Chapter 1

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In the past few years, globalization and modernization have drastically changed the face of Indian culture. Changes are occurring in all spheres of the society, including political, economic, social, and interpersonal. Arranged marriage is the time-honored mode of marriage in India, where the elders of the two families actively intervene to negotiate the union between the man and the woman. Indeed, there had been a time, not far behind in history, that any kind of mixing of the sexes as independent unrelated adults was condemned and punished by the society. Changes have commenced after exposure to European model and particularly after legalization of women’s education; but the pace of change has been gradual, meandering, and remarkably hesitant. Now, however, more and more young Indians, mostly from metropolitan cities, prefer to choose their own life partners, and the frequency of love marriages are on the rise. Although this is not to mean that the free mixing of the women and men have been accepted at all levels, it may be asserted with confidence that one of the significant influences of the West on the Indian culture is ‘dating’.

Like all relationships, dating involves both love and conflict. Dating conflict is of particular interest for two reasons. It is ‘intimate conflict’, and, like marital conflict, a conjoint expression of love and hate. It differs from marital conflict in being more enigmatic, since, in marriage, the couples are bound to stay together by law, while in dating they remain together on their own will. One particular significance of increased mixing of the sexes with a romantic intent in our society is that along with greater opportunity to know each other, psychological disturbances and incidents of violence associated with dating are also increasing in number.

It is important to remember in this context that although definitions of dating is not limited to premarital relationship only, in the present study, the focus has been only on those individuals who are engaged in dating before marriage.
Concept of Dating Relationship

Dating can be defined as “a dyadic relationship involving meeting for social interaction and joint activities with an explicit or implicit intention to continue the relationship until one or the other party terminates or until some other more committed relationship is established (e.g., cohabiting, engagement or marriage)” (Straus, 2004, p.792). Another definition by Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) conceptualizes dating as “a dyadic interaction that focuses on participation in mutually rewarding activities that may increase the likelihood of future interaction, emotional commitment, and/or sexual intimacy” (p.5). Rosenthal (1995) defined dating as a sequence of behaviors beginning with group socializing and progressing to going out alone with one person. According to Wikipedia encyclopedia, dating is another term for courtship and it ‘is the process of selecting and attracting a mate for marriage’ (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2005).

Despite differences in the norms across culture, socio-economic strata, and race, there lies a basic similarity in all sorts of dating. Dating is, according to all conceptualizations, a dyadic interaction, where the partners engage in mutually rewarding activities and invest “time and energy” (Straus, 2004, p.792). Even two very distinctly different types of cultures like US (individualistic) and Taiwan (collectivistic) resemble each other when it comes to dating relationships and showing commitment and satisfaction (Lin & Rusbult, 1995). Hence, some of the characteristics of dating relationship are generalizable across cultures. Since very few empirical data was found on dating in Indian culture, the general nature of dating may be tentatively generalized from the records of western cultures.

In liberal Western societies, a date is an occasion when one socializes with a potential lover or spouse. In this sense, the purpose of a date for the partners is to get to know each other and decide whether they want to have a relationship. Typically, the individuals first interact with the other sex in a mixed group context, and then begin dating in a group context before finally forming dyadic romantic relationships. If the relationship continues beyond initial date, it implies the possibility of mutual attraction, ego involvement, and the possibility of becoming a more committed type
of pair relationship. However, the term ‘date’ is sometimes used to mean a social evening between people who have an established relationship, particularly if the goal is to relax away from day-to-day responsibilities (Dictionary.com, 2005).

Individuals may meet a potential dating partner through common friends, in a party, college campuses, coffee shops, clubs, bars, etc., and decide to go out with a compatible partner for a date. The relationships can also be arranged through newspaper, through internet, or by parents or friends. Initially the couples may ‘hangout’ and engage in various leisure activities together. Going out to movies or to dinners are common among dating couples, and these joint activities trigger positive emotions (Wilson-Shokley, 1995). For adolescents, these new relationships provide an opportunity for sexual experimentation and status attainment. Romantic relationship also serves as a major source of support for many young adults (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). Various theorists have even suggested that experiences in adolescent romantic relationships may influence the nature of subsequent close relationships, including marriages (Erikson, 1968; Furman & Flanagan, 1997; Sullivan, 1953).

