Perceived Parental Support, Peer Relationships, and Loneliness among Adolescents: The Role of Emotional Regulation

(A Review-Based Study of Family Relationships, Emotional Isolation, and Belongingness in the Indian Context)

AUTHORS- 1-Mrs. Meenakshi 2-Prof. (Dr.) Sushila

Designation 1- Assistant Professor, Department of Home Science, Krishna Group of Institutions, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, India.

2- Prof .Department of Sociology, Government Degree College, Modinagar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, India.

Abstract

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by emotional changes, increasing independence, identity formation, and the growing importance of relationships with parents and peers. Although adolescents may remain physically connected to their families, schools, and friendship groups, they may experience emotional isolation when they perceive insufficient understanding, acceptance, or support. This review-based paper examines the relationship between perceived parental support, peer relationships, loneliness, and emotional regulation among adolescents, with particular relevance to the Indian sociocultural context and the educational settings of Meerut and Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. The review focuses on parent–adolescent communication, friendship quality, emotional expression, interpersonal trust, and a sense of belongingness. Existing research indicates that supportive peer relationships and constructive social-emotional skills are important correlates of adolescent well-being. Research on Indian adolescents also highlights the importance of parental involvement in educational engagement, although educational participation should not be equated directly with emotional support. Emotional regulation is considered a potential explanatory and protective process through which adolescents understand and manage interpersonal stress. The paper proposes an integrated conceptual framework connecting family support, peer relationship quality, emotional regulation, and loneliness. It also discusses implications for parents, educational institutions, teachers, counsellors, and community-based interventions. The paper concludes that adolescent well-being requires more than academic supervision or physical care; it requires emotionally responsive relationships, opportunities for safe self-expression, and supportive environments that strengthen social connectedness.

Keywords: Adolescence, perceived parental support, peer relationships, loneliness, emotional regulation, emotional isolation, family relationships, belongingness, Indian adolescents.

1. Introduction

Adolescence is a significant period of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. During this stage, young people gradually develop independence, establish personal identities, negotiate family expectations, and seek acceptance from their peer groups. Relationships with parents and friends become particularly important because they influence adolescents' perceptions of self-worth, interpersonal security, and social belonging.

Family remains an important source of emotional security. Parents may provide affection, guidance, encouragement, protection, and opportunities for open communication. However, the quality of parental support depends not only on what parents provide but also on how adolescents perceive and interpret that support. A parent may be concerned about a child's academic achievement and future prospects while the adolescent may still feel emotionally misunderstood if conversations focus exclusively on marks, discipline, career decisions, or social expectations.

Peer relationships constitute another important dimension of adolescent development. Friendships can provide companionship, acceptance, emotional validation, and opportunities to develop interpersonal skills. Supportive friendships may help adolescents cope with academic pressure, family disagreements, social rejection, and uncertainty about their future. Conversely, bullying, exclusion, friendship conflicts, and pressure to conform may increase feelings of insecurity and loneliness.

Loneliness is not identical to physical isolation. An adolescent may live with parents, attend school regularly, and communicate with numerous friends while still experiencing a lack of meaningful emotional connection. Emotional isolation may arise when an individual feels unable to express personal concerns, expects criticism rather than understanding, or perceives that significant others do not recognize their emotional needs.

The systematic review and exploratory meta-analysis by Mitic et al. (2021) examined evidence from 364 studies on supportive peer relationships in early adolescence. Their findings highlighted the relevance of social-emotional skills, individual characteristics, family influences, and the school environment in understanding peer relationship quality. This provides a valuable basis for examining how family relationships, friendships, and emotional regulation may jointly influence adolescent loneliness.

In India, adolescent experiences are shaped by diverse family structures, cultural expectations, educational competition, gender norms, digital communication, and changing patterns of family interaction. The experiences of adolescents in urban and semi-urban settings, including Meerut and Ghaziabad, deserve attention because these settings may combine traditional family expectations with changing educational, social, and technological environments.

