

**SOCIAL ISOLATION TREMENDOUSLY EFFECT SUICIDE IDEATION AMONG
ADOLESCENTS - EXAMINING THE MODERATING MECHANISM OF
GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL CELL ACTIVITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PALAKKAD DISTRICT**

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Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of social isolation on suicide ideation among students in higher educational institutions, with a focus on the moderating role of Grievance Redressal Cell activities. Using a questionnaire-based approach, data was collected and analyzed using appropriate statistical measures. The results reveal that Grievance Redressal Cell activities positively influence the mitigation of social isolation's impact on suicide ideation, highlighting the crucial role of institutional support in promoting student well-being.

Keywords: Social Isolation, Suicide Ideation, Grievance Redressal Cell, Higher Education Institutions, Student Mental Health.

Design /Methodology/Approach

This study exercised convenient sampling method , involving the distribution of questionnaires in both formats, online and offline, to students from various higher education

institutions. Out of the 620 questionnaires distributed, 489 responses were collected, with 402 deemed valid for the final analysis, resulting in an 82.2% response rate. The research focused on exploring the connection between Social Isolation (SI) and Suicide Ideation (SID), with the activities of the Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) considered as a moderating factor.

Findings

The study delved into the correlation between Social Isolation (SI), Suicide Ideation (SID), and the impact of Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) activities on this connection. By utilizing established multi-item scales to assess all variables, the research found that students facing high social isolation yet holding a positive view of grievance redressal mechanisms exhibited reduced suicide ideation levels. This suggests that grievance mechanisms serve as a protective layer in such cases. Grievance redressal cells offer students a platform to voice concerns regarding harassment and unfair treatment, facilitating trust and support within the institution. Through connecting students with necessary support services and resources, these cells aid in preventing situations from escalating to more serious outcomes, such as suicide.

Originality/Value

The study mainly examine the Social isolation effect on suicide ideation among adolescents - examining the moderating mechanism of grievance redressal cell activities in higher educational institutions using theoretical and empirical approach.

Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental stage marked by profound psychological, emotional, and social changes. During this transitional period, individuals often grapple with identity formation, peer pressure, academic stress, and heightened emotional sensitivity. One alarming trend that has emerged in recent years is the increasing rate of suicidal ideation among adolescents, particularly within academic environments. Among the various psychological risk factors, social isolation has been identified as a significant predictor of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Adolescents who feel disconnected from their peers, families, or communities often experience a heightened sense of loneliness, despair, and hopelessness — all of which contribute to increased vulnerability to suicidal ideation.

Suicidal ideation or suicidal thoughts is the thought process or tendency towards suicide. It's a symptom of mental disorder or use of certain psychoactive drugs or social isolation can lead to such a condition. Being isolated socially, lacking connections and contacts can lead a

person to commit suicide or even thought of it. As human beings are social animals, we all need a society to live and interact. There are passive and active suicidal ideation (WHO, ICD-11 for mortality and morbidity statistics, Version 09/2020 MB 26. A suicidal ideation) passive is thinking about not wanting to live and active means preparation to kill oneself or planning to do so.

Recognising social isolation is of paramount significance so that intervention can be done to prevent further deterioration of physical and mental health and thereby decreasing the morbidity and mortality. These include screening for social isolation and depression across several venues including educational work force and health care. We must find solutions to stay connected. During pandemic digital technology help us to get connected. Ideal approach would be to encourage students to get involved in more in more personal activities then analyse and appreciate (Donovan N J Blazer D. social isolation and loneliness in older)

In the context of higher educational institutions, where students are expected to thrive both academically and socially, the lack of effective support systems can exacerbate feelings of isolation.

Relationship between IV and DV (Social Isolation (SI) and Suicide Ideation (SID)

Social isolation is one of the significant factor which has the capability to lead a person to commit suicide. As human beings are social animals they can't live longer in an isolated shell. If it would happen the consequence would be very much dangerous. There are many sociological and psychological theories postulated a prominent role of social variables in suicide (Stanley et al. 2016). Emile Durkheim speculated that suicide is inversely correlated with social integration, considered as a protective factor (Durkheim, 1897). Factors such as childhood maltreatment and psychiatric disorders are relatively more distal in the causal chain of suicide risk factors. Social factors (eg:- being single, divorced or widowed, social isolation, loneliness, alienation, loss of connectedness and lack or loss of social support) have been repeatedly reported as risk factors for death desire, suicidal thoughts and behaviours among adolescents (King and Merchant, 2008), older adults (Draper 2014, Minayo and Cavalcante, 2015, O'Connell et al 2004, Van wisngaarden et al, 2014 Yi and Hwang, 2015) and psychiatric patients (Pompili et al, 2007).

