

**THE EFFECT OF HOMESICKNESS ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE HOSTEL STUDENTS****Ms. Harshdeep Kaur***Postgraduate Student, Department of Psychology, Galgotias University, Greater Noida***Abstract**

*Homesickness is a complex emotional condition characterised by the feeling of longing and anxiety when away from home or the environment, it affects the students' mental health causing students to not able to focus on daily activities, and they feel to return back to their old life. Home sickness mainly occur to hostel students, existing literature has shown that home sickness causes depression and anxiety among the hostel students they feel isolated and unsupported in their new environment, a person may constantly think about their home and link to the present situation the cause of home sickness have been linked to moving away from cities and leaving parents behind for higher education it is difficult to live without parents and friends homesickness not only affect us mentally but also physically and emotionally it also disrupts our daily routine, making difficult for us to concentrate on academics and other activities this study seeks to objectively investigate the relationship involving homesickness in link to depression and anxiety specifically how homesickness affects the mental health of the students in hostel the SCAT( Sinha comprehensive anxiety test) and BDI (BECK depression inventory test) were administered to a sample of 100 persons these findings highlights the necessity of homesickness can be prevented and how can we improve our mental health outcomes*

**Keywords:** *Homesickness, Loneliness, Fear, Distress*

**Introduction**

The oxford learned dictionary define homesickness as the sensation of being away from home and missing friends and families the Cambridge dictionary defines homesickness as the state of being dissatisfied due to extended absence from ones home children are greatly impacted when they leave their home in search of better education and to have a bright future even if moving away from home is difficult one must make sacrifice for having a better future living away from parents gives you more opportunity to experience life adventures and strengthen you as a person and helps you to develop into a better person it also leads to more mature you enabling you to face and deal with life challenges. The impact of homesickness varies from person to person because adjusting to new environment is not at all an easy task some students view it in a positive way while some in a negative way students who attend college on regular basis find it difficult to adjust to the college campus homesickness is a common emotion each person experience it to different degree and intensity but the degree and intensity individual differences exist when it comes to home sickness researchers have demonstrated that those who struggle to adjust have problem in focusing on their studies homesickness have a psychological impact on the students it can also result from lack of social interaction with peers if left untreated homesickness can negatively affects academic performance social relationships etc homesickness being also common traits of loneliness, missing friends and relatives trouble adjusting to new environment and recurrent thoughts of home throughout history are the examples of homesickness not only poets and

authors have shown their interest but scientist have also shown their interest like Johannes Hofer(1980) said that homesickness is an disease which make people alone and isolated in different countries fisher (1989) said that homesickness is a well known phenomena for the most of the people and found certain key elements to it such as preoccupation to the family, friends, home and routine fisher theory of attachment has given a strong evidence which says that children build strong relationship with the caregivers which contribute to the child having homesickness with its consequences to both home sick and non – homesick homesickness can be conceived of as being related to adjustment order according to DSM4 (AMA1994) which occur within 3 to 6 months it has been linked to two order adjustment order and depressive mood disorder it shares certain elements with agoraphobia it hamper their personal and professional life as they cant stay away from the families Depression is a major issue in the society mainly affecting the youngsters it can be long term and short term according to American Psychiatric Association (APA) depression is a serious medical illness that effects our thinking process how it can lead to variety of physical symptoms and reduces person ability to work and think globally it is a mood disorder characterised by persuasive sadness, hopelessness and lack of interest in physical activities symptoms include lack of appetite, lack of sleep, difficulty in concentrating and thoughts of death and suicide. Conversely anxiety is disorder marked by excessive, frequently worry or tension and fear about ordinary situation. It can be manifested physically as tenseness, trembling or elevated heart rate anxiety can also interfere with day to day

activities and include panic attacks, social anxiety and generalised anxiety disorder (GAD) according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) anxiety compromises of more than just territory concern or terror if left untreated, it can worsen over time and causes symptoms that interfere with day to day task like work, school or relationship examples of anxiety disorder include generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), Agoraphobia, separation anxiety disorder

In a study on boarding school children ranging from 11 to 16 years old Fisher, Frazer and Murray (1984) found a mere prevalence of 16% when the term homesickness was missing however two years later a similar study in context and participant demographics found 71% of the students experienced homesickness away from the home in boarding school in the year (1986)

In a quantitative study on Dutch adults Verschurre - Bontakee and Spin Hoven (2004) concluded that not only depression and anxiety are the key elements of home sickness but the most vulnerable group that re-occur from childhood through adulthood exhibited more depressive symptoms than control group therefore this finding suggests a strong positive relationship between depression and anxiety