The present review therefore examines the interconnected roles of perceived parental support, peer relationship quality, loneliness, and emotional regulation, while identifying implications for family life, educational institutions, and future research in the Indian context.

2. Statement of the Problem

Adolescents are frequently encouraged to achieve academic success, behave responsibly, and prepare for future employment. Although these expectations may reflect parental concern and aspirations, insufficient attention to emotional communication can create a gap between adolescents' emotional needs and the support they perceive from their families.

A similar gap may occur within friendship groups. Adolescents may have many social contacts but lack trustworthy relationships in which they can discuss personal difficulties without fear of ridicule, rejection, or judgment. Such circumstances may contribute to loneliness, emotional withdrawal, reduced confidence, and difficulties in managing interpersonal stress.

The central problem addressed in this paper is the need to understand how adolescents' perceptions of parental support and the quality of peer relationships may be associated with loneliness, and how emotional regulation may help explain differences in these experiences.

The review also addresses the limited contextual understanding that can arise when findings from international research are applied to Indian adolescents without considering family expectations, local educational environments, and sociocultural diversity.

3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the paper are:

To examine the relationship between perceived parental support and adolescent emotional well-being.

- To discuss the influence of parent–adolescent communication on emotional expression and feelings of belongingness.
- To review the role of peer relationships and friendship quality in adolescent loneliness.
- To explain the potential role of emotional regulation in managing interpersonal stress.
- To develop a conceptual framework connecting parental support, peer relationships, emotional regulation, and loneliness.
- To discuss the relevance of these relationships for adolescents in the Indian context, particularly in educational settings in Meerut and Ghaziabad.
- To suggest recommendations for parents, educational institutions, counsellors, and future researchers.

4. Research Questions

The review is guided by the following questions:

- How is perceived parental support related to adolescents' experiences of emotional security and loneliness?
- In what ways may the quality of peer relationships influence emotional isolation and belongingness?
- How may emotional regulation help adolescents manage family and friendship-related stress?

- What practical measures can families and educational institutions adopt to support adolescent emotional well-being?
- What further research is needed to understand these relationships among adolescents in western Uttar Pradesh?

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The paper adopts a narrative, review-based research design. It synthesizes relevant literature on adolescent development, family relationships, parental involvement, peer support, social connectedness, loneliness, and emotional regulation.

It does not report a new questionnaire survey, interviews, experiments, or original statistical analysis. Accordingly, the discussion presents a conceptual synthesis of published research rather than findings from a newly recruited sample of adolescents.

5.2 Scope of the Review

The principal themes are:

- Perceived parental support and family communication.
- Friendship quality and peer acceptance.
- Loneliness and emotional isolation.
- Emotional regulation and interpersonal coping.
- School belongingness and educational support.
- Indian sociocultural and regional considerations.

Research published in and around 2021 is given particular attention, alongside established literature relevant to adolescent development and social relationships.

5.3 Literature Identification and Selection

Relevant literature may be identified through Google Scholar, PubMed, Crossref, and academic journal websites using combinations of the terms adolescent loneliness, parental support, peer relationships, emotional regulation, family communication, social connectedness, and Indian adolescents.

For a final journal submission, the authors should document the actual databases searched, dates of searching, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and number of articles reviewed. As this manuscript does not claim a completed systematic database search, it does not report invented search counts or a PRISMA selection process.

5.4 Analytical Approach

The selected literature is organized thematically to examine common concepts, proposed relationships, practical implications, and gaps in the evidence. The analysis distinguishes between findings directly reported in empirical research and interpretations proposed in the present conceptual framework.

6. Conceptual Understanding of the Major Variables

6.1 Perceived Parental Support

Perceived parental support refers to an adolescent's subjective understanding of the emotional, informational, practical, and relational assistance received from parents or primary caregivers. It may include affection, attentive listening, encouragement, respect for age-appropriate autonomy, constructive guidance, and a willingness to discuss difficulties.

