INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Social relationships are at the core of human life. Satisfying social relationships are vital for good mental and physical health. Not surprisingly, problematic aspects of relationships have been a major focus of psychological research. Indeed, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) highlights the fact that relational problems sometimes warrant the focus of clinical attention because they may cause clinically significant distress, and/or complicate the treatment of, or intensify mental disorders/general medical conditions. Psychologists have undertaken careful analysis of aggression, competition, crowding and other negative factors in social relation. Some problems of social relations have, however, been emphasized to the neglect of others. Researchers have investigated instances where there are “too many” people and individuals feel subjectively “crowded”. However, little attention has been given to the other end of the continuum where social relationships are “too few”, and people feel subjectively lonely.

As humans we possess a need to belong, which constitutes a fundamental motivation – driving our thoughts, emotions and interpersonal behaviour. This need to belong comprises a pervasive desire to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting positive and significant interpersonal relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Mijuskovic (1988) has also taken a strong stance on the motivational force of social relationships, arguing that:

“the fear of loneliness and the desire to avoid it constitutes the ultimate primary motivational principle in man... the drive to escape isolation accounts for all our passion, thought, and action. In all we think, say, and do, we are animated by a fear of
loneliness” (p. 508). Consequently, people who experience persistent difficulties in establishing and maintaining satisfying relationships with others, and thus have difficulty satisfying their belonging needs are likely to experience a sense of deprivation, manifested in disturbances such as loneliness (Chipuer, 2001; Cacioppo et al., 2000; Hagerty, Williams, Coyne, & Early, 1996; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). After an extensive recent review of the extant literature, Heinrich & Gullone (2006) concluded that loneliness was a crucial marker of social relationship deficits. Moreover, these authors argued that loneliness should command clinician’s attention in its own right - not just as an adjunct to treatment of other problems such as depression (p.695).

The phenomenon of loneliness is difficult to define, yet it is one of most important dimensions of human behavior. To date, the experts have not agreed upon a definition. Further, there are neither defined theoretical frameworks which explain loneliness nor is there any consensus regarding the causes and consequences. In the social sciences, the oldest publication about loneliness is Über die Einsamkeit (Zimmermann, 1785–1786). The attention to the concept of loneliness began in the 1950s and 1960s; with publications by Fromm Reichmann (1959). Several studies (Cf. Peplau & Perlman, 1982) suggest that loneliness is a meaningful psychological construct. But what is the nature of this construct? Researchers interested in the problem of loneliness have generally agreed on two characteristics of the loneliness experience (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). First, loneliness is an aversive experience, similar to other negative affective states such as depression or anxiety. Secondly, research has shown that loneliness is distinct from social isolation and reflects an individual’s subjective perception of deficiencies in his or her network of social relationships. These deficiencies may be quantitative (e.g., not enough friends) or they may be qualitative (e.g., lack of intimacy with others). Perlman and Peplau (1981) formulated a definition of
loneliness as “the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person’s network of social relationships is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively”. Larose, Guay, & Boivin (2002) defined loneliness as a subjective, distressing and unpleasant state in which individual perceives deficiencies in their social world. Loneliness is a subjective experience that can be related to but is not synonymous with social isolation. It has been described as a sad subjective state resulting from dissatisfaction with one’s social experiences (Youngblade, Berlin, & Beslky, 1999). Loneliness as a complex set of feelings and cognitions reflects the distressing and negative emotional experience emanating from the individual’s perceived deficiencies in intimate and social relationships (Ernst & Cacioppo, 1999; Rotenberg, 1999; Perlman, 1988). There is, however, a general consensus among researchers about the inevitability of loneliness (Medora & Woodward, 1986). Loneliness is viewed as a painful experience that is an inevitable part of living (Russell, 1996), and is associated with unmet needs (Weiss, 1973).

Generally the term “loneliness” tends to evoke thoughts of an elderly person isolated and alone or someone who is cut off from the mainstream of society. However, the experience of loneliness transcends the whole spectrum of human life and is felt by both young and old. Constant reminders of the pervasiveness of loneliness are expressed through popular songs, poetry, advice to the lovelorn columns, and news media coverage of everyday social issues.