For the young adults, the opposite sex is a frequent source of strong emotions (Wilson-Shockley, 1995). Although majority of these emotions are positive, a substantial proportion is negative too, indicating that relationships with the other sex can be sources of stress as well. Many become involved with warm and supportive dating partners, whereas others report conflict-ridden, volatile relationships. It has been reported that 20% to 40% of individuals in dating relationships use physical assaults in a 12 month period (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989). In a more recent study, more than 25% of the adolescents reported being victims of dating violence (Wolfe & Feiring, 2000). Dating violence has been reported to precede serious marital violence in 25% to 50% of cases (Gayford, 1975; Roscoe & Benaske, 1985). In terms of mental health, romantic break-ups are one of the strongest predictors of depression, multiple victim killings, and suicide attempts for young adults (Brendt, Perper, Morittz, Baugher, Roth and Balach, 1993; Fessenden, 2000; Joyner & Udry, 2000; Monroe, Rohde, Seeley and Lewinsohn, 1999). Thus, romantic involvements have both benefits and risks.
Conflict

Researchers have asserted that conflict is an inevitable part in the development and maintenance of all relationships (Adams, 1965; Coser, 1956; Scanzoni, 1972). Since dating is a dyadic relationship, conflict theory is applicable to it as well. As a relationship becomes more intimate, there is increase in interdependence between the partners, frequency of interaction and implicit right of influence, and in the opportunities for disagreements (Winstead, Derlega and Rose 1997). If conflict is suppressed, it results in stagnation and failure to adapt to changed circumstances and/or erode the bond of solidarity because of an accumulation of hostility.

Conflict can be both constructive and destructive to the relationship, and this, in turn, depends on how the partners manage the conflict (Winstead et al., 1997). It can make or break a relationship depending on the importance of issues involved and ways in which they are addressed. If the conflict is handled in a way that both the partners find it satisfactory, and no hard feeling is left behind in the process of resolution, then it further helps in the development of the relationship. However, if the conflict resolution tactics used is not mutually accepted, it may leave behind a scar, and eventually may lead to the termination of the relationship (Siegert & Stamp, 1994).

Straus in 1979 grouped the various techniques employed by individuals in a conflict situation into three categories.

1. **Negotiation**: The use of rational discussion, argument, and reasoning – which is an intellectual way to settle a disagreement. This is a very constructive way of dealing conflicts.

2. **Psychological Aggression**: Aggression is generally defined as a behavior intended to produce injury or harm (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mower and Sears 1939). Psychological aggression, a form of hostility, is a threat or infliction of psychological damage or pain occurring among humans during communication. This includes the use of verbal and non-verbal acts that symbolically hurt the other.

3. **Violence**: Violence is commonly defined as “an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person” (Feld & Straus, 1990, p.490). In 1991, Sallinen-Kuparinne, Thompson and Klopf, noted that
Research in the area of dating aggression started in 1981 with Makepeace's pioneering study. Before that it was believed that dating was a time for "innocent exploration" (Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989, p.3) and that violence was more common among married couples (Gelles, 1972). Since Makepeace's study, many studies have investigated the prevalence and nature of dating violence. A substantial amount of violence and psychological abuse amongst dating couples have been uncovered in the college and university settings (Arias, Samios & O'Leary 1987; Bernard & Bernard, 1983; Billingham & Sack, 1986; Bookwala, 2002; Henton, Cate, Koval, Lloyd & Christopher., 1983; Jezl, Molidor & Wright, 1996; Lane & Gwatney-Gibbs, 1985; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1989).

**Sex Difference in Dating Conflict**

Analysis of conflict and violence among dating couples revealed that in majority of the studies, women are reported to be more aggressive than men. For example, in 1988, Burke, Stets and Pirog-Good. reported that in a college population 14% of men and 18% of women reported inflicting physical abuse. Caulfield and Riggs (1992) reported that 19% of women slapped their male partners, while 7% of men slapped their partners. Hendy, Weiner, Bakerofskie, Eggen, Gustitus and McLeod. (2003) reported that 16% of men and 26% of women admit inflicting violence on their current romantic partner.

Although women are often found more aggressive than men in intimate relationships, compared to men's aggression, women's physical aggression is usually less negatively evaluated since it is potentially less serious (O'Leary & Arias, 1988). In 1993, Serra also noted that the nature and meaning of a violent act is quite different
when it is acted out by a man against a woman, compared to when it is acted out by woman against a man, because of biological asymmetry of the sexes. Since an adult man of normal built is more physically powerful than an adult woman of normal built, the man will easily overcome his partner in a physical conflict. So, clearly, if a woman enters into conflict with a man, either by assaulting him or by reacting with violence to his assaults, she immediately becomes the victim or the loser, and he the winner. Therefore, it is quite evident that unless specific tact or measure is employed, woman’s threat to the man does not pose much physical danger.

