

# Impact of Maternal Deprivation on Perceived Loneliness and Self-Confidence. And-Role of Perceived Loneliness in Leaving the Child at the Threshold of Low Self-Confidence

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## Abstract

In the present investigation an attempt have been made to study and compare the level of perceived Loneliness and Self-Confidence among children suffering from maternal deprivation either partially or completely and to find out relationship between Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence. Sample size for the study consisted of 100 students which included 50 maternally deprived orphans and 50 Children of working mothers in the age group (14-16) years selected purposively from various government and private (high and higher secondary) schools of district Srinagar. Perceived Loneliness scale by Dr.Praveen kumar jha and Self-Confidence Inventory by Dr. Rekha Gupta Agnihotri were employed as tools for data collection and t-test and correlation was used for data analysis. Bar diagram were used to make the results clear. The results revealed that Children of both the categories suffers from high Perceived Loneliness and possess average Self-Confidence, however on comparison no significant difference was found between the two category of children on Perceived loneliness and self-confidence, both categories display almost similar feeling of Perceived Loneliness and possess similar level of self-confidence. Also a strong correlation has been found between Perceived Loneliness and self-confidence.

**Keywords:** Maternally deprived orphans, Children of working mothers, Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence.

## Introduction

As soon as the child steps in this world, the first individuals he comes across are his/her parents. Mother who has taken great pain to bring him to this world, carried child in her womb for nine gruelling months and the father who is always there to care for him/her. Parents along with siblings become the family for the child. Family, the first environment where child feels, observes and learns the emotional relationships (Warhol, 1998).It is the most intimate social environment, first learning place of a child in this world, a place where the vital process of socialization of the child begins. Parents play a pivotal role in the psycho-social well-being of a child. Psycho-social well-being entails having a healthy mental state and sound emotional status. According to WHO, good mental health for children and adolescents is a prerequisite for optimal psychological development, productive social relationships and effective learning. It is an ability to care for oneself, having a good physical health and effective economic participation as adults. Psycho-social well-being is also an important aspect in the provision of children's rights (UNAIDS, 2001), and it is based on the understanding that children need to be loved, respected, and listened to, for them to be able to develop a healthy mind. It is the family in general and parents in particular which are responsible for the overall development of personality of a child

Personality is formed in the first instance within the womb of family relationship. It is from these early experiences that child acquires his attitudes, values, and pattern of social behaviour. The pattern of personality development in the young child is established primarily with the frame work of his relationship with the parents. Most children without parental support risk powerful cumulative and often negative effects because of their parental deprivation, thus becoming vulnerable and predisposed to physical and psychological risks. According to most extensive studies on social deprivation, it was found that depriving children of family environment causes lasting damage to their intelligence, emotional wellbeing and even their physical stature. Lack of care and attention left children with stunted growth, substantially lower IQs and more behavioural and psychological problems.Naqsbandi et al. (2012) in their study revealed that there are many psychological/adjustment problems with the children living in the orphanages and almost all of them miss their siblings which point out how significant sibling relation is for the development of the child both physically and psychologically. Yasmin and Marina (2009) found that orphan children living in orphanages reported lower self-esteem as compared to the children living with their parents probably due to loss of parents. Swami priyankat (1989) found that children living with their families were better adjusted and have better self concept than orphans living in orphanages. Durualp et al. (2013) in their study revealed that adolescents living in orphanages experience higher level of loneliness as compared to the adolescents living with their families. Qanabari Hashem (2011) found that ordinary children i.e. the children living with their families own higher Emotional intelligence over orphanage children. Jeelani barjees (2009) found that orphans and non-orphans differ significantly on mental health.Non-

orphans were found to be emotionally stable, better in overall adjustment, Self determined in thinking, have high sense of safety, confidence, freedom from fear and have better general mental ability in thinking than orphan children. These studies give a notion how important is the presence of family for the healthy personality development of children. Research studies have revealed that mother's role is significantly higher in the personality development of a child, because of very close contact with the child. As stated by Eisenberg et al., (2005) mother's parenting attitudes and interactions with children have more powerful impact on their children's emotional and social development in the early years. It is also possible that the effects of positive parenting (especially mother) are strong in this period when children are more vulnerable and parents are highly salient emotional models compared with other models in their nearby.