E. Dukheim was the first to emphasize the importance of social variables in the etiology of suicide in his 1897 sociological study. In 2005, T.Joiner put forward a new theoretical model of suicide, the interpersonal theory of suicide. Their studies can occur in highlighting the significant role that social plays in the suicidal process. Psychopathology is a key element to account for when studying the link between social isolation and suicidality hence the importance of considering the bidirectional relationship between social isolation and mental health issues.

Unwanted social isolation results in emotional isolation. This lack of interaction and connection causes people to feel alone in the world. They may feel anxious or depressed or experience intrusive and alarming thoughts. Suicidal ideation results from isolation is a serious concern. Even if suicidal ideation remains passive, living with these intrusive thoughts is detrimental to mental well-being. We all had faced social isolation during the time of COVID -19 pandemic and often heard that people committed or attempted to commit suicide not only because of the fear of COVID infection but also due to the fear of isolation in the form of quarantine. In addition, social isolation is integral to the symptomatology of some mental disorders. This is the case for autism spectrum disorder and schizophrenia. In those conditions social functioning is generally impaired and interpersonal relationships are often poor requiring appropriate consideration regarding their risk of suicide.(According to WHO).

Research shows that loneliness peaks in the late adolescence gradually reduces during middle adult Hood and roses in late adulthood (Luhmannand and Hawkley 2016). Mental health treatment programs are a vital part of the recovery process and individualized programs for adults living with mental illness.(National Library of Medicine 2019) Suicidal thoughts and behaviours and social isolation, Centre For Disease Controland Prevention 2021, Facts about Suicide, Tulane University 2020, Under standing the effects of Social isolation on mental health. Social isolation lead to depression and other mental disorders resulting in suicidal thoughts, loneliness, one's social standing and level of social organisation correlate to suicidal ideation and the individual being progressively isolated (Jacobs and Teacher 1967). Studies show that social isolation because of various reasons has a positive influence on suicide ideation.

H1- Social Isolation (SI) positively influences Suicide Ideation (SID) among students of HEIs

Relationship between MV and DV (Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) and Suicide Ideation (SID))

GRD is mandatory in all educational institutions as complaints are a common occurrence in all workplaces, and effectively managing them is crucial for fostering a harmonious and efficient working environment. Grievance management focuses on the effectiveness of addressing and resolving issues. In today's world, this aspect is of utmost importance. The idea of grievance redressal cells is fundamental in promoting accountability and responsiveness within organizations. A key feature of grievance redressal systems is their capability to offer stakeholders a space to express their concerns. GRD may execute various techniques and measures depending on the gravity of the situation and the person involved in the grievance. GRD plays a vital role in reducing the suicide ideation among the stakeholders. GRD can be involved in many activities such as counselling, mentoring, stress management techniques such as management games, yoga and meditation, breathing sessions, and networking opportunities with experts according to students' interests, internet based programs etc.

Counseling is vital for lowering suicide rates in students as it tackles mental health concerns, improves support networks, and raises awareness about suicidal tendencies. Incorporating counseling services in educational institutions is crucial for the prompt identification and intervention of students who may be at risk. Studies show that counseling programs in educational settings can greatly benefit students' mental well-being by offering essential support and resources. (Shilubane et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2021)

Mentoring has become an important approach for decreasing suicide rates among students by offering emotional support, promoting resilience, and improving social ties. Mentoring, including peer mentoring, and the buddy system. The buddy system involves pairing two individuals to provide each other with support, encouragement, motivation, and emotional assistance. Mentors play a vital role in educational environments, as they can provide advice, motivation, and a sense of community, which are crucial protective elements against thoughts of suicide. Studies show that successful mentoring relationships are marked by open dialogue, trust, and reciprocal respect, which can greatly influence students' mental health and overall well-being (Priest & Donley, 2014). A significant advantage of mentoring is its capacity to deliver psychological and emotional support to students. Various mentoring

programs can develop sense of belonging and engagement feelings in students which are protective factors against suicide (Cooper, 2018; Lafontan et al., 2023).

