# Crises-Led Depression: Curbing The Conditionality Of Loneliness In The Early Youth

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**Abstract**

The world is filled with crises at one corner or the other (Russian-Ukrainian war, Israel-Hamas); the Covid-19 crisis has covered the whole world. Every crisis leaves survivors depressed; depression is one of the most common disorders. It leads to many diseases, especially lifestyle diseases. Severe depression may lead to suicide; the shivering fact is that suicide turns out to be the fourth major cause of death in the age group of 15-29. The World Health Organization estimates that 3.8% of the global population are victims of depression, of which 5% are adults. Hence, this article focuses on detecting and curbing depression at an early age. Various reasons for depression are analyzed followed by possible solutions to tackle depression. A critical outlook on the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in depression would be a unique observation in this research.

**Keywords**: Depression, Loneliness, Early Youth, AI

## Introduction

The word depression is traced to the Latin origin "depressio", which means sinking. Depression is a common disorder that the world is suffering from. It leads to lifestyle diseases. It is a slow poison, that kills one's abilities and personality. Sometimes in events of severity, it takes away lives (suicides). There are many reasons to be depressed and there are types of depression (Benazzi, 2006). Out of many reasons that provoke an individual's depressive vibes, failures in life (majorly career and relationships) and a beloved's demise stand as primary reasons. Sometimes, having an anxious past leads to depression. These are potentially major causes of depression. Following the traces of the world's depression from World War I to the present pandemic, this article brings up a general discourse on early youth's depression from the family level to society and concludes with possible suggestions to tackle depression.

## World War I to the Present

Around a century ago, the world witnessed post-war trauma, which led many scholars to work on depression and anxiety disorders. After World War-I ended in 1919, soldiers' potential threats were nervousness, nightmares, disturbing bloodshed memories of war and hallucinations, fear, pain, and loss of loved ones. War-led crises and disturbances in a massive population grasped the attention of psychoanalysts. Sigmund Freud, an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis mentions in one of his celebrated works *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917) that depression is an output of people's experience of loss and their uncontrollable want of holding on to loss (Fiorini, 2009). The stated Freud's observation on depression explains the impact of the war crisis on people's behavior and 'self-loss' (psychologically).

After 25 years of World War I, the emergence of World War II and the Holocaust brought similar circumstantial hallucinations and re-introduced depression with a high-intensity level. The 20th century was dominated by World War I and II, the Holocaust, Agitations against colonialism, civil wars in several parts of the world, the disintegration of the USSR, the Persian Gulf war and many other disturbing events. These events brought complete unrest and eventually led to an existential crisis too (Jensen & Shaw, 1993). When the world started to recover from many traumatic events of the previous century, the beginning of the 21st century marked an economic crisis i.e. the 2007-2009 global financial crisis, that shook the financial foundations of many countries. Another storm in disguise of a pandemic awaited to shake the world in all possible ways in 2019; the outbreak of COVID-19 paved the way to loneliness, suffocation, depression and other severe anxieties (*Global Prevalence and Burden of Depressive and Anxiety Disorders in 204 Countries and Territories in 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic - The Lancet*, n.d.). Looking at the last one hundred years of human lives, the development axis of science and society is rising parallelly with the axis of the number of crisis sufferers.

In addition to the various crises-led depressions discussed earlier, there are other reasons which likely resulted in a massive population's depression, especially the masses. Two of the most important crises to be discussed are persons with disabilities-social access and forced isolation, and the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR). People with disabilities are deprived of social participation and experiences in society. Abled-person's designed society makes the impaired disabled

(Cameron, 2014). As per the WHO, over 1 billion people are experiencing disability/ies, which is around 15% of the world's population. Of 1 billion, 190 million people are 15 years old and above (*Disability and Health*, n.d.). The world is being shaped and reshaped every moment by accumulating many social changes, modern lifestyle changes and entertainment facilities. Due to social inaccessibility, people with disability/ies are alienated, which results in disabled teens' and early youth's loneliness. It is a forced social alienation and imposed loneliness. If people with disability/ies get access to participate and experience social life, they can live to the fullest in possible ways. Social inclusion can boost people's life expectancy and happiness.

