University of Mumbai

S A M B H A S H A N

LONELINESS, EXILE & INDIAN SOCIETY

Unveiling Contemporary Realities

CALL FOR PAPERS

March 2024

Within the paradoxical landscape of our densely populated yet emotionally isolated world, the pervasive issue of loneliness persists; transcending the external facade of societal density. The report Loneliness in India: Recognising the Role of History, Technology and Culture (2022) by Kristine Gloria in collaboration with Ananta Centre, Aspen Digital, and Meta discusses loneliness as a distressed feeling that informs us that our need for attachment to social need is not satisfied. Very often paired with feelings of anxiety, social withdrawal, fear, depression, and shame; it is a complex feeling that raises the question of whether loneliness is an individual problem or a social and political one. While loneliness does not discriminate and can affect people of different ages, conditions, professions, and places, there is a greater need to focus on the structural factors that cause systemic discrimination making some groups (such as the elderly, persons with disabilities, women, children, socially, economically marginalized, religious minorities, persons who are homeless, to name few) more vulnerable to the condition than others. Rapid socio-economic transitions with inadequate mechanisms of ensuring access and equity have deepened the existing socioeconomic and political disparities, thus rendering certain (privileged) people's /communities' condition more important than others (Gloria, 8-9). To that effect, the report makes a case (quoting Ajay Nair, CEO of Swasth and Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellow), that there exists two India's. One Indian is benefitting from the awareness and services available for mental health and loneliness, and another Indian, still faces the predicament of being exiled (locked up) and having no access to therapists or mental health care resources. While India boasts of technological innovations that help millions, there are other billions who are still left behind! (Gloria, 20). Throughout history, philosophers have grappled with the existential dimensions of loneliness. Karl Marx, a towering figure, positioned loneliness within the framework of societal and economic alienation, contending that individuals within capitalist societies experience detachment and isolation due to their relations with the means of production. Philosophers such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Martin Heidegger delved into the non-essential nature of human existence, exploring the themes of anguish, freedom, isolation, phenomena of individual consciousness, and the human condition. What one reads in all of what is come to be characterized as existential literature; is that an individual while standing 'alone' in his radical freedom, choice, and responsibility towards society is redemptive, regenerative, and strong, whereas, loneliness suggests a certainly forced exile, exclusion, marginalization and suffering.

In the silent struggles that accompany the experience of loneliness, four distinct crises emerge, each casting a shadow on the emotional landscape of individuals. First and foremost is the Crisis of Authenticity, a battle waged against societal expectations and the fear of judgment. Loneliness often leaves individuals feeling disconnected from their true selves, as they grapple with the pressure to conform, leading to a profound crisis of identity and authenticity. Parallel to the crisis of authenticity, Loneliness brings forth the Crisis of Purpose. In the absence of meaningful connections, individuals find themselves questioning the significance of their actions and the overall purpose of their existence. This crisis intertwines with a sense of aimlessness, leaving individuals adrift without a clear sense of direction or fulfillment. Simultaneously, the Crisis of Ownership unfolds, as loneliness exacerbates the struggle to maintain control over one's experiences and emotions. In an era dominated by digital connectivity and virtual realities, individuals may find themselves seeking validation from external sources, leading to a crisis in owning and navigating their emotional landscapes. Lastly, Loneliness weaves a Crisis of Relationship, impacting the very fabric of human connection. Whether through the absence of meaningful connections or the breakdown of existing relationships, the emotional toll is palpable. Loneliness not only isolates individuals but also threatens the foundation of the relationships they hold dear, intensifying the emotional burden of solitude. These four crises, interwoven with the broader narrative of loneliness, underscore the intricate and multifaceted nature of this pervasive human experience. By understanding and addressing these crises, we take a step toward unraveling the complexities of loneliness and fostering a more connected and empathetic society.

The poignant intersection of exile, loneliness, and mental health in India finds resonance in the framework of Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages. Erikson's Stage 6, marked by the conflict of Intimacy vs Isolation, encapsulates the crucial juncture where failure can precipitate isolation, loneliness, and, in some cases, depression. This developmental perspective sheds light on the enduring impact of isolation on an individual's psychological well-being. In the current scenario, available data underscores a disconcerting trend as loneliness emerges as a pervasive factor affecting mental health across various stages of the life cycle described by Erik Erikson. This collective insight from the field of psychology underscores the urgent need for a nuanced exploration of loneliness and exile, recognizing their intricate interplay with mental health outcomes, and underscores the importance of addressing these complex dynamics to foster a more compassionate and supportive society.

Robert Putnam's "Bowling Alone" (2000) explores the decline of social connections, emphasizing the negative impact on communal bonds and heightened loneliness. In contrast, Eric Trist's "Going Solo" examines the potential benefits of voluntary solitude, acknowledging the fine line between empowerment and the risk of isolation. Together, these perspectives offer a nuanced view of loneliness, addressing the consequences of diminishing social capital and the complexities of embracing solitude in modern society. Fyodor Dostoevsky, Anton Chekhov, and Leo Tolstoy, renowned literary figures, drew inspiration from their encounters with loneliness. Their masterpieces, such as "Crime and Punishment," "The Cherry Orchard," and "Anna Karenina," explore the profound impact of isolation on the human psyche. Virginia Woolf, navigating profound loneliness and mental health challenges, infused these struggles into masterpieces like "Mrs. Dalloway" and "To the Lighthouse," creating nuanced explorations of the human psyche. Ernest Hemingway, confronting intense solitude post-war and in relationships, reflected his experiences in works like "The Old Man and the Sea" and

"A Farewell to Arms," where protagonists grapple with isolation. Daniel Defoe, facing social isolation and financial difficulties, likely drew from personal struggles in "Robinson Crusoe," exploring the psychological impact of solitude. Mary Shelley, dealing with personal tragedies, wove existential loneliness into "Frankenstein," portraying the monster's isolation. Sylvia Plath, the renowned poet, expressed her struggles with mental health and isolation in works like "The Bell Jar," providing a poignant insight into the effects of loneliness on the human mind. John T. Cacioppo, a loneliness researcher, shaped the discourse on loneliness and well-being in works like "Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection." Olivia Laing, exploring her loneliness in "The Lonely City," intertwined personal encounters with artists like Edward Hopper, offering a poignant exploration of urban loneliness and artistic expression. These writers, having intimately experienced loneliness, channeled their insights into enduring works that illuminate the complexities of the human condition and the universal struggle against isolation.