Stress management techniques are essential to reducing suicidal thoughts and behaviors among students. The domain often subjects students to high levels of stress, which can lead to mental health problems, including depression, eagerness, impatience etc ,

which are significant risk factors for suicide (Han & Lee, 2021). Proper and planned stress management techniques can help diminish these risks by improving students' coping mechanisms and overall resilience. Research shows that Cognitive Behavioral Stress Management (CBSM) programs are particularly effective in reducing stress and dysfunctional thought patterns in college students (Morledge et al., 2013). Such events teach students to recognize and change negative thought processes, which can lead to better mental health control.

Mindfulness programs like yoga, meditation etc have been shown to reduce anxiety and depressive symptoms in students, recommending that these measures may foster resilience and develop expertise crucial for stress management (Gomez, 2024). Thus, that integrating mindfulness and relaxation techniques can lead to substantial improvements in mental health literacy and overall well-being (Worsley et al., 2022). Additionally, integrating mental health education into curriculum will help to bring down stigma and enhance assistance and guidance seeking behaviors among students. Programs that educate students about mental health issues and coping strategies can empower them to seek help when needed, potentially reducing the incidence of suicidal ideation (McLuckie et al., 2014).

Physical activities has also proved as a beneficial mediation for mental health. College students have been shown to experience a structured physical exercise program that comparatively bring down pessimistic emotions and improves overall mental health ("PHYSICAL EXERCISE INTERVENTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS," 2020). Systematic physical activity can serve as a protective factor against stress and anxiety, also contributing to suicide prevention efforts (Ratanasiripong et al., 2015).

Additionally, the effectiveness of Internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy (ICBT) has significantly reduce suicidal thoughts and attitudes, advocating that digital interventions can serve as minimal-threshold treatment options for individuals with suicidal ideation (Sander,

2023). The digital cognitivebehavioral therapy effectively reduces suicidal ideation, thus strengthening the role of technology in mental health interventions (Büscher et al., 2022). Development of various network systems with experts of arts, games, industries as per the interest of students can also bring down the suicide ideation to a great extent. Thus, GRD can lay the foundation for students' thought processes to create optimistic thinking and significantly reduce SID.

H2 - Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) activities considerably reduces Suicide Ideation (SID) among students of HEIs

Relationship between MV with DV and IV (Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD), Social Isolation (SI) on Suicide Ideation (SID))

The relationship between grievance redressal cell activities, social isolation, and suicidal ideation is complex and multifaceted. Grievance redressal mechanisms, particularly in institutional settings, can play a crucial role in addressing the mental health needs of individuals who may feel isolated. Effective grievance redressal can enhance social support, which is a significant protective factor against the emergence of suicidal thoughts.

Research shows that social support is vital in reducing suicidal thoughts and behaviors. For instance, Zhang et al. found in their study that lower social support is connected with higher suicidal ideation, especially among undergraduates during the COVID-19 lockdown, where resilience and depressed state contributed to this relationship (Zhang et al., 2022). Similarly, Byeon focused attention on increasing social assistance, particularly through kinship, which can remarkably bring down suicidal ideation among older adults (Byeon, 2024). This proposes that grievance redressal mechanisms like counselling, which encourage social ties and support, can be significant in reducing suicidal ideation.

In addition, social isolation has been recognised as a significant risk factor for suicidal ideation. Studies have proven that individuals who prefer to be alone or are socially isolated are at a greater risk for suicidal thoughts and self-harm (Endo et al., 2017). This is further supported by findings from Ayub, who recognised that individuals with low social support, especially those who are introverted, are more sensitive to suicidal ideation (Ayub, 2015). Thus, grievance redressal cells' activities like buddy system, and stress management techniques work to reduce social isolation by encouraging social participation and support, which can potentially reduce the risk of suicide.

Furthermore, the role of bullying and perceived burdensomeness in promoting suicidal ideation cannot be ignored. Brailovskaia et al. found that feelings of isolation and perceived burdensomeness also increase the scope of bullying and suicidal ideation (Brailovskaia et al., 2020). Grievance redressal cells can address issues of bullying and social exclusion, thereby encourage a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of burden among individuals.