Bjorkqvist (1994) is of the opinion that there is no reason to believe that females should be less hostile and less prone to get into conflicts than males. But being physically weaker, women usually develop other means than inflicting physical aggression in order to reach successful results. Hence it should not be expected that women use exactly the same strategies for attaining their goals as men do. Since strategies for aggression and conflict resolution are learned, and not innate (Farrington, 1989), women are more likely to learn different methods than men (Taylor, Klein, Lewis, Gruenewald, Gurung, & Updgraff, 2000). Some of the important aspects other than physical aggression are usage of verbal and indirect aggression. Hence there are good reasons to believe that, as far as adult interpersonal conflict is concerned, physical aggression is really the exception, not the rule. Other means are more likely to be used.

Factors Influencing Dating Conflict

The significant factors that trigger violence and aggression in dating conflicts can be classified under 1) Social and demographic variables, 2) Family related variables, 3) Relationship variables, and 4) Personality Variables.

Social and Demographic Variables

a) Race – Several studies (Makepeace, 1987; O’Keefe et al, 1986) have indicated that race is an important variable in dating violence, but the findings as to relative prevalence among races are mixed. Some studies (Makepeace, 1987; O’Keefe,
Brockopp & Chew (1986; Plass & Gessner, 1983) have found that blacks use more violence compared to whites. Others (Lane & Gwartney-Gibbs, 1985) have indicated that whites are more violent than blacks, and Asians report lower level of violence compared to Hispanics. In a study by Straus (2004), it was revealed that considerable amount of dating violence was reported by students all across the world, including Asia & Middle East, Australia & New Zealand, Europe, Latin America and North America.

b) Family Income - In a study by Makepeace (1987), higher rates of dating violence involvement was found among partners coming from lowest and highest income groups.

c) Age - Women in their 20's were more likely to aggress than women aged 30 and above (Fiebert & Gonzales, 1997). But in many cases (Arias et al., 1987; Marshall & Rose, 1987), no significant age difference was found in case of reporting and perpetrating dating violence.

d) Place of Origin - Studies (Lane & Gwartney-Gibbs, 1985; Makepeace, 1987) have reported that those reared in large urban areas are more likely to report getting involved in dating violence, than those reared in small rural areas. Some others (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1989; Spencer & Bryant, 2000) were of the opinion that victims of dating violence were mostly from rural areas.

**Family Related Variables**

a) Family History - It has been found that those who experience dating violence are more likely to have grown up in homes marked by divorce or separation and periods of parental absence (Makepeace, 1987; O'Keefe et al., 1986). Victims of dating violence are more likely than non-victims to describe their relationship with their parents as distant (Makepeace, 1987) and have spent less time with their mother (Murphy, 1984).

b) Witnessing parental violence - Witnessing aggressive behavior between one's parents increases the aggressive tendencies both behaviorally (that is increasing the use of aggression in general) and in terms of incorporating aggressiveness into their personality style. This also increases the acceptance of aggression as a response to problem. In a study, Bernard and Bernard (1983) reported that 73% of the aggressive
males and 50% of aggressive females experienced or observed abuse in their families of origin. According to the Social Learning Theory, the perceived consequences (positive or negative) of a witnessed behavior are important in predicting whether the behavior will be initiated by the witness. Arias (1984) found that for men inter-parental aggression was related to courtship aggression both directly and through its impact on personality, while for women it was only through personality variables.

c) Experiencing violence in childhood - Being victim of parental aggression increases the likelihood that a person will behave aggressively in a dating relationship (Bernard & Bernard, 1983; Comins, 1984; Marshall & Rose, 1988). Like the effects of inter-parental aggression, the effects of child victimization appear different for men and women and are probably mediated by other factors.

**Relationship Variables**

a) Love and Commitment – Studies have indicated that majority of dating aggression incidents occur among steady or serious dating relationships. Violence was found related to the degree of intimacy among the partners, and physical abuse occurred more often in committed couples (Plass & Gessner, 1983; Mason & Blankenship, 1987).

b) Interpersonal Control – Power and interpersonal control influenced usage of violence significantly. DeMaris (1987) noted that males are more likely to get involved in dating violence if they believed that males should control the relationship. Stets and Pirog-Good (1990) predicted that interpersonal control predicted inflicting and sustaining minor aggression. Other studies (Follingstad, Bradley, Laughlin & Burke, 1999; Ronfeldt, Kimerling & Arias, 1998) have indicated and dissatisfaction with relationship power predicted psychological and physical abuse.