“Like the common cold, loneliness is easy to catch, hard to cure, rarely fatal but always unpleasant and sometimes wretched almost beyond bearing”, stated Allen Fromm (1965, p. 187). Many authors (e.g., Hymel, Tarulli, Hayden Thomson, & Terrell-Deutsch, 1999; Rotenberg, 1999; McWhirter, 1990; Medora & Woodward, 1986; Peplau & Perlman, 1982) have contended that loneliness is a basic fact of life and thus experienced to differing extents by everyone at
some stage in their life. Loneliness and the struggle for intimacy are the essence of human existence and, as such, are permanent and universal experiences (Mijuskovic, 1996). Wood (1986) has even suggested that “failure to experience loneliness appropriately calls into question one’s very nature as a social being” (p. 184). Loneliness does not respect the boundaries of age, gender, race, marital status, socioeconomic status, or health status (Neto & Barros, 2000; Medora & Woodward, 1986). Thus, loneliness is a universal experience, a consequence of the universal human need to belong (Rotenberg, 1999a).

Thus, loneliness is an inescapable fact of life and knows no boundaries. Young and old, married and unmarried, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, healthy and unhealthy, extroverts and introverts - all eventually experience loneliness in some form at some stage of life, Rubin (1971) purports that even those who have wonderful relationships, devoted and loving families, excellent and involved careers and hectic social lives, will experience loneliness at some time (cf. Medora & Woodward, 1986).

The phenomenon of loneliness has been investigated extensively by Woodward (1967). Since 1967, fifteen research projects have been conducted under the supervision of Woodward at the Department of Human Development and the Family at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln (U.S.A).

The population of these studies included divorced (Zabel, 1970), housewives (Visser, 1971), never-married (Swanson, 1971), older persons (Woodward, 1971), college students (Seevers, 1972), rural high school students (Otto, 1973), low income single parents (Joern, 1973), older adults in nursing homes (Wythers, 1974), low income single adolescent mothers (Bauermeister, 1978), elderly American Indians (Luck, 1979), older urban widows (Hornung, 1980), and alcoholic subjects in rehabilitation centers (Medora, 1983).
The publication of Robert Weiss’s book “Experience of Loneliness: Studies in Emotional and Social Isolation” in 1974 was a critical event in awakening behavioural scientists and therapists to the urgency of the problem. It is Weiss’s “Experience of Loneliness” which comes closest to being the loneliness researcher’s Bible (Rubin, 1979, p. 85). According to Weiss’s typology, emotional loneliness “results from the lack of a close, intimate attachment to another person” and gives rise to feelings of emptiness and anxiety, whereas social loneliness “results from the lack of a network of social relationships in which the person is part of a group of friends who share common interests and activities” and gives rise to feelings of marginality, boredom and aimlessness (Russell, Cutrona, Ross, & Yurko, 1984). Recently, this differentiation between social and emotional loneliness has received increased attention, and researchers have used the two types of loneliness to further differentiate among lonely persons and among the different determinants that lie behind their loneliness (Dykstra & de Jong Gierveld, 2004; Van Tilburg, Havens, & de Jong Gierveld, 2004; Van Baarsen, Snijders, Smit & Van Duijn, 2001; Dugan & Kivett, 1994). Emotional loneliness is closer to global concept of loneliness (Van Baaren, Snijders, Smit, & Van Duijn, 2001).

The flurry of research on loneliness in the last few years has been impressive. One impetus for the new interest is the realization that loneliness is a serious and widespread problem, and the study of loneliness has much potential for helping to understand traditional topics such as need for affiliation and interpersonal attraction. Moreover, researchers at the University of California Los Angeles have made significant contributions in the sense that two measures of loneliness have been developed (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980; Russell, Peplau, & Ferguson, 1978); and Peplau, Russell, and Heim (1979) have proposed an attribution theory of loneliness.
The studies in the area of loneliness gained momentum, as a result of several efforts (de Jong Gierveld, 1987; Colford, 1987; Marcoen, Goossens & Caes, 1987, Medora & Woodward, 1986; Schultz & Moore, 1986; de Jong Gierveld, 1986, 1984; Winttenberg & Reis, 1986; Borys & Perlman, 1985, Eisemann, 1984(a), 1984(b); Moore & Schultz, 1983; Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Russell, Peplau & Cutrona, 1980; Weeks, Michela, Peplau, & Bragg, 1980; Belcher, 1973, Weiss, 1973). It can be asserted that a widespread but vastly neglected psychological and social problem has finally been taken seriously. Numerous psychologists and sociologists have been attacking the loneliness problem systematically. Schultz and Moore (1986), Moore and Schultz (1983), and Moore et al. (1982), have shown interest in loneliness experience at adolescence. Loneliness research, however, over the past several years have yielded some interesting and, in some cases, surprising findings. For example the popular conception that old people, as a group, are especially prone to loneliness is apparently a myth. In fact, surveys find that people in their late 60s, 70s and 80s are less lonely than younger adults. In particular, older widows and widowers seem to be better protected from loneliness than young ones. Loneliness is particularly prevalent and intense during adolescence.

