

## Effect of Anxiety, Socio-Economic Status and Sex on Loneliness

Dr. Ajay Pal<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Sanjay Kumar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Prof. & Principal, J & A Degree College, Baheri, Bareilly (U.P.)

Email: [drapsinghip@gmail.com](mailto:drapsinghip@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Dr. S. P. Singh College of Teacher Education, Motihari (Bihar)- 845437

Email: [sikhar.sanjay@gmail.com](mailto:sikhar.sanjay@gmail.com)

### Abstract

This study explores how anxiety, loneliness and socio-economic status come together to affect the persons loneliness. The findings of the study reflect that Socio-economic status and anxiety act as separate challenges but often overlap, increasing each other's impact. When these feelings intensify, they can disturb emotional balance and create a confused or negative sense of self. The study also identifies that Socio-economic status as an important factor that influences opportunities, access to education, social support, and exposure to long-term stress. People from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to face loneliness and anxiety, which further affects how their identity develops. Overall, the research explains how emotional well-being and social conditions work together to shape a person's loneliness and identity over time. The conclusion of the present study offers useful guidance for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers who aim to support healthier identity development and stronger social support systems. The results and findings of the study reflect that Difference in loneliness of the subjects of three different anxiety levels is significant.

**Key Words:** Anxiety, Identity, Convergence, Amplification.

This study of loneliness is a very important area, which has been discovered recently in the field of psychology. Though the history of loneliness is very old, the psychological studies in this field are very new. An in-depth study of psychological literature on loneliness (Peplau, Russell and Heim, 1978) documents the growth of psychological work on loneliness. Of the 208-publication available in English from 1932 to 1977, only 6% were published before 1960. These previous works were only comments by various clinicians based on these observations of patients. Well known from this era are the theoretical works of Sullivan (1953) and Fromm-Reichman (1959). In 1970's research experiments and further studies work on loneliness grew quickly. An important early achievement was the publication of "Loneliness" the experience of emotional and social isolation". by Weiss (1973). This publication was capable enough to arouse interest in loneliness.

The term 'loneliness' refers both an experience and a feeling or emotion. In normal way people need to live with others but in loneliness condition people do not need to be with others. Most personality theorists assume that attachment to other people is basic, when such attachment is disputed loneliness results. Loneliness appears always to be a response to the absence of some particular type of relationship or more accurately a response to the absence of some particular relational provisions (Weiss 1973). Loneliness is the unpleasant

experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively (Perlman and Peplau, 1981).

Hunter (1990) has explained about loneliness as "loneliness is an unpleasant affect, combining sadness and anxiety, a felt response to the absence of sufficient relational contact. The typical causes of this loneliness are the same as those of grief of which it is part." The review of studies related to the loneliness reveals that the loneliness is interalia a result of not only personal or psychological variables but of other variables also. The findings of the available studies related to personal, psychological, socio-cultural variables on loneliness are contradictory, especially the effects of levels of anxiety, socio-economic status, academic achievement and sex of subject.

To the best of our knowledge no such study has been done in India. Therefore, the present study was carried out to study the effects of both personal and psycho-social related variables on loneliness. Socioeconomic status affects the personality of an individual directly or indirectly, People belonging to middle or lower middle class are devoid of many opportunities like an easy access to education, Employment and other opportunities in comparison to those belonging to upper class where people enjoy their lives with resources and opportunities, Similarly Gender has a direct impact on the loneliness, As females are more expressive and explanatory to express their sufferings and feelings as compared to men.

There has been a considerable amount of research about loneliness, yet much of the research is inconclusive and some is even contradictory (Agnew 1980, Andersson 1998, Benner and Wang 2014, Berkman and Glass 2000, Borys and Perlman 1985, Cacioppo et al. 2009, Hawkey et al. 2008, Hughes et al. 2004, Kawachi and Berkman 2000, Kearns et al. 2015, Putnam 2002). The connotation associated with loneliness is negative but beyond that the interpretation takes many different shapes and meanings for people: being physically alone or isolated, perceiving a lack of support, lacking financial assistance, an emotional solace, discerning a lack of belonging in a community, or believing they are misunderstood (Kearns et al. 2015). The subjective nature of loneliness makes it a difficult variable to measure. This has led to the research behind the experience of loneliness to be contested, muddled, and even, at times, opposed

## **PROBLEM OF THE STUDY**

“In the present investigation the effects of anxiety, socio-economic status and sex of loneliness where studied”

## **HYPOTHESES**

- (i) There is a significant difference between loneliness of low, normal and high anxiety subjects, i.e., low anxiety subjects have less loneliness, while subjects of normal anxiety have moderate and subjects of high anxiety have the maximum.
- (ii) There is a significant difference between loneliness of low, middle and high socio-economic status subjects, i.e., low socio-economic status subjects have

moderate loneliness, while the subjects of middle socio-economic status have more loneliness than subjects of high socio-economic status.

- (iii) There is a significant difference between loneliness of male and female subjects, i.e. male subjects have less loneliness whereas females have the most.

There are significant interactions between anxiety and socio-economic status; anxiety and sex of subjects; socio-economic status and sex of subjects; sex of subjects; anxiety, socio-economic status and anxiety socio-economic status and sex of subjects; anxiety and sex of subjects; socio-economic status, and sex of subjects and anxiety, socio-economic status and sex of subjects.

## METHOD

### DESIGN

A factorial design of  $3 \times 3 \times 2$  with 18 independent cells consisting of three levels of anxiety i.e. low anxiety, normal anxiety and high anxiety levels; three levels of socio-economic status i.e. low socio-economic status, middle socio-economic status and high socio-economic status and two sexes of subjects i.e. Male and Female.