Perceived support is distinct from parental involvement measured only through observable activities, such as attending school meetings, monitoring homework, or paying educational expenses. Such activities may be valuable, but they do not automatically establish that an adolescent feels heard, accepted, or emotionally secure.

Indian research by Paul, Rashmi, and Srivastava (2021) examined parental involvement and school dropout among Indian adolescents. Their findings connected certain forms of limited parental participation with greater dropout risk in particular groups. The study concerns educational outcomes rather than loneliness directly; nevertheless, it illustrates the importance of examining family involvement within the wider developmental environment.

For the present paper, parental support is therefore understood as a multidimensional construct involving both practical involvement and adolescents' perceptions of emotional availability.

6.2 Parent–Adolescent Communication

Communication is a central mechanism through which family support may be experienced. Open communication allows adolescents to discuss academic stress, friendship problems, body image, social expectations, career uncertainty, and personal concerns.

Supportive communication is characterized by listening, empathy, age-appropriate privacy, non-humiliating correction, and constructive discussion. In contrast, repeated criticism, dismissal of emotional concerns, excessive comparison with siblings or classmates, and punishment for honest disclosure may discourage adolescents from sharing their experiences.

Communication should not be understood as the absence of parental guidance or boundaries. Rather, the relevant distinction is between guidance that combines clear expectations with emotional respect and interaction that makes adolescents feel persistently unheard or unsafe.

In the Indian family context, discussions about academic performance, career choices, gender roles, family reputation, and independence may be especially consequential. However, these experiences vary considerably across households, socioeconomic groups, rural and urban settings, and individual adolescents. No single family pattern should be assumed to characterize all Indian families.

6.3 Peer Relationships and Friendship Quality

Peer relationships become increasingly important as adolescents develop social identities and seek acceptance beyond the immediate family. Friendship quality may be reflected in trust, reciprocity, empathy, reliability, shared activities, and the ability to resolve disagreements constructively.

Supportive friendships can provide emotional validation and practical assistance. They may also offer opportunities to practise communication, cooperation, perspective-taking, and conflict resolution.

Mitic et al. (2021) provide a substantial review of the factors associated with supportive peer relationships. Their synthesis identifies social-emotional skills and school environments as relevant considerations in understanding peer relationships during early adolescence.

However, peer contact is not necessarily equivalent to peer support. Adolescents may experience loneliness within a large friendship group when relationships lack trust or when acceptance appears conditional on appearance, academic achievement, social status, conformity, or online visibility.

Negative peer experiences, including bullying, exclusion, ridicule, and coercive friendship dynamics, may undermine belongingness. Consequently, the quality and perceived safety of relationships may be more informative than the number of friends alone.

6.4 Loneliness and Emotional Isolation

Loneliness is the subjective experience of a discrepancy between desired and perceived social connection. It may occur when adolescents believe that their relationships do not provide the intimacy, understanding, companionship, or acceptance they need.

Emotional isolation is used in this paper to describe the perceived absence of meaningful emotional connection, including difficulty expressing feelings or believing that others are unwilling to understand personal concerns. It overlaps conceptually with loneliness but should not automatically be treated as a separately validated psychological construct.

Three related experiences are particularly relevant:

Emotional disconnection within the family: Adolescents feel that family members do not understand their feelings or concerns.

Peer-related loneliness: Adolescents perceive insufficient intimacy, acceptance, or dependable friendship.

Reduced belongingness: Adolescents feel that they do not have a meaningful or valued place within their family, school, or peer community.

These experiences may coexist, but they are not interchangeable. An adolescent who experiences family conflict may still have supportive friendships, while an adolescent who feels excluded by peers may receive substantial emotional support from parents.

The 2021 review by Pearce et al. examined loneliness as a potential contributor to anxiety and depression among young people. Its emphasis on loneliness as a meaningful psychological and social experience supports the importance of addressing perceived disconnection rather than considering social participation alone.

6.5 Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation refers to the processes through which individuals recognize, understand, express, and manage their emotional responses. It includes the ability to tolerate distress, reconsider unhelpful interpretations, communicate feelings constructively, and select appropriate coping strategies.