The importance of research on loneliness lies not only in its potential for shedding light on basic aspects of social relations but also in the fact that loneliness is a common and distressing problem for many people.

Keeping in view the importance of loneliness as a meaningful psychological construct, the purpose of the current research was to examine more systematically among adolescent males and females the phenomenon of loneliness using unidimensional loneliness measure. More precisely speaking, the purpose of this study was to investigate the phenomenon of loneliness with special emphasis on: (A) adolescent’s (males and females separately), (B) predictors of
loneliness, and (C) use of multivariate techniques for identifying predictors of loneliness. The rationale for laying emphasis on the above mentioned three aspects is given below:

(A) There appears in the literature a number of theoretical statements on loneliness which specifically address loneliness in adolescents or can be applied to adolescents. These statements include discussions of various forms of loneliness, psychological/developmental and environmental/social theories of loneliness. Very few studies have dealt with the phenomenon of loneliness among adolescents although a number of writers have suggested that loneliness is especially felt as a painful experience during adolescence. Research indicates that contrary to popular belief and depictions, loneliness more frequently occurs during earlier developmental periods compared to old age (Perlman & Landolt, 1999; Peplau, Bikson, Rook, & Goodchilds, 1982) . Schultz and Moore (1988) have also observed high school students to be more lonelier than college students, although loneliness has been reported to be widespread during the initial college transition (Shaver, Furman, & Buhrmester, 1985; Cutrona, 1982). Indeed, Culp, Clyman, and Culp (1995) found that 66% of high school students considered loneliness to be a problem that they had experienced in the past year. In a review of mean loneliness scores, Perlman and Landolt (1999) concluded that the prevalence of loneliness appears to peak during adolescence, drop between young adulthood and middle age, and then perhaps rise slightly in old age. Brennan (1982) suggests that while more than 50% of adolescents experience recurrent feelings of loneliness, for 10% to 20% of adolescents, loneliness is persistent and painful (Brennan, 1982).

Sippola and Bukowski (1999) asserted that loneliness in adolescence may be a normative experience and thus to
some degree expected because during this time the social expectations, roles, relationships, and personal identities of adolescents undergo significant changes. As children move into adolescence, they develop greater expectations about their social relationships, wanting loyalty, support, and intimacy, as well as to exchange beliefs, values, and ideologies with friends, rather than merely wanting to share activities (although activity-sharing still remains important; Parker, Saxon, Asher, & Kovacs, 1999; Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1999).

Adolescents are also likely to develop a preoccupation with their social status (Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1999). Thus loneliness can arise if adolescents have not acquired the necessary social skills to cope with their changing social environment, or if they hold unrealistic expectations concerning their social relationships (Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Moreover, since the establishment of intimate relationships becomes increasingly important during adolescence (Erikson, 1963), being unattached may also induce loneliness in adolescents (Neto & Barros, 2000; Rubenstein & Shaver, 1980).

The transition from childhood to adolescence also sees adolescents spending less time with family, and more with peers (Larson, 1999). As such, adolescents seek to gain independence from their parents (Larson et al., 1982), establish their individuality (Koenig & Abrams, 1999), and replace their parents as their primary attachment figures (Ostrov & Offer, 1978; Weiss, 1973). Simultaneously, adolescents are trying to define themselves amidst physiological, emotional, and intellectual changes which may render their childhood self-concepts obsolete (Brennan, 1982). Personal identities become salient during this time (Erikson, 1968), and with maturing cognitive abilities (Rappoport, 1972, cited in Brennan, 1982; Elkind, 1968), adolescents are able to conceptualize themselves in an increasingly complex, and abstract manner. This involves formulating
of identities not only on the basis of physical characteristics, but also based on psychological characteristics (e.g., traits, thoughts, beliefs, and values), and with respect to their social relationships (Parkhurst & Hopmeyer, 1999; Sippola & Bukowski, 1999). The adolescent must then strive to achieve an integrated and coherent sense of self by “consolidating the many different aspects of one’s private and public persona” (Koenig & Abrams, 1999, p. 297). However, with this drive towards autonomy, individuality, and identity formation comes the risk of “increased feelings of separateness and responsibility, and hence to stronger needs for affiliation and vulnerability to emotional and social loneliness” (Brennan, 1982, pp. 285–286). Thus adolescence is a period of high risk for loneliness. However, while some loneliness during this period is to be expected, persistent and painful feelings of loneliness are not normative. Moreover, failure to resolve loneliness before moving out of adolescence may pose significant concerns for future social relationships and mental health.