Women who can be a mother, daughter, sister or wife is one of the Almighty's greatest unique gifts to mankind. She has been bestowed by Almighty with a capacity and capability to provide a tune of life to the new generation. With the emergence of a new economic pattern, increasing opportunities for education, rising standard of living and increased modernization, women from the middle and upper class families have also started coming out of their traditional role of a home maker to join the work force. Thus at the same time they are responsible for all household chores and also for upbringing of their kids. Employment of women has paved way for controversies regarding maternal employment and child development. It has been seen that the children of working mothers tend to have a less healthy life style than those, whose mothers stay at home. They snack on more junk food, spent more time in front of TV and do less exercise. Those whose mothers work part time follows healthier regime, while the children of mothers who don't work have the most nutritious diets and enjoy more exercise (jenny hope 2009). Asma (2012) revealed in her study that children of non-working mothers have more Emotional intelligence than children of working mothers. This study indicates that the mothers separation from the children and her presence in the life of children influences the Emotional intelligence of children to a larger extent. Diehl, Beau (2010) found that developmental problems arouse specifically for children whose mother worked longer hours. Hangal and Vijaylaxmi (2007) in their study have revealed that adolescent children of home makers have significantly higher self-concept than children of employed mothers. Thus it is clear from the above cited studies that both orphans and children of working mothers suffer considerably because of absence of a healthy family environment, especially the mother which is the core of the present research. It is evident that both the category of children viz Orphans and Children of working mothers suffers from maternal deprivation completely or partially respectively. The investigator feel that this deprivation casts more influence on the personality characteristics of children of working mothers than those of the orphans, it is so because the children of working mothers despite of presence of mothers in their lives do not get sufficient time from them to suffice their needs and this in turn impede the healthy development of their personality, While as the orphans have already accepted the fact of absence of mothers in their lives. The review of literature has made it clear that many studies have been conducted individually on Orphans and the children of working mothers on various parameters of personality but no comparative study between these two groups has been conducted yet. Thus the present investigator made an attempt to study and to compare the Orphans and Children of working mothers on Perceived Loneliness.

#### I. Perceived Loneliness

A natural demand of human survival is to live in a group, a group in which people form relationships, share their feelings, have positive contacts and gain knowledge about better survival. As people live on, they may encounter feelings about not being a part of the group. They may feel detached and left out and resign from the colourful life and become loners and probably most people experience this painful feeling of isolation and loneliness at some time in their lives. Today's life is filled with social transitions that disrupt personal relationships and set the stage for loneliness. Being unloved and lonely has been called "the greatest poverty". Loneliness also refers to an individual's subjective perception that he/she lacks close interpersonal relationships. An individual is lonely if he or she desires close interpersonal relationships but is unable to establish them. According to Peplau and Perlman (1982), "Loneliness is the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some way". Loneliness is an emotional and cognitive state that a person experiences as a result from desiring close relationships but being unable to attain them (Baron & Byrne, 2003). Loneliness as a term describes the inner feeling when we are starved of affection (Davey, 1994). According to research by John Cacioppo, a Psychologist from University of Chicago and one of the top loneliness experts, loneliness is strongly connected to genetics. Other contributing factors include situational variables, such as physical isolation, moving to a new location and divorce. The death of someone significant in a persons' life can also lead to feelings of loneliness. Loneliness can also be a symptom of psychological disorder such as depression. Loneliness can also be attributed to internal factors such as low self-esteem. People who lack confidence in themselves often believe that they are unworthy of the attention or regard of other people. This can lead to isolation and chronic loneliness. Jones, carpenter and Quitana 1985) in a study revealed that lonely people often have low self-esteem and in some cases, have poor social skills. Several of these personality factors can be both the cause and consequence

of loneliness. For example people with low self-esteem may be less willing to take risk in social settings. This could make it harder for them to form friendships and thereby increases their chances of loneliness. On the other hand, the experience of being lonely for a long time may lead a person to see him or herself as a social failure and so causes a drop in the person's self-esteem. Anuba dhal et al. (2007) found that self-esteem was negatively correlated with loneliness. Hoffmann M.L. et al. (2004) also revealed in his study that low self-esteem was associated with the feeling of loneliness. Individuals with low self-esteem are likely to feel rejected and disapproving of others, in addition they may lack self-confidence and social skills required for initiating and developing relationships.

