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YOGA AND LONELINESS: AN INVESTIGATION DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC SITUATION

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ABSTRACT

The undertaken research has investigated the effect of Yoga on loneliness of adolescents during the unprecedented effects of COVID-19 Pandemic since 2020 all over the world; especially adolescents. The data based review articles since 2020 onwards, suggests that corona virus has resulted to lower the quality of life among adolescents by reducing their interactions with family, peers, friends, teachers and relatives and thus resulting into loneliness, lack of enthusiasm, depression and anxiety. The undertaken research viewed Yoga as a strategy and approach to address loneliness among adolescents. Quantitative data (N=100) of adolescents were randomly identified under the age group of 13 to 18 years. Loneliness scale by Dr. Anjali Arora (2008), was modified and used to collect the data whereas an open-ended questionnaire was prepared to study Yoga. Correlation and regression analysis were applied. Results showed positive association between Yoga and loneliness. It also suggested that to combat loneliness there is a need to perpetuate Yoga as a strategy which can give relief to adolescents by expanding their vision to decrease loneliness by practicing Yoga.

KEYWORDS: Adolescents, COVID19, Loneliness, Yoga, Quality of life

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic has forced the world to change in which we are living. The strategies to beat this pandemic as; social isolation and distancing with our friends, neighbors, and family members. This has created notable depression, anxiety and loneliness among adolescents particularly in the age group of 13 to 20; who are characterized as; fun lovers, social busters of joy and happiness. This is the stage characterized by problems like; psychological disturbances and adjustments. This is the period is marked by personal identity, achievements, work life balances and competitions. This behavior of adolescents draw our attention that each and every adolescent reacts differently and has a unique fashion to fulfill one's needs and social gratifications. Adolescents as sensitive and attractive have to manage their desires and emotions in a way so as to understand the confusion created by pandemic that is protecting themselves from drastic and deadly consequences of disease.

This presumption suggests that the current pandemic situation has generated the feeling of chaos and loneliness among adolescents. According to Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010); loneliness is the feeling that get generated from lack of interactions particularly poor social interactions. Heidinger and Richter (2020) suggested COVID-19 pandemic as a situation which affect adolescents by affecting movement of adolescents from the parents' house to a different city for school, college, university, or a new job. This has posed a very distinct challenge in their social life. Systematic reviews of research conducted by Lee and Ko (2017); Pels and Kleinert (2016) regarded physical activity as a practice to decrease the feelings of loneliness. Their research also showed a relationship between loneliness and physical activity. Further Baumeister and Leary (1995); found a close association between physical activity and loneliness by creating an attachment and mental well being factors. This diverts our attention towards the negative effects of loneliness and problems of personal identity, which are adding more and more to daily life problems in adolescents' life. This led us to realize that necessary measures must be developed as strategy to beat loneliness. Here, Yoga comes as an art to practice, so as to control an individual's mind, body and soul. This helps one to achieve a peaceful body and mind by managing stress and anxiety and provides a relaxation. It also helps to increase flexibility, muscle strength and body tone by being associated with human body and health. Woodyard (2011). In this case very few co- relational studies were studied in India where Yoga as predictor variable

was associated with criterion variable like; loneliness. As research shows; limited work in this field so need arises to explore loneliness and Yoga in COVID-19 pandemic situation was felt.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are stated as under:

1. To see the correlation between Yoga and loneliness.
2. To investigate the role of predictor variable viz; Yoga on loneliness (criterion variable).

RELATED LITERATURE

Brennan and of Auslander (1979) disclosed adolescence as the stage of assuming personal responsibilities towards their actions. They highlighted this stage which characterized them to delineate from their parents, teachers and peers which ultimately lead them towards a feeling of loneliness. They further stressed that loneliness among adolescents is linked to negative emotions such as depression, anxiety and boredom.

Studies conducted by [Brennan and Auslander (1979), Paplau, Rusell and Hein(1979), Parlee (1979), Brennan (1982), Rubenstein and shaver (1982), Larson (1981, 1983 1997), Guidubaldi, Parry and Natasi (1987), Hoja, Bukowski and Beery (2000), Taylor (2002), Silk (2003), Jylha (2004), Heinrich and Gullone (2006), Dhal, Bhatia, Sharma and Gupta (2007), Myin-Germeys et al., (2009), Ferguson(2011), Bolton (2021), Vanhalst et al., (2012), Roekel, Scholte, Engels and Goossens (2015)] led us to conclude that loneliness among adolescents lead towards psychological, social and emotional and behavioral problems by which an individual create distances and passivity by decreasing social involvement and interactions. This unhealthy behavior of adolescents can termed as high and low according to different aspects of loneliness.