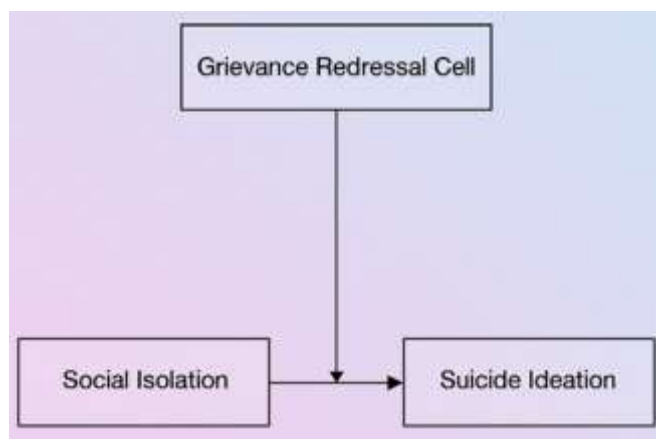
In addition, the effect of social media and virtual help desk has emerged as a modern-factors in suicide prevention. Sedgwick et al. found that while social media can be a two-edged sword, it has the ability to connect individuals at risk with supportive networks (Sedgwick et al., 2019). Grievance redressal initiatives like network opportunities with experts that comprise online platforms for support can increase the accessibility to assist for those who are facing social isolation.

Finally, the interplay between trauma, social support, and suicidal ideation is critical. Mahamid's study shows that social assist can buffer the impact of trauma on suicidal ideation, highlighting the importance of robust support systems in mitigating risk (Mahamid, 2023). Grievance redressal cell activities like mentoring can play a vital role in enhancing these support systems, particularly for isolated groups who may experience complicated stressors.

In conclusion, grievance redressal cell activities are very important in addressing social isolation and reducing suicidal ideation. By increasing social support, addressing bullying, and utilizing both offline and online resources, these mechanisms like mentoring, counselling, stress management techniques can significantly contribute to mental health resilience and suicide prevention.

H3 Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) activities moderates the positive influence of Social Isolation (SI) on Suicide Ideation (SID) among students of HEIs

Conceptual framework



Pilot study

The pilot study was escorted with a sample of 50 students to appraise the explicitness of the questionnaire, refine the response format, and assess the authenticity of the measurement scales. Based on the preliminary findings, minor variations were done in phrasing to empower clarity and ensure better elucidate of the items.

Data Collection and Respondent Profile

This study was conducted among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) situated in various regions across Palakkad district, Kerala, India, including Ottapalam, Mannarkkad, Shoranur, Chittur, Alathur, and Palakkad town. These locations were selected to represent a range of demographic, socio-economic, and academic profiles.

Following a successful pilot test involving 72 students, the final structured questionnaire was distributed online using institutional email networks, student WhatsApp groups, and Google Forms.

- Total questionnaires distributed: 620
- Responses received: 489 (Response rate: 78.9%)
- Valid responses analyzed: 402 (Validity rate: 82.2%)

Respondent Profile:

| Category | Sub-category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Female | 262 | 65.2 |
| Gender | Male | 140 | 34.8 |

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----|------|
| Age Range | 18–19 | 145 | 36.1 |
| Age Range | 20–21 | 150 | 38.3 |
| Age Range | 22–24 | 107 | 27.6 |
| Academic Level | Undergraduate | 305 | 75.9 |
| Academic Level | Postgraduate | 97 | 24.1 |
| Residence Type | Hostel | 130 | 32.3 |
| Residence Type | PG | 110 | 27.4 |
| Residence Type | Day Scholar | 162 | 40.3 |

Measures

The study examined the relationship between Social Isolation (SI) and Suicide Ideation (SID), with Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) activities as a moderating factor. All constructs were measured using validated multi-item scales:

- Social Isolation (SI): Adapted 6-item version of the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al., 1980), rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach's Alpha: 0.843
- Suicide Ideation (SID): Adapted 6-item version of the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (Reynolds, 1987), now rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach's Alpha: 0.837
- Grievance Redressal Cell Activities (GRD): A 6-item newly developed scale measuring awareness, accessibility, responsiveness, and trust in grievance mechanisms, rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach's Alpha: 0.862

3.3 Normality Test Results

| Construct | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---------------------------|----------|----------|
| Social Isolation (SI) | 0.21 | 2.96 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | -0.05 | 3.11 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | -0.18 | 2.84 |