## II. Self-Confidence

The socio-psychological concept of self-confidence relates to self-assuredness in one's personal judgment, ability, power, etc. It is an attitude which allows individuals to have positive yet realistic views of themselves and their situations. It is one of the personality traits which is a composite of a persons' thoughts and feelings, strivings and hopes, fears and fantasies, his view of what he is, what he has been, what he might become, and his attitudes pertaining to his worth. It is a positive attitude of oneself towards one's self-concept, an attribute of perceived self. It is also referred as a person's perceived ability to tackle situations successfully without leaning on others and to have a positive self-evaluation. Confidence is learned, it is not inherited. If we lack confidence, it probably means that, as a child, we were criticized, undermined, or suffered an explicable tragic loss, for which we either blame our self or were blamed by others. A lack of confidence isn't necessarily permanent but it can be if it is not addressed. Our religion, the influence of the culture which formed our perspectives, our gender, social class in general and our parents in particular, are all factors which influence and contribute to our level of confidence. Confident people have deep faith in their future and can accurately assess their capabilities. They also have a general sense of control in their lives and believe that, within reason, they will be able to do what they desire, plan and expect, no matter what the foreseeable obstacle. But this faith is guided by more realistic expectation so that, even when some of their goals are not met, those with confidence will continue to be positive, to believe in themselves and to accept their current limitations with renewed energy. However, having high self confidence does not mean they will be able to do everything they want. A desire to be good at everything we do, in order to impress others, stems from a competitive instinct and lack of personal reinforcement. Self Confidence is essentially an attitude which allows us to have a positive and realistic perception of ourselves and our abilities. It is characterized by personal attributes such as assertiveness, optimism, enthusiasm, affection, pride, independence, trust, the ability to handle criticism and emotional maturity. In the words of Basavanna (1975), "Self Confidence refers to an individuals' perceived ability to act effectively in a situation to overcome obstacles and to get things go all right." People who are not self-confident depend excessively on the approval of others in order to feel good about themselves. They tend to avoid taking risks because they fear failure. They generally do not expect to be successful. They often put themselves down and tend to discount or ignore compliments paid to them. By contrast, self-confident people are willing to risk the disapproval of others because they generally trust their own abilities. They tend to accept themselves; they don't feel they have to conform in order to be accepted. Surprisingly, lack of self-confidence is not necessarily related to lack of ability. Instead it is often the result of focusing too much on the unrealistic expectations or standards of others, especially parents and society. Friends' influences can be powerful than those of parents and society in shaping feelings about one's self. Students in their college years re-examine values and develop their own identities and thus are particularly vulnerable to the influence of friends. Dr. Manisha Goel and Preeti Aggarwal (2012) in their study on "A comparative study of self confidence of single children and children with sibling" found that the children with sibling have high self-confident than the single children. There is significant negative relationship between sense of alienation and lack of self-confidence. Development of self confidence right from beginning makes an individual mature, confident and responsible citizen. A. Hemalatha (2008) found that Academic performance is mainly determined by cognitive, motivational and personality factors such as self-confidence, communication, interpersonal relationship. Christopher M. Tavani and Susan C. Iosh (2003) in their study on "Motivation, self-confidence and expectations as predictors of the academic performances among our high school children" revealed that expectations, motivations, self-confidences and parental education levels influences student's academic performances. Maikhuri, R. and Panole, S.K., (1977), in their study on "Self confidence of adolescents in relation to their academic achievement" revealed that there is no significant correlation between academic achievement and Self-Confidence. However, significant differences were observed in the academic achievement to the high and low self confidence groups.

### Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been framed for the present investigation:

1. To identify Orphans studying in district Srinagar.
2. To identify the Children of working mothers studying in district Srinagar.

3. To study and compare Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Perceived loneliness.
4. To study and compare Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Self-confidence.
5. To find relationship between Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence.

### Hypothesis

- There will be a significant difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on perceived loneliness.
- There will be a significant difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Self-confidence.
- There will be a significant relationship between Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence.

### Operational Definition of Variables

**Children:** The *Children* for the present investigation shall refer to Adolescent offspring of working mothers.

**Working mothers:** The working mothers for the present investigation shall refer to the females working outside their homes either in government or private sectors.

**Orphans:** The orphans for the present study shall refer to Adolescents that have lost their mothers in the early stage of their development.

**Perceived Loneliness:** Perceived loneliness is operationally defined as the scores which the subjects obtain on “Praveen Kumar Jha’s” Perceived Loneliness Scale (1999).