Lee and Ko (2017) conducted research to study the effect of physical activity on loneliness. Their research finding witnessed that there was an association between the two. They further emphasized that physical activity contribute towards decrease in feelings of loneliness by arousing emotions like; romantic partnership and socio-cognitive variables such as intention, planning and self-efficacy .

Kang et al., (2018) shed light on determinants to predict students' loneliness during pandemic situation. The results revealed that loneliness was related to social-

cognitive predictors of physical activity such as; self-efficacy, quality of life and work-life balance. This study further found that loneliness was correlated with physical activity like Yoga exercises.

Based on research work Vasileiou et al., (2019) reported that university students' faces different life challenges such as; leaving home and building of new social relationships. They further noted that loneliness and transition-related changes affect the health behavior of students. The further emphasized Yoga and physical exercises act as protective factors and must be fostered among students

Hamermesh (2020); Heidinger and Richter, (2020) conducted research on senior citizens and found that loneliness has increased during pandemic. Their research further indicated that lonely individuals remained lonely, whereas lonely because of COVID-19 pandemic situation consisted of specific groups such as younger individuals and those experiencing social isolation are growing day by day.

Weger & Morley (2020) conducted a Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program and adopted an intervention, developed at Helsinki University. The main objective of this program was to address loneliness and social isolation via weekly sessions to incorporate art and inspiring activities, exercise/health content during the program. Their outcomes indicated that to decrease loneliness and increase feelings of well-being during COVID-19 situation, physical activities and Yoga activities can be offered by video calls and conferences and daily phone calls.

METHODOLOGY

As per requirement of the study, loneliness was taken as criterion variable whereas Yoga as predictor variable. Quantitative data of (N=100) adolescents aged 13 to 18 were self administered through two questionnaires. Correlation Karl Pearson Product moment correlation was computed to ascertain the connectedness and relatedness between the two variables viz.; Loneliness and Yoga.

TOOLS USED

1. Loneliness scale by Dr. Anjali Arora (2008), was modified and used to collect the data
2. An open-ended Yoga questionnaire was prepared by the investigator.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation Karl Pearson Product moment correlation was computed to ascertain the connectedness and relatedness between the two variables viz; Loneliness and Yoga. The analysis reported under correlation matrices is as;

TABLE 1: CORRELATION OF LONELINESS WITH YOGA FOR ADOLESCENTS (N=100)

Variables	r - value
Loneliness and Yoga	.175**

The above table reveals significant, positive correlation of Yoga with loneliness of adolescents. Therefore, it can be interpreted that Yoga disintegrates loneliness of adolescents by involving into a physical activity. The result of this study is in line with the research work of Lee and Ko (2017); Pels and Kleinert (2016); who found that physical activities like Yoga decrease loneliness of individuals.

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To identify the relationship of loneliness and Yoga regression analysis was applied. The main purpose was to determine the role of predictor variable viz. Yoga on loneliness (criterion variable).

TABLE 2: REGRESSION ANALYSIS TO PREDICT YOGA ON LONELINESS FOR THE ADOLESCENTS (N=100)

Predictor Variable	Criterion Variable(Loneliness)				
	R	R ²	Adjusted r square	Beta Value	t-value
Yoga	.207	.103	.103	.206	4.128**

The above table depicts that Beta value for Yoga was positive, which shows that increase in Yoga activities, loneliness of adolescents decreases by 206 units respectively. The findings of the study get support from the research work of Lippke et al., (2021); who observed that physical activities decreases the effect of social isolation and loneliness by acting a buffer during COVID -19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

This research highlights indicates the issues related to adolescents during the COVID- 19 crisis like; online classes and admissions in higher professional institutions after doing 12th Class . The young adolescents felt their entrance exams and board exams were unduly delayed which have pressurized them to go for increased digitalization in form of online classes and e-notes. This has isolated them socially as well as with self. This in turn, has increased the feelings of loneliness

among individuals who are fed up of virtual communication. Their doubts related to studies are not much clarified much as they were cleared during close physical contacts.

Further, the recent publications on the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that students were not having direct contact with family and friends as they were afraid of pandemic. This in turn, has increased the risk for both isolation and the development of mental health problems like; loneliness that lived usually in the student social network and support. Elmer et al., (2020) this impacts the mental wellbeing of students which were positively associated with loneliness and anxiety symptoms. The findings of this research match with the findings of the undertaken research that loneliness can be removed by Yoga and physical exercises which act as protective factors and must be fostered among adolescents. The results of the study are in line with the research work of Weger & Morley (2020); who visualized that to decrease loneliness and increased feelings of well-being during COVID-19 situation physical activities and Yoga activities can be offered by video calls and conferences and daily phone calls.

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