**Personality Variables**

a) Personality characteristics and mental health status – Psychopathology and neuropathology of the individuals have been found to be related to some extent to dating violence. Comins (1984) associated women’s courtship aggression with their
scores on the Symptoms Check List-90 (SCL-90: Derogatis et al., 1976). There has
been also evidence that neurological (Detre, Kupfer & Taub, 1975; Reiss, 1975) and
hormonal (Lloyd & Weisz, 1975) factors influence human aggressive behavior.

b) Gender Role Identity - Many researchers have found a strong relationship between
femininity and masculinity and usage of violence in interpersonal relationships. Since
the traditional masculine role is defined by the terms ‘being in control’, aggressive,
powerful and dominant, it has been argued that the use of aggression was linked to rigid
sex role stereotyping in males and aggression may be particularly likely to occur among
sex-typed males involved with non-traditional, therefore threatening female partners
(Walker, 1984). Bernard, Bernard & Bernard (1985) found that traditionally feminine
women were the least likely to be abused. Toby (1966) was of the opinion that men
behave aggressively as a way of demonstrating their masculinity. Lott and Maluso
(1993) explained from a social learning perspective that in most cultures, individuals
learn to be male or ‘masculine’ at least in part, by learning to be aggressive. But Burke
et al. (1988) found that males and females with more feminine gender identities were
likely to inflict and sustain physical abuse. They argued that emotional excitability,
associated with the feminine gender identity, may operate as a precursor for both males
and females.

c) Aggressiveness - Aggressiveness and impulsiveness increases the likelihood of
aggression in a relationship. Cate, Henton, Koval, Christopher and Lloy (1982) reported
that the courtship aggression experienced by their sample was most often a reflection of
anger or confusion on the part of the aggressor. Stets and Pirog-Good (1987b) reported
a relationship between jealousy and courtship aggression for women, and that men who
acted aggressively against a partner showed higher levels of emotionality.

d) Self Esteem - It has been reported (Deal & Wampler, 1986; Goldstein &
Rosenbaum, 1985; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986) that individuals who experience dating
violence have a low self-esteem, compared to those who do not sustain violence.
Elaboration of the Major Concepts of the Present study

The present study was designed to understand the nature of dating conflict among urban young women and men of India, and to explore some of the interpersonal and intrapersonal predictors of such conflict. The selected variables were Gender Role Identity, Aggressiveness and Love Style. Among these three, love and aggression were selected, essentially because the very concept of dating conflict involves these two; it is, indeed, aggression in a love relationship. Therefore, it was logical that the expression of dating conflict would be dependent on the participants' predispositions for love and aggression. Gender Role Identity, or Femininity and Masculinity, were selected because, by default, heterosexual dating is a gendered concept, and therefore, its expression must entail the socially constructed meaning of gender and sexuality (Feiring, Deblinger, Hoch-Espada, & Haworth, 2002; Hogben, Byrne, Hamburger, & Osland, 2001). The patterns of conflict woven between the woman and the man in dating relationship would be influenced by their respective understanding of feminine and masculine roles.

The theoretical notions of the three concepts — Aggressiveness, Gender Role Identity and Love style have been elaborated in the following sections.

Aggression

There are innumerable definitions of aggression; indeed, Harre and Lamb (1983) catalogued more than 250 definitions. Buss (1961) contends that aggression is simply any behavior that harms or injures others. A contrasting definition by several other researchers (e.g., Berkowitz, 1974; Feshbach, 1970), contends that in order to be classified as aggression, action must involve the intention of harm or injury to others and not simply delivery of such consequences. Another definition by Zillman (1978) restricts use of the term aggression to attempts to produce bodily or physical injury to others.

After much controversy concerning what is to be included in a definition of aggression, Baron (1977) came up with the following one: "Aggression is any form of
behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment” (p. 7).

A closer examination of this definition reveals a number of special features.

1. Aggression as Behavior – It suggests that aggression be viewed as a form of behavior, not as an emotion, a motive or an attitude. It is not essential that individuals be angry toward others in order to attack them; aggression occurs in ‘cold blood’ as well as in the heat of intense emotional arousal. It is neither essential that aggressors hate or even dislike the persons they attack, since, in many cases, people attempt to inflict harm upon persons toward whom they hold a positive rather than negative attitude.

2. Aggression as Intention – The term aggression limits to acts where the aggressor intends to harm the victim. But many researchers have pointed out that intentions are private, hidden events not open to direct observation. As a result, they must be inferred from conditions that both precede and follow alleged acts of aggression.

3. Aggression as Harm or Injury – The definition of aggression indicates that physical damage to the recipient is not essential. As long as a person has experienced some type of aversive consequences, aggression may be said to have occurred. Thus in addition to direct physical assaults, such actions as causing others to ‘lose face’ or experience public embarrassment, depriving them of needed objects, and even withholding love or affection can, under appropriate circumstances, be aggressive in nature. According to Buss (1961) aggressive acts can be dichotomized along three dimensions. Physical – Verbal, Active – Passive, and Direct – Indirect. The combination of these dimensions yields 8 possible categories into which most aggressive acts can be classified.