Baier and Welch (1992) conducted a conceptual analysis in order to distinguish homesickness from related concepts such as separation-anxiety and school phobia on basis of which six cases were formulated 1. Homesickness happens in all age groups under the conditions of being away from home 2. Frequently homesickness is not acknowledged neither homesickness feelings are processed interpersonally 3. In adults and childrens homesickness is link with the feeling of embarrassment or denial 4. Homesickness reflect the persuasive feeling of sadness and thoughts about the place being left 5 children who feel homesickness are forced to suppress the feelings 6. somatic complaints may occur for longingness of the family

In recent longitudinal study it was shown that dependency on others is another cause for the homesickness (Brewin 1989) this finding suggests a support linkage of homesickness dependency on parents and family was found to be the chief characteristics of the Home sickness

Hamid (1974) hypothesised a two staged process of adaptation to new living environment the process of giving up previous life is marked by anger, depression, acknowledgement loss and mourning rejected detachment and hope indicate that the individual is prepared to accept and make the best of new life situation homesickness

Mandler (1990) in his discontinuity model view that the interruption and discontinuity of lifestyles and routines may lead to feelings of anxiety, fear and distress these negative emotions can be labelled as homesickness when being away from home old plans and behavioural activities become ineffective in the new situation

American Psychiatric Association (2013) homesickness and separation anxiety shares central theme of excessive anxiety concerning separation from home. homesickness and separation anxiety are seen as overlapping to each other but have different distinctive features

VAN VILET (2001) has linked emotional instability to homesickness while VAN Tilburg (1996,1996) have identified Neuroticism and high anxiety as a critical feature though depression has been also linked to it but these two are the major factors contributing to home sickness

**Objectives**

1. To study anxiety among the hostel students
2. To study depression among the hostel students
3. To study the relationship between depression and anxiety among hostel students

**Hypothesis**

1. College students who report high level of homesickness will exhibit high level of depression
2. College student who report high level of homesickness will experience high level of anxiety
3. There is a positive correlation between depression and anxiety

**Methodology**

**Sample**

A total number of 100 participants were included in the study through purposive sampling from the hostels in Greater Noida, informed consent was obtained and forms were distributed through google forms

**Data collection**

Online data was done google forms were used to administer the questions because it is an easily navigable and accessible platform for participants Emails messaging applications were used to extend the participate in the study along with the brief explanation of its goals and instructions for filling out the forms

**Tools for measurement**

**Beck Depression inventory scale**

In the present study researcher has used BECK DEPRESSION INVENTORY TEST (BDI, BDI-1A, BDI 2) created by Aron T Beck and release in 1961 it is a 21 question multiple choice self-report inventory one of the most used psychometric test

used to measure the severity of depression the BDI has been widely used in clinical and research field in 1966 the BDI was revised to include additional items and to reflect changes in the Diagnostic and Statistical manual of Mental disorder (DSM) the revised BDI known as the BDI 2, is the most widely used version of the questionnaire the 21 set of question consist of scores ranging from 0 to 3 for example

0 I do not feel sad

1 I feel sad

2 I am sad all the times that I cant snap out of it

3i am sad and unhappy all the time that I cant snap out of it

The BDI has demonstrated high internal consistency which means items in the questionnaire are highly correlated Cronbach alpha for the BDI 2 is typically above 0.90 indicating high consistency the total score in BDI is compared to a key to determine the severity of depression

0-9 indicate minimal depression

10-18 indicate mild depression

19-29 indicate moderate depression

30-63 indicate severe depression

The range of depression will depend on the total score obtained in it

**Sinha Anxiety Scale**

The researcher used Sinha anxiety scale (SCAT) to analyse the anxiety level among the students it was developed by Dr D Sinha an Indian psychologist to cater the to the cultural context of Indian population the scale typically consist of 90 question scoring can be done by hand for any response “yes” score will be 1 and for any response NO the score will be 0 the sum of all positive response will be the score of the subject the coefficient of reliability is determined by using test retest method where(N=100)was employed by spearman brown formula the reliability shown is 0.92 both value ensure high reliability of the test the validity was determined by computing the coefficient between scores on comprehensive anxiety test and on Taylors manifest anxiety scale it was 0.62 on the basis of scores we can tell whether anxiety level is high or low

**Result**

Utilizing the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS)a widely used software programme in social science research the data analysis for this study was completed software played a crucial role in the significance testing, correlation analysis and the computation of descriptive statistics like means and standard deviation for comprehending the connection between homesickness and mental health in our study which were crucial