### SAMPLE

In the present investigation, out of the total 2163 subjects, only three hundred sixty (N=360) subjects were selected on the basis of their scores on anxiety (Sinha and Sinha 1971), socio-economic status (Bharadwaj, Gupta and Chauhan 1989) using stratified random sampling technique from different educational institutions of Bareilly District. Thus, in the total sample of 360 subjects, 120 Ss were of low anxiety level, 120 Ss were of normal anxiety level and 120 Ss were of high anxiety level. 120 Ss of each category of anxiety level were included 40 Ss of low socio-economic status, 40 Ss of middle socio-economic status and 40 Ss of high socio-economic status. Each group of 40 Ss of Socio-economic status were included 20 male and 20 females of Intermediate levels ranging from 16-17 year of age.

### Description of tests used for the selection of subjects:

In the present investigation, the following tests were used for the selection of subjects.

- a) **Anxiety Test:** Hindi version of Sinha's comprehensives anxiety scale (Sinha and Sinha 1971) was used to measure the anxiety levels of subjects.
- b) **Socio-economic status scale:** Socio-economic status scale (Bharadwaj, Gupta and Chauhan 1989) was used to measure the socio-economic status of the subjects.

## RESEARCH TOOL

**Loneliness Scale:** Hindi version of perceived Loneliness Scale developed by Jha (1997) was used to measure loneliness of subjects.

## DATA COLLECTION

On the basis of thirty-six groups of subjects taken from intermediate colleges of Moradabad city, first of all group-1 comprising of 10 male subjects belonging to the age group of 16-17

years with high anxiety levels, of high socio-economic status, was administered "Loneliness Scale" at a time in class room, after the formation of rapport. They were asked to read and follow the instructions. They were also encouraged to clear any doubt they had. The investigator supervised the administration vigilantly. The same procedure was followed in collecting the data from all the subjects of remaining 35 groups.

## SCORING

The scoring procedure was followed as prescribed in the manual.

## RESULTS

To find out the effects of the four independent variables on loneliness, the data were analyzed by using analysis of variance. Duncan's Multiple Range Tests was also employed for multiple comparisons among means. The results of analysis of variance are shown in the following table.

**Table: Summary of analysis of variance**

Source of Variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F
Anxiety (AN)	3182.617	2	1591.308	8.589**
Socio-economic status (SES)	1247.550	2	623.775	3.367*
Sex (S)	1412.136	1	1412.136	7.622**
AN $\times$ SES	5237.083	4	1309.271	7.066**
AN $\times$ S	93.439	2	46.719	0.252
SES $\times$ S	419.107	2	209.553	1.131
AN $\times$ SES $\times$ S	826.993	4	206.748	1.116
AN $\times$ SES $\times$ ACH $\times$ S	562.264	4	140.566	0.759
Within treatment or error	60030.300	324	185.279	—
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73011.489</b>	<b>345</b>	—	—

\* Denotes the significance at .05 level of confidence.

\*\* Denotes the significance at .01 level of confidence.

### On The Basis of The Fowling Table Of ANOVA, The Following Results Were Obtained:

1. Difference in loneliness of the subjects of three different anxiety levels is significant.
2. Difference in loneliness of the subjects of three different socio-economic status is also significant.
3. Difference in loneliness of male and female subjects is observed to be significant.
4. Interaction between anxiety and socio-economic status is found to be significant.

5. Interaction between anxiety and sex is not significant.
6. Interaction between anxiety, socio-economic status and sex is not significant.
7. Interaction between socio-economic status, and sex is not significant.

## INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

All the results are interpreted and discussed in the light of theoretical framework. Our findings support the information theoretical framework and role expectation and role fulfillment for the society on the basis of loneliness. A few problems have also been suggested for further investigation in the field of loneliness.

## References

1. Abdelhalim, A. (1978). Employee Affective Responses to Organizational Stress: Moderating Effects of Job Characteristics. *Personnel Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1744-6570.1978.TB00463.X>
2. Agrawal, U. N., Malhan, N. K. and Singh, B., (1979), Some classifications of stress and its applications at work. *Ind. J. Indus. Rel.*, 15(1):41-50. Bhatia
3. Ahmad S & Mehta, P. (1997) Role stress, quality of work life and alienation. In D.M. Pestonjee and U. Pareek (Eds) *Studies in organizational role stress and coping*. Jaipur/ New delhi, Royal Publication
4. Pareek, U. (1997). Role stress and coping: A framework. In D.M. Pestonjee & U. Pareek (Eds.), *Studies in organizational role stress and coping* (pp. 109-115). Jaipur: Rawat.
5. Ahmad, S., & Khanna, P. (1992). Job stress and job satisfaction of middle level hotel employees. *Journal of Personality and Clinical Studies*, 8(1-2), 51–56.
6. Banerjee U & Gupta, H.N. (1996), Moderating effect of social support in occupational-strain relationship, *Journal of Indian Academy of applied psychology*, 22(1, 2), 27-34.
7. Okjin Kim. (2001). Sex Differences in Social Support, Loneliness, and Depression among Korean College Students. *Psychological Reports*, 88(2): 521–526.
8. Matthews, T., et al. (2016). Social isolation, loneliness and depression in young people. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*.
9. Beller, J. (2024). Disentangling the Contributions of Education, Income, and Socioeconomic Status to Loneliness. (Journal article)
10. Patel, P. & Ojha, S. (2025). Role of Socio-Economic Status and Social Support in Loneliness among College Students. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(2), 2270–2276. DOI:10.25215/1302.205
11. Kwon, K. Y., Nam, N., & Kim, J. (2025). Adolescent Loneliness and Later Life Depressive Symptoms: The Intersecting Roles of Gender and Socioeconomic Status. *Social Science & Medicine*.