**Self-confidence:** It is operationally defined as the scores which the subjects obtain on “Rekha Gupta Agnihotri’s” Self- confidence inventory (1987).

### Sample:

The present study was conducted on a sample of 100 students which included 50 maternally deprived orphans and 50 Children of working mothers in the age group of (14-16) years studying in government and private schools (High and Higher secondary) of district Srinagar. Each school was taken as a unit of sample. The sample was drawn purposively.

### Tool employed:

- Perceived Loneliness scale by Dr. Praveen kumar jha was employed for data collection.
- Self Confidence Inventory by Dr. Rekha Gupta Agnihotri.

### Statistical Techniques:

The data collected were subjected to the following statistical treatment

- Mean
- S.D
- t-Test
- Correlation

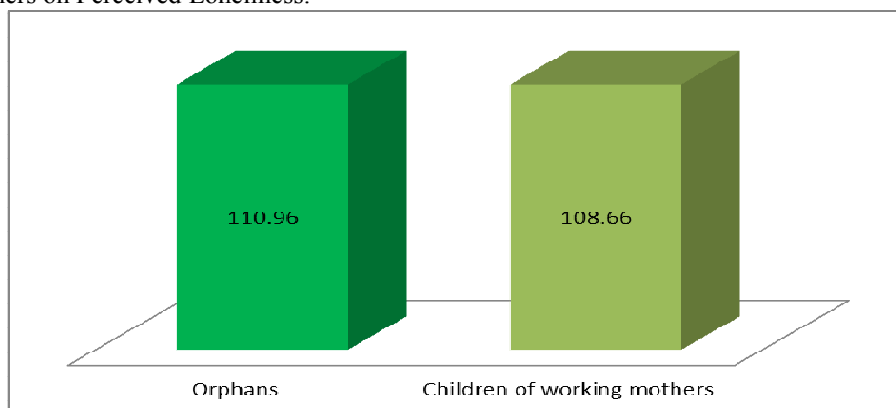
### Analysis:

In order to achieve the objectives formulated for the present study the data collected has been tabulated as under

**Table 1: Comparison of Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Perceived Loneliness.**

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Level of significance
Orphans	50	110.96	14.88	0.71	Not significant
Children of working mothers	50	108.66	17.44		

The above table shows the significance of mean difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Perceived Loneliness.

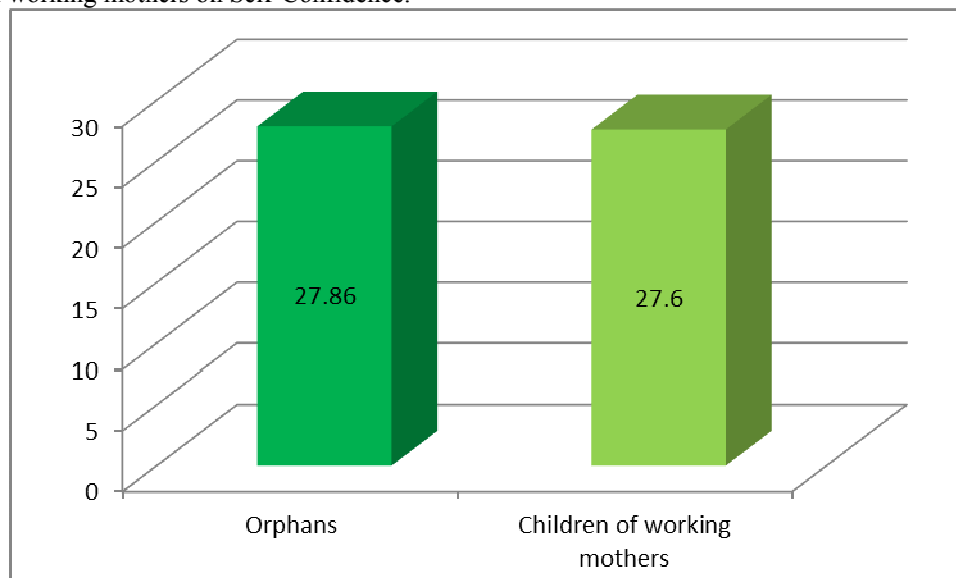


**Fig 1: Graph representing comparison of Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Perceived Loneliness.**

**Table 2: Comparison of Orphans and the Children of working mothers on Self-Confidence**

Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-test	Level of significance
Orphans	50	27.86	9.15	0.13	Not significant
Children of working mothers	50	27.6	10.07		

The details in the above table show the significance of mean difference between Orphans and the children of working mothers on Self-Confidence.