Persons in the helping professions such as psychology, psychiatry, nursing, counselling and social work who have contact with adolescent populations need to examine the phenomenon of loneliness in adolescents in greater depth in order to develop better strategies for coping with this phenomenon. The significance of this issue is summed up in a statement by Gordon (1976, p.64): The legacy of adolescence is frequently a lonely one: the association of love with failure, the inability to form close relationships, the overdependence on romantic fulfilment, and a sense of insecurity in the face of the family and the world. Rather than disappearing with age, these problems will shape the themes of loneliness in adults.

Furthermore compared with males, females are commonly assumed to be more emotional and to manifest higher rates of certain mental illnesses. Given a general tendency for negative emotional
reactions to be more frequent among women, one might expect this
tendency to be manifested in a number of specific phenomena, for
example, loneliness. Nevertheless, research focusing on sex
differences in loneliness for adolescent population has been limited.

Moreover, past studies on gender differences in loneliness
appear confusing. The introduction of reliable and valid instruments
to measure loneliness has sparked debate over the nature and / or
existence of sex differences (Russell, 1996; Borys & Perlman, 1985;
Schmidt & Sermat, 1983; Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980), whereas
several studies show that males are lonelier (Koenig, Isaacs, &
Schwartz, 1994; Page, 1990; Davis & Franzoi, 1986; Schultz & Moore,
1986; Stokes & Levin, 1986; Booth, 1983; Solano, Batten, & Parish,
1982; Russell et al., 1980), other studies show no significant
differences.

In addition, majority of the studies concerning sex differences in
loneliness have examined only quantitative differences in loneliness.
Quantitative differences refer to sex differences in the magnitude of
loneliness on various indices. Schultz & Moore (1986) in their study of
the loneliness experience of college students: sex differences,
emphasized that only few studies have examined sex differences in the
correlates of loneliness, and these few studies (Berg & Peplau, 1982;
Corti & Young, 1981; Goswick & Jones, 1981; Maroldo, 1981; Schill,
Troves, & Ramanaiah, 1980) provide some evidence of sex differences
among college students in the qualitative aspects of loneliness - that
is, differences in the correlates of loneliness. The investigators
concluded that gender appears to moderate the relationship between
loneliness for some, but not all indices of personality and emotional
reactivity. Schultz and Moore (1986) further concluded that the
current results provide tentative support for several hypotheses
concerning gender differences in the loneliness experience and are
encouraging of further systematic research (p.117).
The above findings lend support to the utility of separate analysis of data concerning adolescent males and females. This has been done in the present study. All this suggests:

1. Although there is a considerable agreement regarding loneliness as a common problem for the general population and client in psychotherapy particularly, the literature points out loneliness to be particularly prevalent and intense during adolescence. There appear in the literature a number of theoretical statements on loneliness, which specifically address loneliness in adolescents or can be applied to adolescents. Available evidence indicates that, as a group, adolescents are more vulnerable to loneliness than older populations.

2. There is dearth of information regarding loneliness in this age group. Very few studies have dealt with the phenomenon of loneliness among adolescents although a number of writers have suggested that loneliness is especially felt as a painful experience during adolescence;

3. Research focussing on sex differences in loneliness for this population has been limited. Most studies of sex differences in loneliness have examined only quantitative differences in loneliness. Few studies examining sex differences in the correlates of loneliness have revealed that gender appears to moderate the relationship between loneliness for some, but not all indices of personality.

4. Since adolescence has been theorized as being the first stage of development in which loneliness is felt intensely curing adolescence (Tanner, 1973; Sullivan, 1953), gaining a better understanding of loneliness in this age group separately for males and females in terms of correlates, attributions and coping may prove helpful in counselling adolescents. Learning to cope with feelings of loneliness during adolescence may also
prepare young people for coping with loneliness in later life stages.

Thus it was thought desirable to examine the phenomenon of loneliness separately among males and females at adolescence in greater depth.

