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Shun Facebook to kill loneliness before it eliminates you

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New Delhi, Dec 9: If you think that no other age group is more vulnerable to loneliness than the elderly, go check your backyard. The mammoth rise of the internet and emergence of various social media platforms have left many young Indians – some as young as 14 – socially isolated, lonely and, eventually, in the grip of chronic depression that can take their lives.

Not just leading to suicidal tendencies, the feeling of being lonely can make you sick, very sick if not addressed clinically and socially well in time. According to Dr. Samir Parikh, director, (mental health and behavioural sciences) at Fortis Healthcare in the capital, loneliness can be a trigger to self-suicidal ideation in young people. It can also affect their overall well-being.

“Loneliness can affect you physically and psychologically – draining people and leaving a huge vacuum in their life, thus putting them at suicide risk,” Parikh told IANS. Although in some cases, forming communities and groups on social media can be helpful but the social media can never be a substitute for the real human experience, he added.

“Total social isolation in young people can lead to depression, increases chances of Alzheimer’s later in life and chances of death by suicide or increased physical ailments,” Dr. Madhuri Singh, a leading psychiatrist from Nanavati Super Specialty Hospital in Mumbai, said.

In the virtual world, such lonely souls will, in fact, drift further away from the real interaction which is a must for the healthy functioning of mind and body, she added.