Adolescents may experience intense emotions during conflicts with parents, friendship disagreements, rejection, examinations, or uncertainty about identity and future goals. Their responses may depend partly on the emotional skills available to them and on whether their social environments permit the safe expression of feelings.

Constructive emotional regulation does not mean suppressing sadness, anger, fear, or disappointment. Nor does it mean accepting harmful relationships without objection. It involves recognizing emotions, understanding their causes, and responding in ways that protect well-being and support constructive problem-solving.

The review by Mitic et al. (2021) identifies emotion-regulation ability among the individual factors associated with supportive peer relationships. This provides a basis for considering emotional regulation as a relevant component of the relationship between social experiences and adolescent well-being.

The present paper proposes that emotional regulation may operate as a potential mediator, moderator, or independent protective factor. These possibilities require empirical testing and should not be interpreted as established causal effects.

7. Review of Relevant Literature

7.1 Supportive Peer Relationships in Early Adolescence

Mitic et al. (2021) synthesized findings from 364 studies to develop an integrated model of supportive peer relationships. The review considered individual, family, school, community, and technological influences. Its findings highlight the relevance of social-emotional skills and the school environment.

The study is especially useful because it positions peer relationships within a wider social ecology. Friendship quality cannot be understood solely as a personal characteristic of an adolescent; it may also reflect classroom climate, opportunities for inclusion, family experiences, and the broader social environment.

For the present paper, this supports examining peer support alongside family relationships and emotional regulation.

7.2 Parental Involvement and Indian Adolescents

Paul et al. (2021) investigated whether parental involvement was associated with school dropout among Indian adolescents using panel-study data. Their findings identified associations between certain indicators of parental non-participation and dropout risk in specific groups.

Although school dropout and loneliness are distinct outcomes, this study provides Indian evidence that parental participation can matter for adolescent educational trajectories. It also underlines the need to distinguish educational supervision from emotional support when examining family relationships.

The current review extends the discussion conceptually by asking whether adolescents' subjective perceptions of parental responsiveness may help explain emotional experiences that are not captured by educational participation indicators alone.

7.3 Belongingness and Social Exclusion

The review by The importance of belonging and the avoidance of social risk taking in adolescence (2021) discusses the importance of social acceptance and the heightened relevance of social exclusion during adolescence. It examines how efforts to avoid rejection can influence behaviour and decision-making.

This perspective is relevant because adolescents may modify their speech, interests, appearance, or emotional expression in an attempt to remain accepted by a friendship group. While adaptation to social settings is a normal developmental process, persistent fear of rejection may discourage authentic self-expression and complicate emotional coping.

The present paper therefore treats belongingness as a key concept connecting peer relationships with loneliness.

7.4 Loneliness Interventions for Young People

French et al. (2021) reviewed the acceptability and effectiveness of interventions intended to address loneliness and social isolation among young people. Their review identified promising intervention findings but also noted limitations, including small samples, varied outcome measures, short follow-up periods, and attrition.

This literature suggests that loneliness interventions should be evaluated carefully rather than assumed to work equally well across populations. For Indian educational settings, school-based programmes could be adapted to local needs, but their feasibility and effectiveness would require direct assessment.

7.5 Digital Communication and Social Connectedness in India

Sarwatay, Raman, and Ramasubramanian (2021) examined media literacy, social connectedness, and digital citizenship in India, focusing on how parents and young people navigate social environments.

Digital communication may help adolescents maintain friendships, seek information, and participate in supportive communities. At the same time, online comparison, cyberbullying, exclusion from digital groups, and pressure to maintain a particular social image may create additional challenges.

Digital interaction should therefore not be classified as inherently harmful or beneficial. Its relevance depends on the quality of interactions, the adolescent's circumstances, and the balance between online and offline relationships.

7.6 Synthesis of the Literature

The reviewed literature suggests four broad conclusions.