**Fig 2: Graph representing comparison of orphans and the children of working mothers on self-confidence.**

**Table 3: Correlation between Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence of the children of working mothers.**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	R
Perceived Loneliness	50	108.66	17.44	0.82
Self-confidence	50	29.84	10.1	

The details in the above table show the correlation between two variables i.e. perceived loneliness and self-confidence of the Children of working mothers.

**Table 4: Correlation between Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence of Orphans.**

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	R
Perceived Loneliness	50	110.96	14.88	0.68
Self-confidence	50	27.86	9.15	

The details in the above table show the correlation between two variables i.e. Perceived loneliness and self-confidence of Orphans.

**Interpretation and discussion:**

The details in the above table 2 represent the significance of mean difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on **Perceived Loneliness**. On scrutinizing the table it was found that there is no significant difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on **perceived loneliness** as the obtained t-value comes out to be (t=0.7). That means they possess similar level of **Perceived Loneliness**. The results reveal that the children of both the categories have almost similar degree of patience, concentration, enthusiasm, alienation, fear and inhibitions. They have similar notion regarding the importance of their families and display almost similar feelings. However the mean score of the Orphans is slightly higher than the mean score of the Children of working mothers obtained on **Perceived loneliness** with a mere difference of 2.30. As per the norms of the table, both the category of children suffers from high loneliness. That means that presence of mother, in case of the Children of working mothers is not contributing that much to curb the loneliness of her child. The results can be justified on the basis that it is the mother which assists the child in establishment of healthy relationships with the environment by showing affection and creating an environment of trust in addition to covering the physical needs of the child. Thus over engagements (Job and house hold activities) are not allowing her to offer much time to her child to cater these needs. Also Mother is the sole figure with whom the child is securely attached as compared to father and this intimacy is highly affected because of mothers' busy schedule which leads a child to face loneliness.

Our findings are partly in line with the findings of: Kutlu Mustafa (2006), Durualp et al. (2013) that



loneliness levels of orphans is higher than the adolescents living with their families.

In the light of the findings in the table 1, the hypothesis number 1 which reads as, “*There will be significant difference between orphans and the children of working mothers on perceived Loneliness*” stands rejected.

The details in **table 3** represent the significance of mean difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on **Self- Confidence**. On scrutinizing the **table 3** we find that there is no significant difference between Orphans and the Children of working mothers on **Self-confidence**, as the calculated t-value comes out to be ( $t=0.13$ ). The mean difference fails to arrive at any significant level. The results reveal that orphans and the Children of working mothers exhibit almost similar degree of **Self-confidence**. They have almost similar ability in decision making, in making friends, in taking an initiative in accomplishing any task, in speaking truth on the opportune time, in demonstrating their emotions openly and in showing Courage to face any situation. The mean score obtained by Orphans on **Self-confidence** is slightly higher than the Children of working mothers with a mere difference of 0.26 but, this mean difference fails to arrive at any significant level. That means Children of working mother’s exhibit slightly greater level of **Self-confidence** than Orphans because as per the administered SCI inventory, lower the score, higher would be the level of Self-confidence and vice-versa. Thus it is evident that the score obtained on Self-confidence by the children of working mothers as compared to orphans is not that much high as was otherwise expected. That means mothers presence is not making much difference. The results can be justified on the basis that the mother is a role model for the child, they identify themselves with their mothers and children of working mothers because of their mothers being working outside, do not get enough time from their mothers for grooming competitive spirit and it is the competitive spirit which is in turn responsible for boosting the self-confidence.

Our results are in line with the findings of: Jeelani Barjees (2009) that Non-orphans have high level of confidence. Rakshanda Ahad et al. (2010), Gursoy figen et al. (2012), that self concept of adolescents living in orphanages is lower than the adolescents living with their families, Nidha Hamid (2012) Orphans showed low level of Self-concept. Farooqi Nilofer and Intezar Marina (2009), Sarfaraz Asia (2010) that Orphan children reported lower Self-esteem as compared to the children living with their families.

In the light of the results of the table 2, the hypothesis number 2 which reads as, “*There will be significant difference between orphans and the children of working mothers on Self-confidence*” stands rejected.

