



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Psychology**

**LONELINESS AND DEPRESSION AMONG SINGLE CHILD DURING LOCKDOWN**

**KEY WORDS:** Loneliness, Depression, Single child

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**ABSTRACT**

In this century many couples decided to have one child. Having one child may be easy for the parents, but no one thinks about how much loneliness and isolation the child is going to experience in the future. Loneliness and isolation are one of the leading causes of depression. That too during lockdown it made them feel lonelier and depressed as they don't even go out to meet their friends. Even if the family members were all together, the parents were afraid of losing their jobs and the low income, so they can't give good attention to their child. As a result, the child will experience isolation even when their parents are close by. Everyone knows that loneliness can make a person feel depressed, but no one cares about those in the case of children. The paper explores the loneliness and isolation of single children and also analyzed the association of depression among those single child experiences and how this will affect the child's mental health and their future career. This thematic paper applies descriptive methodology and had gone through the contents related to the topic and critically analyzed the ideas. The conclusion of the thematic paper states that the loneliness and depression of a single child are high and it needs to be catered to at an early. Psychological therapy can be planned with remedial measures like CBT, Emotive therapy, etc. In addition, this paper will help the parents to understand how much loneliness and isolation their child experience, and this loneliness will lead their child to depression also it helps to know how to raise a single child in a way that they do not feel loneliness.

**INTRODUCTION**

Regarding population rate, India is second in the world. The birth rate is not yet reduced. In the present condition, it is not easy to bring up more than two children. A study conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER, 2011) indicated that close to 10% of Indian households now opt for only one child, and nearly a quarter of college-educated women said that they would prefer to have a single child. The parents feel that the pressure on them will be too much with more than one child. Having only one child is much easier to afford a smaller home.

But in the case of children, being a single child is much more difficult, Especially in lockdown. The main thing is that children usually spend time alone. The loneliness of being an only child becomes more apparent when they spent time alone. When the child develops, they become more complicated and the concerns and worries they may face will increase. They feel unhappy to end the day alone. Even if the parents are busy with their work, the child won't have a person to share their little and small silly moments in their life. They will miss the love and affection from a sibling and they will miss the naughty fights. Sometimes this will make the child feel lonely and isolated. And that excessive loneliness feeling can lead to the child's depression. Depression is a serious mental health condition that develops from a combination of several factors. Feelings of isolation or dissatisfaction with relationships can absolutely play a part.

The lockdown caused by COVID 19 left people around the world feeling isolated and depressed. So many people experience lots of mental and physical problems at this time. The only child is also experiencing loneliness because they don't have anyone to talk with and play with. Their parents are always busy with their work and career. The children's only relief was their schoolmates and their playtimes, but the pandemic situation had also restricted them to have to interacting with their fellow mates.

**Loneliness**

Loneliness is the state of being alone and feeling sad about it. Loneliness is a situation experienced by the individual as one

where there is an unpleasant lack of certain relationships. This includes situations in which the number of existing relationships is smaller and is considered desirable or admissible, as well as situations where the intimacy one wishes for has not been realized. Thus loneliness is seen to involve the manner in which the person perceives, experiences, and evaluates his or her isolation and lack of communication with other people.' De Jong Gierveld (1987-1989).

**Depression**

Depression is commonly used term in our day to day life to express the feeling of sadness, unhappiness and grief due to some unpleasant life experiences or events. Depression is known clinically by various synonymous terms: Major depressive disorder, major depression, clinical depression or unipolar depression. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders defines a depressed person as experiencing feelings of sadness, helplessness and hopelessness (DSM-IV).

**Single Child**

Single child are children who grow up without siblings. Having only one child allows the parent to be more attentive to the emotional needs of the single child. Attention can be more directly focused, saving for college is easier, and it's much easier to afford a smaller home. But in the case of children in their childhood, parents are the only playmates they have, but in the rush of their work, parents can't play with their children. At that moment children were thinking that what if they had a sibling too.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study aims to the loneliness and depression among single child during Covid-19 pandemic.

**METHODOLOGY**

This thematic paper adopted descriptive methodology and had gone through the resources and critically analyzed the review related to the topic.

**DISCUSSION**

Chronic loneliness will lead the child to many kind of mental

issues, at that time the parents must consult a psychologist.