First, family relationships and peer relationships are interrelated dimensions of adolescent social development. Second, the quality of relationships may matter more than the mere presence of social contacts. Third, emotional and social skills are relevant to how adolescents navigate interpersonal experiences. Fourth, interventions addressing loneliness require careful evaluation and adaptation to their target populations.

An important limitation remains: these publications do not collectively establish a single causal pathway linking parental support, peer relationships, emotional regulation, and loneliness among adolescents in Meerut and Ghaziabad. The proposed relationship among these variables should therefore be treated as a framework for future research rather than a confirmed regional finding.

7.7 Updated Evidence from 2021–2026

To update the review beyond its original concentration on 2021 publications, the revised paper incorporates selected studies and institutional resources published from 2021 through October 2026. The sources are not presented as a systematic census of all available research; they are a focused selection relevant to loneliness, family support, peer relationships, social connectedness, and adolescent mental health.

Recent evidence strengthens the paper's central argument while also adding caution. Buecker et al. (2024) synthesized longitudinal evidence on risk and protective factors for youth loneliness, including social and psychological variables. Turner et al. (2024) emphasized adolescents' own accounts of loneliness and the importance of safe, supportive spaces. Indian work on peer-supported digital storytelling (Gonsalves et al., 2024) and online peer-support forums (Achar & Mehrotra, 2024; issue publication 2026) broadens the discussion of help-seeking and digital connection. WHO (2025) and UNICEF India (2025) stress that adolescent mental health requires supportive family, school, community, and service environments. A 2026 meta-analysis by Burke et al. reports that intervention effects are not uniformly conclusive, reinforcing the need to evaluate programmes rather than assume that any single approach will work for all young people.

Table 1. Selected literature published between 2021 and 2026

Year / source	Focus	Contribution to this paper	Caution / relevance
2021 — Mitic et al.	Supportive peer relationships	Integrates individual, family, school and social-emotional factors.	Supports a multi-factor view; not a Meerut/Ghaziabad sample.
2021 — Osborn et al.	Youth loneliness interventions	Reviews intervention acceptability and effectiveness.	Studies varied in design and outcome measures.
2021 — Paul et al.	Parental involvement in India	Adds India-based evidence about parental participation and school dropout.	School dropout is not the same outcome as loneliness.

2022 — Patra (Ed.)	Adolescence in India	Indian sociocultural context, peer relations, mental health and life skills.	Edited academic volume, not a single empirical study.
2024 — Buecker et al.	Longitudinal risk/protective factors for youth loneliness	Synthesizes longitudinal evidence across social and psychological factors.	Associations vary by study and population.
2024 — Turner et al.	Adolescents' perspectives on loneliness	Highlights context, skills and safe spaces as possible prevention themes.	Qualitative perspectives should not be generalized to every adolescent.
2024 — Devi & Singh	Family support and adolescent mental health in Haryana	Provides regional Indian evidence connecting family support and well-being.	Single study; not a direct test of loneliness.
2024 — Gonsalves et al.	Baatcheet peer-supported digital storytelling	Indian youth-oriented intervention co-design and digital peer support.	Co-design paper; not proof of intervention effectiveness.
2024 — Achar & Mehrotra	Online peer-support forums for youth in India	Explores perspectives on online peer support and help-seeking.	Exploratory stakeholder evidence.
2024 — Cherewick et al.	Social support and self-efficacy in Darjeeling	Indian early-adolescent evidence on social support and well-being.	Sample and setting limit wider generalization.
2025 — WHO	Adolescent mental health	Emphasizes coping, emotion management and supportive	Institutional guidance rather than a primary study.

		environments.	
2025 — UNICEF India	Child and adolescent mental-health services	Highlights service gaps, stigma and need for youth-centred care in India.	National service mapping; not a regional prevalence estimate.
2025/26 — González-Abaurrea et al.	Peer victimization, loneliness and solitude	Reviews possible bidirectional links between peer victimization and loneliness.	Review findings do not establish local causal effects.
2026 — Burke et al.	Loneliness interventions, ages 4–18	Meta-analysis assesses intervention effects and social-emotional approaches.	RCT estimate was small and not statistically significant; cautious interpretation needed.
2026 — Tripathi et al.	Indian online peer-support forum content	Adds recent Indian evidence on the concerns young people bring to anonymous peer-support spaces.	Online forum users are not representative of all adolescents.

