

# A Comparative Study of Self-esteem and Depression among orphans and children living with their parents in Rupandehi district, Nepal

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**Abstract:** Parents play an important role in a child's life. They provide for physical, emotional and social needs which are required for the holistic development of the child. But losing parents at an early stage of life can have disastrous impact on the overall development of the child. Even though the child is provided an alternate option of being in an institutional home but a huge gap exists in the fulfilment of psychological needs and well-being. Several studies have supported that this gap can lead to behavioural issues and psychological problems like depression, aloofness, reticence in the child. The aim of the study is to assess the level of self-esteem and depression among orphans and children living with their parents. For this purpose, a comparative study was undertaken. The convenience sample included 40 orphans and 40 children living with their parents. The instrument used was Rosenberg's Self-Esteem and Children's Depression Inventory. Data was collected from various institutions that take care of the orphan children and children living with their parents from Rupandehi district of Nepal. T ratio was applied on the data and results also proved that there is significant difference between the level of self-esteem and depression among the orphans and children living with their parents.

**Keywords:** Orphan, Children living with their parents, Self-esteem, Depression

## Introduction

Childhood is the stage in which the child forms a secure relationship with their parents which is important for their psychological and social development.

Having parents is a blessing and a gift of unconditional love, acceptance and encouragement for the child but children growing up without their parents have become a common sight around the world. It is estimated that the number of orphans worldwide had reached 153 million in 2013 (UNICEF). AIDS epidemic, civil war, poverty, natural disaster, abandonment and accidents are among the leading causes of children becoming orphans.

The trauma that follows after losing a parent has the long-lasting effects on the child. Lack of support during the grieving time and inadequate help in adjustment to an environment without their parents increases the risk of emotional and behavioural disorder, depression, anxiety etc. A 2000 Journal of child psychology and psychiatry and allied disciplines study found that about 1 out of every 5 children who have lost a parent will develop a psychiatric disorder.

Research has indicated that parent loss in childhood is associated with significant problematic consequences (Bowlby, 1980; Harris, 1995)

Parental death may lead to a reduction in social support which is also related to poorer health. (House, Umberson and Landis, 1988)

Ragan and McGlashan (1986) found that participants who grew up in families where one or both parents die were more likely to have difficulty forming stable adult relationships.

Further research has shown that parental death may increase the likelihood of alcohol and drug abuse in adulthood. (Dennehy, 1966)

Studies have been done to examine the long-term impact of early parental death and it was found that children develop certain type of psychopathology in the adulthood. (Berlinsky and Biller, 1982)

Orphanages are institutions for the care of a child who has lost his/her parent. Many studies have shown that children raised in the orphanage, report more depressive symptoms than children reared at home. Other research had found that orphans are more

anxious, less optimistic about the future and more likely to express their aggressive feelings. They have disrupted behaviour as compared to non-orphans.

Studies have shown that children living in the orphanages home are at greater risk for long term negative impact on their social, emotional and cognitive development.

Institutionalized children have also been found to have difficulties in forming an integrated self-concept (Kodandaram and Rao 1983). They develop maladaptive characteristics that include low self-esteem, self-rejection, identity confusion, alienation and distrust (Mwebze Micheal, 2007).

Further research in the Nepali context is required because nothing much has been done to understand more about the impact of institutionalization on the behaviour and attitude of the children residing in orphanage home. Early diagnosis and timely intervention are needed to alleviate and alienate their suffering and improve the quality of their lives. Further this research will provide insight to program planners and policy makers to review and change/ strengthen existing care and support programs for children in the orphanage home.

## Review of Literature

In 1996 in the Rakai district J Sengendo et al. investigated the psychological effect of orphan hood in a sample of 193 children. According to their findings, non-orphans were more optimistic about the future while orphans showed significantly higher level of depression.

Dr.M. Nasar Sayeed Khan, Dr. Masha Asad Khan, Rabia Majeed in 2004 did a study in Lahore on 240 adolescents where non orphan children reported higher level of self-esteem than orphan children.

Kedly (2006) pointed out that orphans had greater risk of anxiety, depression, anger, fear, stigmatization, stress, irritability, fugue, offending and hyperactivity.

Seggane Musisi et.al (2007) in Uganda did a study on 420 orphans and non-orphan children. It was found out that orphans exhibited common emotional and behavioural problems than the non-orphans. Further orphans were described as "needy, sensitive, isolative with low confidence and self-esteem and protection, identity, security, play, food and shelter.