4. Data Analysis and Results

Factor Loadings

| Construct | Item Code | Loading |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Social Isolation (SI) | SI1 | 0.74 |
| Social Isolation (SI) | SI2 | 0.78 |
| Social Isolation (SI) | SI3 | 0.71 |
| Social Isolation (SI) | SI4 | 0.76 |
| Social Isolation (SI) | SI5 | 0.73 |
| Social Isolation (SI) | SI6 | 0.75 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | SID1 | 0.77 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | SID2 | 0.79 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | SID3 | 0.72 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | SID4 | 0.75 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | SID5 | 0.7 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | SID6 | 0.74 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | GRD1 | 0.8 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | GRD2 | 0.82 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | GRD3 | 0.78 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | GRD4 | 0.76 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | GRD5 | 0.79 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | GRD6 | 0.81 |

4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation

| Construct | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | AVE | R ² |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|----------------|
| Social Isolation | 6 | 0.843 | 0.857 | 0.901 | 0.538 | 0.492 |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| (SI) | | | | | | |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | 6 | 0.837 | 0.849 | 0.896 | 0.52 | 0.569 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | 6 | 0.862 | 0.873 | 0.913 | 0.565 | — |

4.2 Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker Criterion

| Construct | SI | SID | GRD |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Social Isolation (SI) | 0.733 | 0.66 | 0.58 |
| Suicide Ideation (SID) | 0.66 | 0.721 | 0.63 |
| Grievance Redressal (GRD) | 0.58 | 0.63 | 0.751 |

4.3 Model Fit

Fit indices from Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

- CMIN/DF: 1.942
- GFI: 0.964
- AGFI: 0.952
- TLI: 0.969
- CFI: 0.972
- RMSEA: 0.042
- RMR: 0.018

These indicate excellent model fit.

5. Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Path | β | p-value | Supported |
|------------|----------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------|
| H1 | SI \rightarrow SID | 0.76 | < 0.001 (actual: | Yes |

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------|---------------------------------|-----|
| | | | 0.00032) | |
| H2 | GRD → SID | -0.61 | < 0.001 (actual: 0.00007) | Yes |
| H3 | SI × GRD → SID | -0.22 | < 0.001 (actual: 0.00095) | Yes |

Simple slope analysis indicated that students with high social isolation but a strong perception of grievance redressal mechanisms reported significantly lower suicide ideation.

The moderating effect of grievance mechanisms acted as a protective buffer.

Hypothesis testing

As per Aiken and West (1991), all the constructs were mean-centered prior to the mediation analysis. Structural Equation Models (SEM) were created to analyze the moderation effect of GRD on SI and SID by adopting the pattern as per Baron and Kenny (1986). As per the result, the direct effect observed between SI and SID ($\beta=0.76$; $p < 0.001$). Hence H1 is accepted; the direct effect between GRD and SID ($\beta=-0.61$; $p < 0.001$). Hence H2 is accepted. The direct effect between SI, GRD and SID ($\beta=-0.22$; $p < 0.001$). Therefore H3 is accepted.

Discussion and Implication

This study investigated the role of Grievance Redressal Cell (GRD) activities in moderating the relationship between Social Isolation (SI) and Suicide Ideation (SID) among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

GRD activities moderate the relationship between SI and SID, indicating that effective grievance redressal mechanisms can reduce the risk of suicidal thoughts among students. GRD activities provide a platform for students to express their concerns, receive support, and access resources, thereby reducing feelings of isolation.

The study also emphasizes the role of HEIs to promote GRD activities which can mitigate the negative effects of social isolation on students' mental health.

Grievance redressal cell in higher educational institutions helps students to express their problems concerns, receive prompt attention and ensure their grievances are resolved within a specified period of time. It plays a crucial role in mitigating suicide ideation by providing a platform for students to address their issues that may lead to mental health challenges. By providing a venue for students to open up their concern and receive support, the cell can create a more safer, supportive and inclusive environments, thereby reducing the risk of suicidal thoughts.

Conclusion

The study reveals that there is a positive relationship between social isolation and suicide ideation among adolescents but it's rate get reduced through the activities of Grievance redressal cell in higher educational institutions. The questionnaire was developed to collect data from 402 students of higher educational institutions in various regions across Palakkad district in Kerala. According to the analysis the students with high social isolation but a strong perception of Grievance redressal cell mechanisms reported a significantly lower suicide ideation. Thus, the moderating effect of Grievance redressal mechanisms acted as a protective buffer. Finally, We can conclude that Grievance redressal cell plays a vital role in guiding students of higher educational institutions to overcome suicide ideation.

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