Another crisis is the MMR in developing countries. Especially in some developing and least-developed countries, the MMR is saddening. Due to global intervention in the health sector, improvement is seen in MMR, but it could not bring the rate down to zero or a single digit at least (*Maternal Mortality Rates and Statistics - UNICEF DATA*, n.d.). Freud views birth as the beginning of anxiety, and Rank's observation in T*he Trauma of Birth* (1924) is that the separation of a child from his/her comfort zone of the mother's womb causes anxiety (Rank, 2010). The separation is viewed as a source of a rough imprint on the child's anxiety. As far as the mother and family are concerned, after going through 9 months of laborious care and longing, if the child dies immediately after birth or at a young age, it is going to affect the mother and family members gravely (Berry, 2022) (Flach et al., 2022). In order to have a healthy family environment, attention should be paid to Maternal Mortality rates keenly. In addition to these stated causes, there are some similar disturbing and influential factors for early youth depression.

**Depression in Early Youth**

Irrespective of the age group, wars and pandemics leave everyone depressed, especially children. They are more vulnerable. Loss of parents and loved ones are consequences that become imprints of psychological disturbances in teens and early youth, which is extremely concerning (*WAR & Military Mental Health - PMC*, n.d.). The children who suffer at the early stage, their adolescence would be highly impacted. The archetypes of childhood suffering will architect adolescence. Their transitional phase is crumpled due to the unspeakable and unexpressive traumas they carry in their innocent hearts and minds. The emotional baggage and burden they carry on their un-ready shoulders are devastating the young generation to the core (Jensen & Shaw, 1993). Failures in career and relationships and an anxious past are other reasons for depression in early youth. Relationships, trust, and having a disturbing family background are potentially weakening the young generation. The early youth phase is a transition from a playful, mundane life to a serious path of progress. If that transitional phase is not smooth, the coming phases will drastically surpass playfulness and innocence to either danger or severe damage. Therefore, looking after those innocents is the pressing priority.

Failure is one of the major causes of depression in early youth. Failure in terms of budding relationships of the sweet age, failure in friendship, failure in examinations. This is the phase in teens where most of them step out of their homes as independent decision-makers. They meet new faces in this transitional phase. Every beginning seems beautiful unless beauty starts fading away; beauty in support, in personality and in behavior. Teens tend to fantasize about their future by falling into the fallacy of new relationships that they encounter. Some budding relations bloom into happiness, and some lead to gloom (*Relationship between Consequences of Love-Failure and Health's Dimensions - ScienceDirect*, n.d.). If the relationship turns out to be toxic, it results in behavioral changes and a negative outlook. Teens can be saved from suffering from serious relationship-oriented depression at home by providing an open and free environment, where a child can open up to parents or siblings with the confidence of understanding and support from family. Family should create such an atmosphere, otherwise in search of relief, in search of someone to hear them, they end up again being with some other person who either could console them properly or take an advantage of the vulnerability of the person in the circumstances, which will probably lead to one more breaking down incident in life.

Anxiety during examinations has become another major challenge for the world to deal with. Due to technical and financial constraints, the online education system was unable to reach more students throughout the Covid-19. And students faced concentration problems. As the education system is back on track with traditional classrooms, students have issues with earlier online half-learnt subjects, which leads to fear of failure in examinations (Balachandran et al., 2020). This is a worrisome aspect that many students are facing. Conducting intermediary sessions on important topics of the online completed syllabus would be an ideal solution. Another burden that students are tired of taking is fulfilling their parents' dreams. Parents' dreams are forcefully carved into children's minds, and they end up with suicide at times of failure (*Student Suicides on the Rise in India - Media India Group*, n.d.). Family is ideally the space for comfort; if this space generates stress, it will impact society dangerously. Hence, parents are advised to be sensitive toward their children's interests and abilities.

Another alarming cause which leads to depression is having an anxious past. Every teen is not expressive enough in expressing his/her sad emotions. A teen can laugh aloud before everyone but may cry silently alone. This silent suffocation piles up within and turns out to be either a disastrous pinch to others and/or to self. Teens are afraid that others would mock their emotions or that others may not understand and sensitize to his/her emotions therefore they tend to keep within instead of sharing. In order to eliminate this loneliness and suffering, one must be sensitized enough to understand and

receive others' problems. Sympathy is an expired phenomenon. Being empathetic provides a comfort zone. Being empathetic to a teen who is suffering from a problem, will shape and motivate a teen to grow as a mature person. The one who gets a shoulder to cry on will always be there to offer his/her shoulder to others.