A study done by Yashmin Nilofer Farooqi and Marina Intezar in 2009 in Lahore city of Pakistan on 150 children found that the orphan children reported lower self-esteem as compared to the children living with their parents.

Azza Ibrahim et.al (2011) did a study in Egypt on 200 orphans found out that orphans have high rate of depression than children reared at home. Girls were about 46 times more likely to have depression than boys.

Rabia Majeed et.al (2014) did a study on 240 adolescents aged between 13-19 years that was divided into three groups namely non orphans, Institutionalized orphans and non-institutionalized orphans. It was found out that there is no significant difference in dependency, self-esteem, self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness and emotional stability among the three groups.

Tamara V. Avakyan et.al (2014) did a study on 123 teenagers in Moscow found out that orphan children show high level of depression, anxiety and social anxiety than the children living in families.

A study done by Markos Abiso Erango et.al (2015) in Ethiopia on orphan children aged between 7-18 years. It was found out that the orphan children have low self- esteem.

Eyerusalem Hadush (2015) did a study in Ethiopia on 196 children out of which 112 were orphans and 84 were non-orphans. It was found out that institutionalized children reported high depression and low self-esteem than the non-orphans.

Mifrah Rauf Sethi and Madiha Asghar did a study in Peshawar, Pakistan in 2015 on 325 children out of which 150 were orphans and 175 were non-orphans with the age range of 13-16 years. It was found out that orphan children have higher level of self-esteem as compared to non-orphans.

Nasir Mohamad Bhat did a study on 210 children aged between 13-17 years in the Kashmir valley of India in 2015 found that orphans have high level of depression as compared to non-orphan children.

Ganavi Ramagopal et.al (2016) in India found out that children living in the orphanage reported 35% depression and majority were females.

Mr.Siyad.B.R., Mr. Muneer.P did a study on 200 orphans and non-orphan children in 2016 from Trivandrum district, age ranging between 8-14 years. The orphan children reported lower self-esteem than the children living with their parents.

Mashkoor Ahmad Lone, Dr. P Ganesan did a study on 160 orphan and non-orphan children in Jammu and Kashmir, India in 2016. It was found out that orphan children reported lower self-esteem than family reared children.

A study done by Dr. P Ganesan et.al (2017) in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir in India, found out that the orphan children reported lower self-esteem than family reared children.

Ranjith Kannan et.al (2017) did a study in Tamil Nadu in India on 221 orphans and 221 school going children. High level of self-esteem was seen more among school going children compared to orphanage children.

Sanurizwanie Mat Sahad, Zakaria Mohamad, Madhiyah Mohamad Shukri did a study on 240 orphans and non-orphans adolescents in Malaysia in 2018. The result found out that orphans have higher emotional problems such as depression, anxiety and stress than the non-orphans.

Gamechu Shiferaw, Lemi Bacha, Dereje Tsegaye in Ilu Abba Bor Zone, South West Ethiopia in 2018 found that depression was high in females than males.

Archana Vinnakota et.al (2018) in India did a study on 150 adolescents. It was reported that depression among institutionalized children was significantly higher compared to children living with their families.

Eaprodite Nsabimana et.al (2019) did a study in Rwanda on 178 children out of which 94 were orphans and 84 lived with their families. It was found out that children living in an institution showed lower self-esteem than the children living with families.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Objectives of the study:**

The present study will be carried out to achieve the following objectives:

- To find out the relationship between self-esteem and depression among children living with parents and children living in orphanage.
- To see the differences in self-esteem and depression level in children living in orphanage and children living with their parents.

### **Hypothesis:**

- a) Children living in orphanage will score higher on Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) as compared to those living with their parents.
- b) Orphans will score significantly lower on Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale as compared to children living with their parents.
- c) There will be significant relationship between self-esteem and depression among children living with parents and children living in institutional homes.

### **Sample:**

The total number of participants were 80. Samples were drawn from the institutional homes and children living with their parents of Rupandehi district, Nepal. The sample included (n=40) institutionalized orphans and (n=40) children living with their parents.