The experience of exile and loneliness from the twentieth century until current times has come as an experience of mass violence and horror caused by conflicting political and economic ideologies which force us to contextualize it within the events of wars, mass displacements, persecutions, generalized violence, human rights violations and excessive surveillance of technocratic undemocratic regimes. This call beckons scholars to unravel the profound implications of these phenomena on contemporary society, bridging the academic, conceptual, and ideological domains of real-world experiences. This call for papers seeks scholarly engagement with the multidimensional aspects of loneliness and exile. Beyond probing the psychological implications, submissions are encouraged to elucidate the philosophical and political underpinnings as well as historical contexts drawing upon the intellectual legacies of prominent thinkers. Papers could navigate the phenomena of loneliness and exile, exclusionary societal structures exacerbating isolation, and propose interventions grounded in critical analyses.

Themes Encouraged for Exploration (Non-exhaustive):
1) Psychological Implications: Loneliness and mental health
2) Technological Connectivity and Social Disconnect
3) Cultural and Societal Constructs of Exile
4) Exile and Displacement: Societal repercussions of displacement
5) Community and Belonging
6) Philosophical, Existential, Critical Theory reflections on loneliness
7) Policy Interventions
8) Urbanization and Loneliness
9) Literary and Artistic Expressions
10) Epidemiological Insights
11) Interpersonal Relationships: Intimacy, isolation, and societal dynamics
12) Economic and Workforce Impact
13) Aging and Loneliness
14) Youth and Loneliness
15) Diasporic contexts
16) Cinematic and Mass Media Representations
17) Wars, Insurgencies International Relations and Politics of exile
18) Loneliness and Internal and External migration
19) Marriage and loneliness
20) Single and loneliness
21) Societal alienation

The March 2024 issue of Sambhasan will be on the above themes. Last date for the submission of the article is 15th March, 2024. The style of Writing the article is given on the website: https://mu.ac.in/sambhashan Kindly follow the instructions given on the website. Submit your article through a Word file on the following email id: coeditor.sambhashan@mu.ac.in

Guidelines to follow for writing a research paper in Sambhashan:

- Original, scholarly, creative and critical papers with adequate references and empirical work (if applicable).

- All references to the author should be removed from the submission to enable the anonymous review process.

- There should be a limit from 4000-6000 words (for papers), 1500-2000 words (for commentaries) and 1000 words (for book reviews).

- Essays should follow the Times New Roman font in size 12 with double space and be submitted as a word document.

- All contributions should follow the author-date referencing system detailed in chapter 15 of The Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The style guidelines are given below and can also be consulted on the journal webpages for quick reference.

- Authors should submit a statement that their contribution is original without any plagiarism. They can also, in addition, submit a plagiarism check certificate.

A) BOOKS

- Book references should be listed at the end of the paper as "Works Cited" in alphabetical order.

Single Author:

Carson, Rachel. 2002. *Silent Spring*. New York: HMH Books.

Dual Authors:

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 1997. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.

Multiple Authors:

Berkman, Alexander, Henry Bauer, and Carl Nold. 2011. *Prison Blossoms: Anarchist Voices from the American Pa*st. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

B) JOURNAL ARTICLE

- List should follow alphabetical order and mention the page range of the published article.

- The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. 1995. "Forms of Capital and

Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social

Topography." *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 4 (January): 859–903.

Ayers, Lewis. 2000. "John Caputo and the 'Faith' of Soft-Postmodernism." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (March): 13–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000006500102

Dawson, Doyne. 2002. "The Marriage of Marx and Darwin?" *History and Theory* 41, no. 1 (February): 43–59.

C) NEWS OR MAGAZINE ARTICLE

- List should follow alphabetical order and need not mention the page numbers or range.

- The URL or name of the database should be included for online articles referenced.

Hitchens, Christopher. 1996. "Steal This Article." Vanity Fair, May 13, 1996

https://www.vanityfair.com/culture/1996/05/christopher-htichens-plagiarism-musings

Khan, Saeed. 2020. "1918 Spanish Flu cure ordered by doctors was contraindicated in

Gandhiji's Principles". Times of India, April 14, 2020.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/75130706.cms?

utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

Klein, Ezra. 2020. "Elizabeth Warren has a plan for this too." Vox, April 6, 2020.

https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2020/4/6/21207338/elizabeth-warrencoronavirus-covid-19-recession-depression-presidency-trump.

D) WEBSITE CONTENT

- Website content can be restricted to in-text citation as follows: "As of May 1, 2017, Yale's home page listed . . .". But it can also be listed in the reference list alphabetically as follows. The date of access can be mentioned if the date of publication is not available.

Anthony Appiah, Kwame. 2014. "Is Religion Good or Bad?" Filmed May 2014 at

TEDSalon, New York.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a

_trick_question

Yale University. n.d. "About Yale: Yale Facts." Accessed May 1, 2017.

https://www.yale.edu/about-yale/yale-facts.