**Some of the problems faced by the single child:**

- No special sibling bonds.
- They feel lonely at times, e.g. on holidays, rainy weekends etc.
- No companionship from siblings in later life.
- They don't have a person to share their little and small silly moments in their life. They will miss the naughty fights.
- Sometimes they feel insecure.
- They are the only hope and happiness for their parents. So, single children are under huge pressure to excel in every field to make their parents proud.

Being a single girl child in India, everyone keeps telling that they must have been a boy. Most of the Indian single child girl's parents heard that 'why only one child that also a girl'. Those words make the child to think that they are not good enough.

These all make the child lonely and depressed. These feelings can be reduced with the help of their parent's love and affection. But in some cases, the parents are being busy with their work. They only focus on the amount of money they get and focus only on their future and career. Because of that their children are lonely and isolated in their life. They don't have anyone to talk to and share their happiness and sadness. Those isolated feelings make the child depressed.

**HOWTO OVERCOME**

**Give more attention:** For the child, parents are the only happiness point. They want their parent's attention and love. A parent's valuable time is the most precious gift for the child, so make time for quality time. Extra time may be required to ensure that the child is not constantly into loneliness at home.

**Keep your child busy:** Always make the child busy and don't give them a chance to think that they are alone. Give them more tasks and work and allow the child to spend more time with their friends and peer groups that will help the child to forget their loneliness feeling.

**Develop a routine:** Routines and structure provide children with a sense of normality and help them know what's coming next throughout the day. This helps them recall things to look forward to, but it also keeps them occupied in those moments when they don't have as much social interaction.

**Don't give stress:** Being an overprotective parent might get in the way, it gets stressful for the child. Because once a child acknowledges his/her parents are overprotective it becomes difficult for the child to share or express thoughts and feelings with their parents.

**Never feel guilt about having a single child:** Opting for a single child is a personal decision. No one, not even close relatives, should make you feel guilt about this aspect. Always think that your child is your pride.

**Expand your family of friends:** Teach your child that friendship and close relationships are very important for a person's life. Even the parents also have to learn the importance of expanding the circle of friends.

**THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT**

The experts can help the child to control their lonely feeling and related depression through several therapies. Types of therapies used to treat loneliness and depression include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and emotive therapy.

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** is a form of talking therapy which can be used to treat people with a wide range of mental health problems. CBT aims to help people become aware of when they make negative

interpretations, and of behavioral patterns which reinforce the distorted thinking. Cognitive therapy helps people to develop alternative ways of thinking and behaving which aims to reduce their psychological distress.

- **Rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT)** is based on the concept that emotions and behaviors result from cognitive processes. And that it is possible for human being to modify such processes to achieve different ways of feeling and behaving.

This study discussed loneliness and depression among single children during the Covid 19 pandemic. During this period everyone was buried inside the house. This will make the child lonely and isolated; the loneliness will lead to depression. The paper also helps the parents to understand the plight of children and how to get rid of them. The study hints at how the lonely feeling affect the child's mental health, also mentioned some treatment strategies to resolve the problem.

**CONCLUSION**

Single-child families can be considered a new trend in our world. Having a single child is easy for parents but being a single child is not easy for children. When the parents do not give enough love and care to that child it will lead to loneliness in them. In pandemic time the parents don't have enough time to spend with their children because of their work. And some parents are Single child family can be considered as a new trend in our world. Having a single child is easy being tense because they let their job and their family income reduced. At that moment the child started to think that they are alone, they don't have anyone to open up their hardship to. Prolonged loneliness can make the child depressed. Depression is a complex mental health condition that develops from a combination of several factors. This will affect the child's mental health and also their academic and career life. Because of the loneliness, the child will change to an introverted character and they may have social phobia. They have difficulties interacting with other children and also with society. They may have problems in their studies and they feel shy to perform on stage or around people. This behavior can lead to destroying many of the hidden talents in those children. When the feeling of isolation affects the child negatively parents should consult a psychologist. The mental health professionals will help the child to overcome those feelings with some strategies. So, having a single child is a choice but making the child happier and more peaceful in life is only in hands of their parents. Give the single child good attention and love more than children with siblings. All the children need care and support but single children need more than that.

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