For more than half a century, researchers have been interested in studying the predictors and consequences of loneliness (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006; Weiss, 1973). Furthermore, it can be stated that recent years have seen a burgeoning interest in the psychological state of loneliness which has come to be recognized as one of the most common distress of the human experience (Peplau & Perlman, 1982; Gordon, 1976; Weiss, 1973). The flurry of research on loneliness in the last few years has been impressive. Researchers are divided on the etiological factors that determine loneliness. Some consider the phenomenological experience of loneliness to be the function of quantity of one’s social interaction (Brennan, 1982; Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980). Such studies have shown that individuals reporting feelings of loneliness tend to spend more time alone and to participate in fewer social activities than nonlonely individuals. Other results suggest that lonely and nonlonely people differ in terms of quality, rather than quantity of social interactions (Cutrona, 1981; Jones, 1981; Chelune, Sultan, & Williams, 1980; McCormack & Kahn, 1980).

The characterological view offers still another etiological formulation of loneliness, one that focuses on personality and individual differences variables, rather than situational causes or environmental deficits. Loneliness has been found to be significantly associated with shyness, neuroticism, social withdrawal, and a lower frequency of dating, as well as extracurricular and religious participation (Stephan, Faeth, & Lamm, 1988; Hojat, 1982; Horowitz,
French, & Anderson, 1982; Jones, Freemon, & Goswick, 1981; Russell et al., 1980). Associations between loneliness and poorer social interaction quality have also been demonstrated (Hawkley et al., 2003, Segrin, 1998; Rotenberg, 1994; Wheeler et al., 1983; Jones et al., 1982). For example, Hawkley et al. (2003) found loneliness to be related to less positive and more negative feelings during social interactions. Loneliness has also been linked to low social competence, peer rejection and victimization, a lack of high quality friendships, and more negative appraisals of social support (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Crick & Ladd, 1993; Parker & Asher, 1993; Riggio, Watring, & Throckmorton, 1993; Rubin & Mills, 1988). Larson (1999) has also observed that lonely adolescents are rated by parents and teachers as less well-adjusted. Moreover, loneliness has been found to be associated with higher school dropout rates (Asher & Paquette, 2003), poor academic performance (Larson, 1999; Rotenberg, 1999b; Rotenberg & Morrison, 1993), and juvenile delinquency (Brennan, 1982). However, perhaps most pertinent to the issue of psychosocial problems is the consistent finding that loneliness is associated with low self-esteem (Larson, 1999; Brage, Meredith, & Woodward, 1993; Olmstead, Guy, O'Mally, & Bentler, 1991; Hymel, Rubin, Rowden, & LeMare, 1990; Schultz & Moore, 1988; Jones, 1982; Paloutzian & Ellison 1982; Moore & Sermat, 1974). Other empirical investigations have linked loneliness to anxiety (Mijuskovic, 1986), and more specifically, social anxiety (Anderson & Harvey, 1988; Moore & Schultz, 1983). Numerous studies have also demonstrated substantially sized correlations (coefficients ranging from the .40s to the .60s) between loneliness and depression in both adolescents (Mahon, Yarcheski, & Yarcheski, 2001; Koenig & Abrams, 1999; Koenig, Isaacs, & Schwartz, 1994; Kirkpatrick-Smith, Rich, Bonner, & Jans, 1991; Anderson & Arnoult, 1985; Moore & Schultz, 1983), and adults (Nolen-Hoeksema & Ahrens, 2002; Jackson & Cochran, 1990; Anderson & Harvey, 1988; Goswick & Jones, 1981; Weeks, Michela, Peplau, & Bragg, 1980) with interpersonal difficulties.
being implicated in both. Numerous studies with high school and college students have established associations between loneliness, suicide ideation, and parasuicide (Weber, Metha, & Nelsen, 1997; Garnefski, Diekstra, & de Wichstroem, 1994; Yang & Clum, 1994).

