

A Comparative Study of Social Isolation among Rural and Urban People in Ranchi

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted among 100 participants in Ranchi to examine social isolation and loneliness among rural and urban populations. The sample consisted of 50 rural participants and 50 urban participants. Among the rural participants, 9 males and 14 females reported loneliness, giving a total of 23 participants (46%). Among the urban participants, 11 males and 19 females reported loneliness, giving a total of 30 participants (60%). Overall, 53 out of 100 participants (53%) reported feelings of loneliness.

The major finding of the study was that there was a difference in the level of social isolation between rural and urban people.

Keywords- Social isolation, Loneliness, Social connection, Wellness

INTRODUCTION

Everybody wants to be happy. That's one thing all humans have in common. But over time I've noticed something: happiness isn't only about money, marks, or how successful you are. Of course, these things matter, but they don't give you that deep, warm feeling inside. Real happiness comes from the people around us. From family, from friends, from those who actually care. That's where the idea of "connection" comes in. And when we feel connected, our mind, heart, and even our body feel stronger. This is why people often say wellness fuels happiness.

Meaning of the terms

Social isolation - Social isolation is an objective state characterized by a complete or near complete lack of contacts, meaningful relationships, and interactions with other people and society

Social connection- Social connection is the feeling of being close to and connected with other people through meaningful relationships and interactions.

Loneliness- Loneliness is the feeling of being alone or disconnected from others, even when other people may be around.

Wellness- Wellness is the active process of maintaining and improving one's overall well-being and quality of life.

Meaning of connection

The Meaning of connection is an association or relationship between two or more people. These days, the word "connection" is used so casually. Just because someone has 500 followers on Instagram or Facebook, we say they're "well connected." But honestly, that's not the true meaning. Real connection is not about numbers at all. It's about quality. It means feeling safe with someone. It means knowing there's at least one person who listens without judging. It means laughing together, sharing joy, and knowing you're not alone.

I've realised even one or two close friends can make you feel stronger than hundreds of random contacts. For example, if you're feeling low, a simple "how are you?" from a close friend can cheer you up more than a hundred likes on a photo. Connection is built on trust, care, and genuine feelings.

Today, life looks very different, but our hearts still need the same thing: people to belong with. Without that, something feels missing.

Objective

The main objective of the study is:

1. To find out the social isolation among male & female in Ranchi.
2. To find out the social isolation among rural & urban people in Ranchi.

Need of social connection

When we have connection, we feel less lonely. We get support when life is hard. We share joy when things go well. We feel like we actually matter in the world. On the other hand, when we don't have connection, even if we have money and success, life feels kind of empty. This shows connection is not a luxury — it's a basic need, just like food and water.

Wellness isn't only about eating right or exercising. It's also about how healthy our mind is. And connections do wonders for our mental health. Talking to a friend lowers stress.

Social connections play a significant role in developing our mental health, providing emotional support, personality development, coping skills, positive influence, and overall happiness.

Health Effects of Social Isolation and Loneliness

Social isolation is when a person does not have relationships or contact with others and has little to no social support. Being close to people protects us from depression. When others value us, we also start valuing ourselves more. Loneliness is feeling alone or disconnected from others. Problems feel easier to handle when someone says, "I'm with you."

Think of a bad day you've had. Did a simple chat with a loved one make you feel lighter? That's the power of connection. It doesn't magically solve problems but it makes them feel less scary.

Loneliness is more than just being alone. It's the feeling that nobody understands you or cares. And this can be really harmful. People who feel lonely for a long time can get sick more often. Some studies even say loneliness can be as dangerous as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day. It can make people sad, anxious, or hopeless. Even a person with a lot of friends can feel lonely.

This is why connection isn't just "nice" to have. Our minds and bodies literally need it to stay healthy. Without it, we may look fine from outside but feel broken inside.

Something magical actually happens inside our body when we connect with people warmly. Our brain releases a chemical called oxytocin, also called the "love hormone." It makes us feel safe, happy, and calm. Even a hug or a smile can trigger it. That's why hugging your mom, laughing with a friend, or playing with a pet feels so good. It's your body's way of saying, "This is happiness."

When I first read about oxytocin, it made so much sense. It explains why we crave hugs, real conversations, and closeness. It's not just emotional -it's biological.

Technology is a tricky one. It's amazing because we can talk to people far away, video call family in another country, or join online groups. But there are problems too. Endless scrolling can make us feel empty. Online likes and comments are not real closeness. Comparing our lives to others on social media makes us sad. And many "online friends" don't give real support.

So, while technology can help, we have to use it wisely. Real human closeness is still stronger. A text can't replace a hug. A reel can't replace a real laugh.

The good news is we can all improve our social wellness. It doesn't need huge effort. Small, daily steps matter. For example, meet friends for tea, a walk, or even ten minutes of chat. Nothing beats real eye contact and laughter.

Social isolation and loneliness can increase a person's risk of heart disease and stroke, Type 2 diabetes, depression and anxiety, Suicidality and self-harm, and even premature death.

Way to improve wellness

Sharing hobbies or activities also works. Join a sports group, an art class, or a community project. Doing things together builds bonds faster.

Being kind is another simple habit. Smile at a neighbour, thank someone, help a stranger. Kindness creates warmth and trust.

And of course, use social media carefully. Send real messages, not just likes. Avoid comparing your life with others. Stay in touch with family, call or visit parents, grandparents, cousins. Family ties give a strong sense of belonging.