Source note: This table summarizes selected publications and official resources identified for the revised manuscript. It is a narrative evidence map, not a formal systematic-review extraction table.

Across the selected sources, three themes recur:

(1) social connection is multidimensional and includes family, peers, school and digital settings; (2) adolescents' perceived support and the quality of relationships are important considerations, but study designs and populations differ; and (3) interventions should be locally adapted and evaluated. The Indian studies and resources provide useful context, yet the reviewed evidence does not establish the prevalence of loneliness or the strength of the proposed relationships among adolescents specifically in Meerut and Ghaziabad.

8. Proposed Conceptual Framework

The present paper proposes an integrated framework in which perceived parental support and peer relationship quality are associated with adolescent loneliness, while emotional regulation may influence the strength or nature of these relationships.

Figure 1. Proposed conceptual model

Perceived parental support and parent–adolescent communication

↓

Emotional security, trust, and willingness to express feelings

Peer relationship quality and friendship support

↓

Acceptance, companionship, and social belongingness

Emotional regulation

↓

Recognition of emotions, constructive coping, and interpersonal problem-solving

Combined relevance to adolescent loneliness and emotional isolation

The framework allows for several possible pathways:

- Greater perceived parental support may be associated with lower loneliness through increased emotional security.
- Higher-quality peer relationships may be associated with stronger belongingness and reduced loneliness.
- More adaptive emotional regulation may help adolescents cope with interpersonal stress.
- Emotional regulation may mediate some associations between relationship experiences and loneliness, or moderate the effects of relationship stress.
- Persistent family conflict, negative peer experiences, or difficulties in emotional coping may be associated with greater perceived disconnection.

These pathways are proposed for conceptual clarity. Their direction, magnitude, and causal status cannot be established through the narrative review alone.

9. Discussion

9.1 The Quality of Family Relationships

The literature indicates that family support should be understood in relational as well as practical terms. Adolescents may benefit when parents provide educational guidance while also acknowledging feelings, listening without immediate judgment, and allowing age-appropriate independence.

For parents, an important practical question is whether adolescents can discuss failure, rejection, fear, or disagreement without expecting humiliation or automatic punishment. Such opportunities may support trust and encourage adolescents to seek help when they encounter difficulties.

However, supportive communication should not be regarded as a guarantee against loneliness. Adolescents experience multiple influences, including temperament, life events, school experiences, socioeconomic circumstances, and the quality of their friendships.

9.2 Peer Relationships as a Source of Belongingness

Friendships can provide a setting in which adolescents develop social competence and receive emotional validation. Trustworthy peers may help them interpret difficult experiences, practise problem-solving, and feel less alone.

Conversely, social exclusion and conditional acceptance may undermine belongingness. Schools should therefore pay attention not only to visible disciplinary problems but also to less visible forms of exclusion, including persistent ridicule, friendship-group gatekeeping, and online harassment.

The evidence reviewed by Mitic et al. (2021) supports viewing supportive peer relationships within the broader school and social environment.

9.3 Emotional Regulation as a Potential Protective Process

Emotional regulation may help adolescents respond to difficult experiences without escalating conflict or withdrawing from relationships. Skills such as identifying feelings, pausing before reacting, considering alternative interpretations, and communicating needs respectfully can be taught and practised.

Nevertheless, emotional regulation must not be used to place the entire responsibility for interpersonal problems on the adolescent. A young person cannot be expected to regulate away persistent bullying, abuse, humiliation, or severe family conflict. Individual coping skills need to be accompanied by supportive relationships and appropriate institutional responses.