The details in the **table 3** represents the correlation between Perceived loneliness and Self-confidence of the children of working mothers and details in **table 4** represents the correlation between perceived loneliness and self-confidence of Orphans. On scrutinizing the **table 3 and 4** we find that there exists strong positive correlation between perceived loneliness and self-confidence of the Children of working mothers ( $r=0.68$ ) and perceived loneliness and self-confidence of orphans too ( $r=0.82$ ). The results reveal that in both cases i.e. the children of working mothers and Orphans, with the increase in the score of perceived loneliness the score of self-confidence will also increase. But as per the norms of the administered Self-confidence inventory by Dr rekha gupta Agnihotri, higher the score of self-confidence obtained on the inventory, lesser will be the self-confidence and vice-versa. That means if the score of perceived loneliness will increase the score of self-confidence will also increase and the higher score means low self-confidence. The results can be justified on the basis that individuals suffering from high Loneliness lack concentration, enthusiasm and suffers from insecurity, fears and inhibitions. Because of lack of concentration and enthusiasm they are not able to take an initiative in accomplishing any task. It is this inhibition, fear, lack of enthusiasm and concentration which impedes the development of competitive spirit, which in turn results in low self-confidence.

Our results are in line with the findings of Jones, Hobbs and Hockenbury (1982), Hoffmann M.L et.al. (2004), Anuba dhal et.al. that individuals with high loneliness tend to be low in self-esteem, Goswick and jones (1981) that loneliness is linked with negative self-concept, Dr. Manisha Goel and Preeti Aggarwal (2012) that there is a negative relationship between the sense of alienation and lack of self-confidence.

In the light of the results of the table 3 and 4, the hypothesis number 3 which reads as, “*There will be a significant relationship between Perceived Loneliness and Self-confidence*” stands accepted.

## Conclusions

1. It has been found that both Orphans and the Children of working mothers suffer from high Perceived Loneliness, however the comparative study of these two categories do not show any difference so far as this variable is concerned.
2. It has been found that both Orphans and the Children of working mothers possesses average level of Self-confidence, however the comparative study of these two categories do not show any difference so far as this variable is concerned
3. It has also been found that the Children of both the categories were reluctant in expressing their emotions and sharing of ideas.
4. It has been found that children suffering from Loneliness tend to possess low Self-Confidence.

### Suggestions

1. The working hours of the working mothers should be reduced so that they can stay with their children for longer hours, which in turn will reduce the chances of vulnerability of deficiency symptoms in them.
2. Sensitization programmes for women should be promoted by means of electronic and print media in order to create awareness in them regarding the problems which their children face because of their over engagements.
3. While interacting with the students of both the categories the investigator found that most of the Orphans showed little interest in interaction and were usually silent and the Children of working mothers were found to be aggressive, it is recommended that a counselling cell should be established in every school for guiding the children for proper development of their personality.
4. The comparative study may be conducted on maternally deprived orphans, Children of working mothers and Children of non-working mothers on the same variables.
5. The study may be conducted on orphans living with families and orphans living in orphanages on the same variables.
6. The present study can be conducted on large sample in order to increase the scope of generalization.

### Educational implications:

- Social competence is an ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction. Lonely individuals possess low social competence which in turn leads to low social success. Both Children of working mothers and maternally deprived orphans were found to suffer from high Loneliness. If Children of working mothers will be provided sufficient time and attention by their mothers, this feeling of Loneliness will be eliminated from their lives which will enhance their social competence and school success. In case of maternally deprived orphans counselling is the best option.
- Self-Confidence is a conviction which makes an individual generally capable of producing desired results. Increase in Self-Confidence helps to develop innate qualities of self-worth and competency. Self-Confidence is related to success. A confident attitude, a belief, a faith in one self and one's ideas are essential in getting ahead. A child who perceives himself to be able, confident, and adequate and a person of worth has more energy to spend on academic excellence. Children of working mothers' possess average Self-Confidence. Acceptance of child by his/her mother gives meaning to his/her life which develops in him/her a feeling of self-respect. This self-respect gives birth to self-confidence which is key to every success.
- Maternally deprived orphans were found to possess average Self-Confidence. Counsellors and teachers should intervene in this regard in order to boost their self-confidence. Increase in Self-Confidence will improve their performance in every field of life.

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