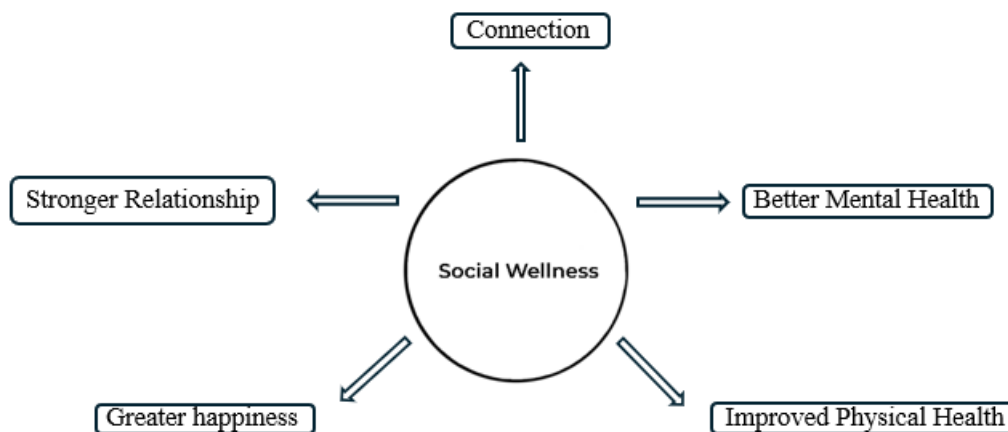


Fig.1- Circle of connection & wellness

Think of it like a circle. It keeps going round and round. When we care for our relationships, our whole life improves.

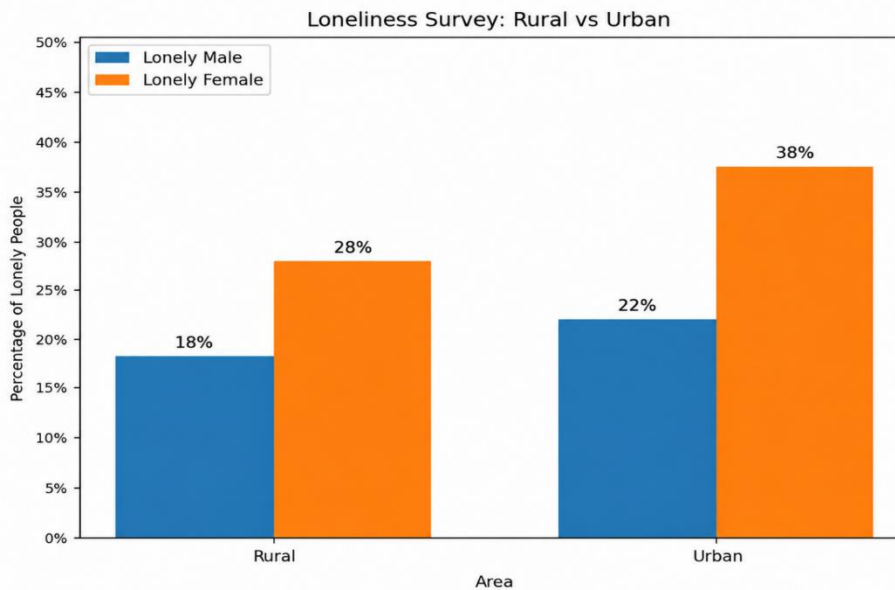
For example, if someone enjoys supportive friendships, they feel less stressed, which improves their health. This wellness leads to greater happiness. In that happy state, the person is more likely to reach out to others, which strengthens their bonds even more. It's like a positive cycle.

Finding & Result

The major findings of the study:

- A significant proportion of participants reported feelings of loneliness.

- Social isolation was also observed among a considerable proportion of the participants.
- Females reported higher levels of loneliness than males in the study.



The urban population showed higher reported levels of loneliness and compared with the rural population.

Fig.2- Graphical representation of data

Suggestion for wellness

Since social media is part of our life, here's how to use it without losing wellness: set a daily time limit, follow accounts that make you feel positive, talk to people instead of just reacting to posts, take a break from screens now and then, and don't forget real-world hugs and laughs.

Some small everyday habits make a big difference: call one friend daily, even for five minutes; eat at least one meal with family or friends; write a thank-you note or message to someone; spend time with neighbours or community; play games offline too; and listen more than you talk people love to feel heard.

Think about school. Imagine a child who has no friends. He eats alone, plays alone, and feels invisible. Even if he has good grades and nice clothes, he feels unhappy. Now imagine another child with two good friends. They play together, laugh at silly jokes, and share secrets. Even if he doesn't have top grades, he feels happy, safe, and loved. This is the power of connection.

I've seen this in my own class too. The child who has a few close friends look so much happier than the ones who are always alone, even if they're "perfect" on paper. It's really eye-opening.

CONCLUSION

In the end the power of connection is what makes life meaningful. Health, money, and success are important, but without people to share them with, happiness feels empty. Wellness comes from balance in body, mind, and emotions. Happiness grows when wellness is strong. Connection is the bridge that brings them together. Love. Hug your family friends and neighbours. Be kind to strangers. Laugh more. Listen more. Stay connected. Because it's true: wellness fuels happiness, and connection is the heart of it.

Overall, the data show that female participants reported higher loneliness than male participants in both rural and urban areas. The reported percentages were also higher among the urban participants than the rural

participants. These findings indicate variations in loneliness based on both gender and place of residence among the 100 participants.

The study indicates that loneliness and social isolation are important areas of concern among the participants studied in Ranchi. The findings highlight the importance of meaningful social relationships and social support in promoting emotional well-being. Strengthening connections with family, friends, neighbours, and the wider community may help reduce feelings of loneliness and contribute to better overall well-being

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