	55	125
Post graduate	0.00	9.00	8	4.00	0.00	3	6.00	5.00	5	3.00	0.00	2	18
Mothers' occupation													
Government service	18.00	9.00	10	7.00	31.00	13	18.00	19.00	19	16.00	26.00	18	60
Private service	0.00	6.00	5	0.00	4.00	1	0.00	6.00	5	13.00	4.00	11	22
Homemakers	82.00	85.00	85	93.00	65.00	86	82.00	75.00	76	71.00	70.00	71	318
Fathers' occupation													
Government service	27.00	38.00	37	30.00	50.00	35	35.00	47.00	45	22.00	35.00	25	142
Private service	9.00	14.00	13	5.00	8.00	6	18.00	13.00	14	5.00	9.00	6	39
Business	18.00	18.00	18	12.00	8.00	11	23.00	10.00	12	61.00	39.00	56	97
Farmer	37.00	30.00	31	50.00	34.00	46	24.00	30.00	29	8.00	13.00	9	115
Agriculture labour	9.00	0.00	1	3.00	0.00	2	0.00	0.00	0	4.00	4.00	4	7
Type of family													
Joint	18.00	21.00	21	16.00	15.00	16	29.00	27.00	27	66.00	39.00	60	124
Nuclear	82.00	79.00	79	84.00	85.00	84	71.00	73.00	73	34.00	61.00	40	276
Family size (No. of family members)													
Small family (up to 4)	36.00	57.00	55	3.00	54.00	16	47.00	21.00	25	48.00	26.00	43	139
Moderate (4-7)	46.00	34.00	35	96.00	46.00	83	35.00	72.00	66	35.00	70.00	43	227
Large (7and above)	18.00	9.00	10	1.00	0.00	1	18.00	7.00	9	17.00	4.00	14	34

female respondents 79%) belonged to nuclear/extended families. Total results indicated that majority of respondents (79%) belonged to nuclear/extended families.

In College of Agriculture (COA) most of the male respondents (84%) as well as female respondents (85%) belonged to nuclear/extended families. Total results showed that most of the respondents (84%) belonged to nuclear/extended families.

In College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (COBS&H), results indicated that most of male respondents (71%) belonged to nuclear/ extended families. Similarly in female respondents (73%) belonged to nuclear/ extended families. Total results revealed that majority of respondents (73%) belonged to nuclear/ extended families.

In College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (COAE&T) results revealed that majority of male respondents (66%) belonged to joint families. Among female respondents (61%) belonged to nuclear/ extended families. Total results indicated that majority of respondents (60%) belonged to joint families.

Overall results depicted that majority of all the respondents belonged to nuclear or extended families except male respondents belonging to College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology joint families.

Family size :

In College of Home Science (COHSc) comparatively higher percentage of male respondents (46%) belonged to families having moderate size. Among female respondents more than half of the proportion (57%) were from small families. Total results indicated that more than half proportions (55%) of respondents belonged to families having small size.

In College of Agriculture (COA) majority of the male respondents (96%) had moderate family size. Among female respondents more than half proportions (54%) were from small families. Total results indicated that most of respondents (83%) belonged to families having moderate size.

In College of Basic Sciences and Humanities (COBS&H) the results indicated that large proportion (47%) of male respondents were from small size of families and majority of the female respondents (72 %) were from moderate size of families. Total results depicted that majority of respondents (66%) belonged

to families having moderate size.

In College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology (COAE&T), results depicted that large proportion of male respondents (48%) were from small families and large proportion of female (70%) respondents were from moderate size of families. Total results revealed an equal proportion (43%) of respondents belonged to families having small and moderate size.

Conclusion :

Thus the study reflects that socio-personal determinants and level of loneliness of students and it was found that students of less educated parents were perceived more loneliness than followed by parents who were educated upto graduation level, majority of respondents belonged to nuclear or extended families felt more loneliness as compared to those belonged to joint families. When reasons of perceiving loneliness were explored it was found that students of their parents were less educated cannot recognized their abilities and capabilities. Parental education level is important predictor for students those who perceived more loneliness because it helps to open up with their children. Students studying in College of Agricultural Engineering and Technology perceived less loneliness as compared to other colleges. In rest of the three colleges, College of Home Science perceived more loneliness followed by students in College of Basic Sciences and Humanities and College of Agriculture. Gender-based perceived loneliness among respondents results concluded that in all colleges majority of male respondents perceived less level of loneliness as compared to females, except in COAE&T where both male and female respondents perceived low level of loneliness.

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8th Year
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