9.4 Relevance to Meerut and Ghaziabad

The Meerut–Ghaziabad region offers a relevant setting for future research because adolescents may encounter varied family arrangements, educational expectations, peer cultures, and patterns of digital communication. Yet, regional relevance should not be confused with regional evidence: the studies reviewed here do not constitute a representative sample of adolescents from these districts.

Future investigations should examine differences across government and private schools, urban and semi-urban locations, gender, socioeconomic background, family structure, and age groups. Researchers should avoid assuming that all adolescents in the region experience the same pressures or that cultural background alone explains emotional isolation.

A locally grounded study could help educators and families understand which relationship experiences are most strongly associated with loneliness in the specific populations being studied.

10. Educational and Practical Implications

10.1 Recommendations for Parents

Parents may consider the following practices:

Set aside regular time for conversation that is not focused exclusively on academic performance.

Listen carefully before offering advice or criticism.

Acknowledge emotional experiences even when parents and adolescents disagree about the situation.

Avoid repeated comparisons with siblings, classmates, or relatives.

Establish clear, consistent boundaries while respecting age-appropriate privacy.

Encourage adolescents to seek help when experiencing bullying, persistent sadness, or social exclusion.

10.2 Recommendations for Schools and Colleges

- Educational institutions can strengthen social connectedness by:
- Developing age-appropriate social-emotional learning activities.
- Encouraging cooperative learning and inclusive extracurricular activities.
- Establishing accessible counselling and referral systems.
- Addressing bullying, cyberbullying, and repeated peer exclusion.
- Training teachers to recognize signs of withdrawal and distress without making unsupported diagnoses.
- Providing structured opportunities for students to express concerns confidentially.

10.3 Role of Counsellors and Community Professionals

Counsellors can support adolescents in identifying emotions, communicating needs, building supportive friendships, and developing constructive coping strategies. Family-focused sessions may help parents understand adolescents' experiences and improve communication where appropriate.

Interventions should be culturally responsive and sensitive to confidentiality, safeguarding, and differences in family circumstances. Persistent distress, significant functional impairment, or safety concerns require appropriate professional assessment and support.

10.4 Relevance to Home Science and Sociology

The topic offers an interdisciplinary connection between Home Science and Sociology. Home Science contributes perspectives on family interaction, interpersonal development, and family well-being. Sociology contributes analysis of social relationships, group membership, cultural expectations, gender roles, and institutional environments.

Integrating these perspectives helps situate adolescent loneliness within both individual emotional experiences and the social conditions in which relationships develop.

11. Research Propositions for Future Empirical Testing

Based on the review, the following propositions are suggested:

P1: Higher perceived parental support will be associated with lower self-reported loneliness among adolescents.

P2: Higher-quality peer relationships will be associated with stronger perceived belongingness and lower loneliness.

P3: More adaptive emotional regulation will be associated with lower loneliness, after accounting for relevant demographic and social factors.

P4: Emotional regulation will moderate the association between negative interpersonal experiences and loneliness.

P5: Parent–adolescent communication quality will be positively associated with perceived emotional support.

These are proposed research hypotheses, not findings demonstrated by the present review. A future empirical study could examine them using validated measures, a clearly defined adolescent sample, and suitable statistical methods.

12. Limitations of the Review

This paper has several limitations.

First, it is a narrative review rather than a completed systematic review with a reproducible database search and formal risk-of-bias assessment. Second, the reviewed studies differ in their populations, research designs, measures, and outcomes, limiting direct comparison. Third, international findings may not transfer uniformly to Indian adolescents because family practices, educational environments, and cultural expectations vary. Fourth, the reviewed evidence does not establish causal relationships among all four principal variables. Fifth, no original data have been collected from adolescents in Meerut or Ghaziabad for this paper.

Finally, emotional isolation, loneliness, emotional regulation, and perceived parental support are related but distinct constructs. Future research should define and measure each construct carefully rather than treating them as interchangeable.

13. Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should consider the following directions:

Conduct a cross-sectional study of adolescents aged approximately 13–18 years in selected schools in Meerut and Ghaziabad.