### **Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

#### **Inclusion criteria for orphan children**

- Age range between 8-17 years
- Both genders
- Willingness to participate in the study
- Must be living in orphanage for the past 6 months

#### **Exclusion criteria for orphan children**

- Recently added in orphanage
- Intellectual impairment and other developmental disorders and organic illness
- Physically handicap

#### **Inclusion criteria for children living with parents**

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- Age range between 8-17 years
- Both genders
- Willingness to participate in the study
- Living with both parents

**Exclusion criteria for children living with parents**

- Intellectual impairment and other developmental disorders and organic illness
- History of parental loss due to death or divorce

**Tools:**

The following tools were used:

- 1) Rosenberg’s Self Esteem Scale (Dr. Rosenberg,1989)
- 2) Children’s Depression Inventory (Dr. Maria Kovacas,1992)

**Description of Tools**

**1.Rosenberg’s Self Esteem Scale (RSES, Dr. Rosenberg,1989):** It is a 10-item scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It has test-retest correlations ranging from .82 to .88. Cronbach’s alpha from various samples has a range of .77 to .88.

**2.Children’s Depression Inventory (CDI, Dr. Maria Kovacas,1992):** It is a 27-item scale which is self-rated. It is widely used for assessing the severity of depression symptoms in children and youth. The scale has alpha measures of 0.71-0.89 which reflects good internal consistency.

**Procedure:**

Formal permission was obtained from Nepal Avinash Anath Kendra, Bal Kalyan Griha and Atama Shanti Anathashram to draw the sample of orphans from Rupandehi district. Moreover, formal permission was also obtained from private school of Rupandehi district to draw the sample of children living with both the parents. A consent form was obtained from each institution. Rapport was established with the respondents assuring them of confidentiality of their personal information would be used for research purpose exclusively. The self-esteem Scale and Children’s Depression Inventory was administered individually to all the research participants in order to determine the level of their self-esteem and depression

**Research Tool:**

Statistical Analysis: Data was analysed using SPSS software. T test was applied to compare the self-esteem and depression among the orphans and the children living with parents.

**Result:**

**Table 1:**

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Mean Error
Self-esteem of Orphans	40	12.7500	4.92898	.77934
Self-esteem of Non-Orphans	40	21.5500	3.03780	.48032

The result shows there is significant difference in the level of self-esteem between the orphan and non-orphan children. T ratio is significant at level 0.05

**Table 2:**

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Mean Error
Depression level of Orphans	40	19.7250	4.31448	.68218
Depression level of Non-orphans	40	5.0500	3.97395	.62834

The result shows there is significant difference in the depression among orphans and non-orphans. T ratio is significant at the level 0.05

### **Discussion:**

The current study investigated the level of self-esteem and depression of orphan children and children living with both the parents. The finding of the study suggest that orphan children reported low self-esteem ( $M=12.75$  and  $SD=4.92$ ) and high depression ( $M=19.7$  and  $SD=4.3$ ) as compared to the children living with their parents (Self-esteem  $M=21.5$  and  $SD=3.03$  and Depression  $M=5.05$  and  $SD=3.97$ ).

Similar studies have also revealed that children living in orphanage homes have low self-esteem and high level of depression because institutionalized children may face several problems such as caregiver may not provide what is important and necessary for the children in the orphanage.

Berger (2003) reported that some of the problems encountered by children living in the orphanages homes including psychological stress, negative impact on academic, loss of inheritance and as a result of these and other burdens children are exposed to depression, low self-esteem and alienation.

Mutiso (2008), in a study in Kenya on institutionalized children in rural and urban settings demonstrated significantly higher prevalence rates of depression symptoms among orphan children compared with non-institutionalized ones.

Panicker (2006) A child's relationship with his parents determines how the child defines himself, as loss of parental figure results in the halted identification of self.

High prevalence of depression level may be related to the orphanage environment such as the feelings of mistrust, insecurity, risk of neglect, abuse and exploitation.

### **Conclusion:**

The finding of this research suggests that there is a significant difference in the level of self-esteem and depression of the orphans and the children living with the parents. The orphans reported low self-esteem and high depression than the children living with their parents.

### **Limitations:**

The sample size taken was small and the results may not be generalized.

### **Implications:**

- Regular psychological assessment of children should be carried for early detection and proper management of any mental abnormalities.
- Various programmes should be conducted by the government to raise awareness among caregiver about the importance of psychological needs of the orphans and consequences of psychological problems like depression and low self-esteem or any behavioural problems.
- Caregiver of these institutions should be trained to provide psychological support to such children.
- Government should conduct counselling session on 'how to increase self-esteem of these children' and 'how to enhance their mental health'.
- The findings from this study will help the policy makers to understand the importance of improving orphan's psychosocial well-being.

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