The modern lifestyle has absorbed an unacknowledged family member, which is mobile. It is a device which encompasses the world within it and the same device killed teens and early youth in India in the name of PUBG, a video game. There were suicides ranging from teens to early youth of 21 years old in India; there were even murder attempts recorded in India when parents or guardians denied giving mobiles to children to play PUBG (*21-Year-Old Student Commits Suicide Because of PUBG Ban in India: Know Details | Technology News – India TV*, n.d.) (*PUBG Mobile Ban Fallout: Two Youngsters Died by Suicide For Being Deprived of The Game*, n.d.). It is evidently shocking how much the current generation is 'living with mobile'. This has become a generation of digital addiction. Either the generation is too sensitive to familial aspects or not sensitive enough. Some sensitive youth tend to commit suicide for their career and or relationship failure; the un-sensitive group turns out to be the reason for family members' depression. Therefore, enough attention should be paid to a generation of mobile-oriented early youth. Video games, social media and the fallacy of digital socialization are killing their social skills. Mobile addiction in a way leads to self-isolation, which is apparently the first step towards loneliness; it is an unexpressive emotional state which causes an anxious personality that will eventually result in depression (J & J, n.d.). Loneliness is an unrecognized self-suffocative process which devastates a person to the dust. House, Landis, and Umberson published a review of epidemiological studies of social isolation in humans around 25 years ago. Their study reveals that social isolation is risky for health and life (House et al., 1988). To curb this type of mobile-led loneliness, parents and family members need to pay more attention to children. Children should be provided with more family time and engagement. The common space that family members share should ideally be encouraging and understanding. Then, children would develop innocence and get a hold of their positive energy. Family is ideally everything; the beginning place of nurturing. If nurturing is positively holistic, the chances for teens and early youth to undergo depression are less.

**Role of Artificial Intelligence**

All the above-mentioned problems are human-provoked. There is an issue bothering the teens and youth of the world and that is Artificial Intelligence. Ever since AI started progressing, it has been an effective contributing factor for humans in many ways. Sardonically it is also a contributor to depression. AI does not depress an individual directly but indirectly amplifies depression. Whatever a teen searches on the internet, AI suggests similar content. Based on the browsing history, Google predicts the content that people would like to browse again. As mentioned in support.google.com that the feature of autocomplete in Google search works sooner in search engines as soon as one starts typing (*How Google Autocomplete Predictions Work - Google Search Help*, n.d.). Google's automated predictions generated by the system take inputs from the previous browsing history. Even YouTube has a similar feature. In 2008, YouTube launched a recommendation system and ranking videos based on popularity. In 2011 YouTube started classifiers to work on identifying videos of racy and violent content and prevented from recommending such content. Ever since recommendations started functioning on YouTube, it has contributed to a huge watch-timing and viewership ("Explained," 2021). Every time, YouTube is working on modifying its algorithm for better and safe services. But an aspect that google predictions and YouTube or Instagram Short Video recommendations need to work on is recommending gloomy content. Most teens and youth suffering from depression, prefer listening to gloomy content. Watching similar gloomy content often, it amplifies one's negative emotions unknowingly. Though there are possibilities to stop google predictions by erasing browse history, it is a temporary solution. Soon after a person searches again on the internet, data will be captured and predictions will resume. And there are similar settings available on YouTube and recommendations can be turned off. Most people are unaware of turning off recommendations. This is a worrying element that the world needs to think about. This is an area where AI needs to be re-programmed. The probable and positive interference of recommendations is recommending content of motivation or comic generation. It would impact the psychological state of a depressed person and helps in stabilizing negative emotions.

**Conclusion**

The world's youth is suffering from this slow-poisoned disease on one side. On the other side, some countries in the world are suffering from a shortage of youth population (Prabhu, 2017). If the conditionality of loneliness caused by depression is not curbed at the early stages, it becomes a serious threat to society. All these terrific years of the crisis left millions of people with unspeakable depression. The diagnosis was and is not available for everyone and it was and is not affordable to all (*Depression*, n.d.). Piling up depression leads to loneliness; isolation from socialization and the fallacy of digital socialization unknowingly makes a teen vulnerable to reality. Instead of focusing on setting up separate rehabilitation centers, the focus should be on creating a healthy and happy environment where people hardly need a rehabilitation center. Family is the backbone of any individual. If this backbone is strong and correct, an individual can stand without a need

for external support. A beloved demise can drastically impact an individual's behavior. It must be treated sensitively by family. After family, it is the educational institution where teens and youth spend more time, in fact, quality time. Therefore, educational institutions have to consider teens' and youth's psychological well-being as a major aim. Failures are common in our lives. One must accept failure and move on for betterment. Clinging to the past and un-acceptance of failure cause more depression. Friends play a key role in anyone's life. People are more comfortable sharing problems and disturbances with friends than with family. It is highly appreciated if friends do not cause for vulnerable situations. Algorithmic changes are needed in AI to curb amplifying gloomy depressive moods. Mental health issues among youths are an important public health concern during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Jones, 2022). Depression is a global disorder. It's the world's fight.

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