Compare perceived parental support, peer relationship quality, emotional regulation, and loneliness across relevant demographic groups.

Examine whether parent–adolescent communication is associated with loneliness after accounting for socioeconomic background and other potential confounders.

Investigate online friendship quality, cyberbullying, and digital belongingness alongside offline relationships.

Develop and evaluate school-based activities that strengthen emotional literacy, peer inclusion, and help-seeking.

Conduct longitudinal research to examine whether changes in relationship quality precede changes in loneliness.

Include adolescents' own perspectives through ethically conducted interviews or focus groups.

Evaluate intervention outcomes using validated measures, transparent methods, and appropriate follow-up periods.

Any research involving minors should obtain the necessary institutional ethics approval, parental consent and adolescent assent where applicable, and appropriate safeguards for confidentiality and participant welfare.

14. Conclusion

Perceived parental support, peer relationships, emotional regulation, and loneliness represent interconnected dimensions of adolescent social and emotional development. Families provide an important context for emotional security, while friendships offer opportunities for acceptance, companionship, and belongingness. Emotional regulation may help adolescents manage interpersonal stress and express their needs constructively, but it cannot replace safe, responsive relationships or institutional action against harmful behaviour.

The reviewed literature provides a useful foundation for understanding these connections. In particular, the synthesis of supportive peer relationships by Mitic et al. (2021), research on parental involvement among Indian adolescents by Paul et al. (2021), and reviews concerning belongingness and youth loneliness point to the importance of examining social connection as a multidimensional experience.

For the Indian context, and for future research in Meerut and Ghaziabad, a constructive approach should combine family communication, positive peer environments, emotional learning, and accessible support systems. The proposed conceptual framework offers a basis for future empirical investigation, but its relationships must be tested using appropriate local data before region-specific or causal conclusions can be drawn.

Ultimately, supporting adolescents requires attention not only to their academic progress and physical needs but also to whether they feel heard, respected, emotionally safe, and meaningfully connected to others.

Adolescent Relationships Review |

References

- Achar, M., & Mehrotra, S. (2024). Online mental health peer-support forums for youth: An exploratory study on stakeholder perspectives. Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/02537176241265558
- Devi, S., & Singh, S. (2024). Role of family support and life satisfaction in affecting mental health of adolescents: An Indian study. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 12(3), 2113–2122. https://doi.org/10.25215/1203.209
- Paul, R., Rashmi, R., & Srivastava, S. (2021). Does lack of parental involvement affect school dropout among Indian adolescents? Evidence from a panel study. PLOS ONE, 16(5), e0251520. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0251520
- Sarwatay, D., Raman, U., & Ramasubramanian, S. R. (2021). Media literacy, social connectedness, and digital citizenship in India: Mapping stakeholders on how parents and young people navigate a social world. Frontiers in Human Dynamics, 3, 601239. https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2021.601239
- Tripathi, R., Karishiddimath, A., Sengupta, P., Khatri, K., Lakshmisree, K. V., Jose, J. T., Idicula, A. E., Srikanth, T. K., & Mehrotra, S. (2026). What youth write about and seek in an anonymized online peer support forum: Insights from India. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 23(3), 389. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph23030389

- World Health Organization. (2025, September 1). Mental health of adolescents. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health

UNICEF India. (2025). Child and adolescent mental health service mapping: India 2024. https://www.unicef.org/india/reports/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service-mapping-india-2024

Online research resources

Google Scholar: -
https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=adolescent+loneliness+parental+support+peer+relationships+emotional+regulation

PubMed: https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=adolescent+loneliness+peer+relationships

Crossref: https://search.crossref.org/

WHO — Mental health of adolescents: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health

UNICEF India — Child and adolescent mental-health service mapping: https://www.unicef.org/india/reports/child-and-adolescent-mental-health-service-mapping-india-2024

NCERT — National Council of Educational Research and Training: https://www.ncert.nic.in/