TABLE 1 Mean and SD of anxiety and depression among hosteler

	N	mean	SD
Sinha anxiety	100	19.5800	22.45992
Beck depression inventory	100	9.3000	11.25956
VALID N	100		

Table 1 shows the description statistics for the BDI and SCAT scores shows a minimum of .00 and a maximum of 86.00 with the mean score of 19.58 and a standard deviation of 22.45 which indicate there is low level of anxiety and for BDI the minimum score was .00 and maximum was 49.00 with the mean score of 9.30 and a standard deviation of 11.25 which indicate there is a mild depression among the hostel students

Table 2 correlation among depression and anxiety

**Correlations**

		SCAT	BDI
SCAT	Pearson Correlation	1	.781**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
BDI	Pearson Correlation	.781**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

\*\*.. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between depression and anxiety beck depression inventory(BDI) and Sinha anxiety scale (SCAT) the results indicated that there was a significant correlation between depression and anxiety (r=-.0718), ( p=.000)this indicate a moderate or average correlation which is statistically significant in practical terms this result suggests that within this sample homesickness have a significant impact on the mental health of the hostel students homesickness can have a significant impact from person to person people who depends others have more likely to face homesickness which can impact their day to day life activities homesickness not only effect mental health but also it psychologically and emotionally also person become week as it is not easy to adjust in new environment

**Discussion**

The study found a significant correlation between depression and anxiety among the hostel students from greater Noida there are many other reasons to the homesickness

Homesickness is an change in emotional state as one leave from his home and adjust to new environment which is very difficult for individual

homesickness have a benefit as leaving home and settling to the new environment helps individual to explore new opportunities and gave a chance to individual to become a better person and change his personality depression is a change in mood when person become sad and feel isolated its natural to feel as it is not so easy to adjust to the new environment as it seems students behave differently according to their comfort zone as individual personality vary like the person who is extrovert or lets say is emotionally strong can adjust easily while the person who is introvert who has not even gone out of the home depends on his parents faces more difficulty in adjusting to the new environment hostel and home are two different places in home we have support of parents siblings so it become easier for individual but at hostel individual goes through so many emotions and sometimes feels isolated and lonely here in hostel we have to deal ourself with our own problems and challenges of life here we are bounded by certain responsibilities also it depends on the type of friends or room partners we get in the hostel some are supportive and caring in nature but some are not due to which individual feels all alone and isolated cultural differences play an very important role in the homesickness as individual comes from different background and it gets very difficult for them to adjust in new environment the wide range of participants contribute to variations in result like student who are in their graduating years who have started this new journey to set their future are more likely to face homesickness as compare to those who are doing jobs outside the home as they have experiences all the challenges in life and it becomes very easy for them to handle all the things very easily FISHER in his study(2004) says that homesickness affects the cognitive level of an individual and individual faces difficulty in concentrating to the academics not only this but also its affects day to day activities also

**Van TILBURG (2012)** personal communication says that the distraction is much more preferred over contacts with or thinking about home

**Stroebe et al (2002)** further conceptualise the two basic framework of grief and bereavement he says that the homesickness result from combined effect of loss and adjustment to new place which results in isolation

**Vinger Hoets (2005)** wrote about cat type and dog type homesickness just as dogs attach more strongly to people than places one part of homesickness is missing people and just as cats strongly attach to places and physical environment another part of homesickness is missing physical place

**Baumeister and Leary (1995)** proposed that the people experience distress when their belongingness and needs are threatened when they have no one to share their pain or happenings people feel anxiety and are depressed

the tools used to measure depression and anxiety have certain limitations such as it can lead to biasness as (SCAT) and (BDI) are self – report measures that rely on subjective evaluations the relationship of depression and anxiety is a complex phenomenon it can be studied with other elements also where in this study it has not been there In summary the strong correlation between depression and anxiety highlights the constructs which leads to homesickness in individual

### Suggestions

Future research should target different elements that can be linked to homesickness such as academic effects , emotional and psychological effect to the students it should be divided into different age groups incorporating variables like academic effect , emotional effect and coping strategies and social support provides a clear view of the relationships examining cultural context through qualitative methods or longitudinal studies effect homesickness longitudinal studies tracking changes are recommended over time are recommended and a mixed method approach qualitative and quantitative can provide us deep insight about the homesickness improved measured tools like meditation should be considered additionally detailed analysis (BDI) and (SCAT) may uncover the specific relationship providing the clear picture

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