In addition to the mental health problems just described which have obvious negative influences on physical wellbeing (e.g., eating disorders, obesity, alcohol and drug abuse), loneliness has been linked to nausea, headaches, and eating disturbances (Page & Cole, 1991; Ponzetti, 1990), sleep disturbances (Cacioppo et al., 2000), fatigue (DiTommaso & Spinner, 1997), poorer immune functioning (Kiecolt-Glaser, Garner et al., 1984), poorer cardiovascular functioning (even after controlling for depression; Cacioppo, Hawkley, Crawford et al., 2002), and serious illness (Lynch, 1977). Lonely people are also characterized by perceptions that they are powerless to change their predicament. In contrast to the nonlonely, the lonely have been found to attribute their interpersonal failures and loneliness to personal (arguably unchangeable) characteristics such as fear of rejection, shyness, low ability, and personality traits, rather than to situational or more changeable personal characteristics such as effort, and strategies chosen (Koenig & Abrams, 1999; Anderson, Miller, Riger, Dill, & Sedikides, 1994; Renshaw & Brown, 1993; Anderson et al., 1983; Cutrona, 1982; Horowitz et al., 1982; Revenson, 1981). But on the other hand, they do not attribute their interpersonal successes to personal characteristics, but rather to luck and other external factors (Solano, 1987). Loneliness has also been shown to be associated with a perceived lack of control over outcomes (i.e., external locus of control: Hojat, 1982a, 1983; Jones et al., 1981). Michela, Peplau, and Weeks (1981, cited in Peplau, 1982) have revealed that the attribution styles employed by the lonely are detrimental and are associated with pessimism and hopelessness. Nonetheless, using general social skill indexes, loneliness has also been found to be associated with social skill deficits (Inderbitzen-Pisaruk et al., 1992).
Family environment is related to characteristics of adolescents’ personal development and social interactions. Although potentially different for males and females, decreased family cohesion and increased interparental conflict can inadvertently provide family environments that are associated with increased feelings of loneliness, which may be associated with problems in adolescents’ social interactions (i.e., social anxiety and social avoidance) (Johnson, Lavoie, & Mahoney, 2001). Loneliness is inversely correlated with social support (Riggio, Throckmorton, Watring, 1993). Inadequate levels of social support may be predictors of loneliness (Martin et al., 1997). Loneliness is inversely correlated with quantity (Cutrona & Peplau, 1979) and quality of social relationships (Boyrs et al., 1985), satisfaction with emotional and tangible support (Kim, 1999).

Guided by previous research on adolescent social development and loneliness, various personal characteristics have been included in the present study. A perusal of these studies reveals that the different measures of anxiety, depression and locus of control have been used for studying their relationship with loneliness. Their relevance, however, has been examined by computing Pearson’s product moment correlations. The present study has also included anxiety, depression, social support, locus of control and perceived family environment as predictors of loneliness.

Moreover, the measures of hopelessness and negative automatic thoughts have also been included for studying their relevance for loneliness since these measures have been found to be significant in Beck’s cognitive theory of depression.

(C) Previous studies have computed correlations for determining the correlates of loneliness. Given the overwhelmingly likelihood that loneliness in adolescent involves multiple, interacting and intercorrelated precipitating and predispositional factors, the use of multivariate techniques is imperative keeping in view the
importance of several factors underlying the construct of loneliness. The present study has made use of stepwise multiple regression analysis for identifying the salient predictors of loneliness.

Furthermore, the existing loneliness literature reveals that different loneliness measures are available. UCLA Scale (Unidimensional), however, has been extensively used. Thus, the present study included in its purview unidimensional scale of loneliness. Since the findings concerning different types of loneliness are not very encouraging. The selection of unidimensional measure of loneliness is based on the following observation:

Finally, although there has been general agreement on the fundamental characteristics of the loneliness experience, researchers have not agreed upon the different types or forms of loneliness (Russell, 1982). One perspective holds that there is a common core of experiences that represents “Loneliness”. An alternative perspective is that two or more qualitatively different types of loneliness exist. Russell, Cutrona, Ross, & Yurko (1984) found differences in the subjective experiences of social and emotional loneliness, although both forms of loneliness were also characterized by a substantial common core of experiences. It may be useful to view this common core as indicating the essence of the loneliness experiences, with different forms of loneliness (such as social and emotional loneliness) adding certain qualities to that common experience.

In sum, the present study is in line with the present researches in this specific area of research. However, it happens to be unique because of several factors:

1. It attempts to study loneliness at adolescence;
2. Keeping in view gender differences in loneliness, it is not desirable
to pool data of males and females. The present study lays emphasis on sex-differences in the predictors of loneliness during adolescence;

3. Keeping in view the multiplicity of factors involved in loneliness, the present study will make use of stepwise multiple regression analysis for determining salient predictors of loneliness. The previous investigations have computed only correlations between loneliness measures and several other measures of interest.