4. Aggression involves Living Beings – While it is obvious that individuals often strike, kick, or hit various kinds of inanimate objects (e.g., furniture, wall, etc.), such behavior will not be considered to represent aggression unless it causes some form of harm or injury to another living organism. Hitting or striking inanimate objects are best viewed as merely emotional or expressive in nature and do not constitute instances of aggression.

5. Aggression Involves an Avoidance-Motivated Recipient – Finally the definition notes that aggression may be said to have occurred only when the recipient or victim is
motivated to avoid such treatment at the hands of the aggressor. This is necessary to note because some forms of love-making encompasses overtones of sadomasochism, and the individuals involved seem to enjoy being hurt by the lovers, or at the very least, make no effort to avoid or escape such treatment.

At this juncture, it may be pointed out how violence and anger are related to aggression. *Anger* is an emotion, the presence of which may cause aggression. It is a necessary but not sufficient condition – its presence does not inevitably produce aggression. But the closeness between anger and the actual aggressive behavior sometimes reinforces the idea of cause-effect relationship. *Violence* is characterized by severe forms of physical aggression. According to Ilfeld (1969), violence as an act of intense, willful, physical harm committed by an individual or a group against himself or another individual or a group. There are several types of interpersonal violence: physical, verbal, emotional and sexual.

Many researchers (Buss, 1961, 1971; Feshbach, 1964, 1970) are of opinion that there are 2 types of aggression – affective or hostile aggression and instrumental aggression. Affective aggression is that accompanied by a strong negative emotional state (Bond, Lader & daSilveria, 1997). Here the primary or major goal sought by the aggressor is that of causing the victims to suffer. Instrumental aggression is related to behavior whose main goal is not the intent to harm but to establish social and coercive power over others through aggressive means. But Bandura (1973) argued that both affective and instrumental aggression are directed towards the attainment of specific goals and are therefore instrumental. As a result, terms like annoyance-motivated and incentive-motivated aggression by Zillmann (1979) and reactive and proactive aggression by Dodge and Coie (1987) were coined. Reactive aggression concerns retaliation to a perceived threat, whereas proactive aggression is used to obtain some other goal, for example dominance. However, an aggressive act often has elements of both types.
Theoretical Perspectives

1. Psychoanalytic Theory – Sigmund Freud (1920) proposed that aggression stemmed from thanatos or death instinct, which, he felt, represented the organism’s wish to return to the state of nothingness from which it had emerged. Since the death instinct would, if unrestrained, result in the rapid termination of life, he further reasoned that through other mechanisms (for example, displacement) the energy of thanatos comes to be directed outward and, in this manner, serves as the basis of aggression toward others. Aggression that cannot be discharged against external objects will be turned back on the self. Hence this theory contends that human beings are essentially left facing a choice between continuing assaults against others on the one hand and ultimate self-destruction on the other.

2. Ethological Theory – Konrad Lorenz, in his book ‘On Aggression’ (1966), concluded that human aggressiveness is an instinct fed by a constant source of energy to neural centers that govern the instinct, and it is not necessarily reaction to outer stimuli. Primarily an inner excitation, aggression seeks release and will be expressed regardless of the adequacy of the outer stimulus (Fromm, 1973). Secondly, according to Lorenz’s theory, aggression is in the service of life; aggression among the members of the same species serves natural selection, providing a balanced distribution of a species over the available territory and aiding in the gathering of food.

3. Frustration–Aggression Theory – In 1939, Dollard et al. proposed the ‘frustration–aggression theory’ which says that aggression is always a consequence of frustration, and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression. Frustration was initially defined as “something that interferes with an ongoing goal response” (Megargee, 1969, pp. 1059-1060), while aggressive behavior was defined as “an act whose goal response is injury to an organism or organism surrogate” (Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder & Huesman 1977, p.24). But evidences have been found that frustration does not necessarily lead to aggression but may also lead to depression (Buss, 1963). And aggression may also occur as a result of factors other than frustration. So Berkowitz (1974) modified the drive theory and said that frustration led to negative affect or anger, but this only led to aggression in the presence of aggressive cues.
4. **Cognitive Theory** - Berkowitz (1989) revised his earlier theory to state that frustration or other aversive stimuli (external factors) instigate aggressive reactions by creating negative affect. The response would then be determined by the individual's interpretation of the negative affect. If it was interpreted as anger, then aggressive tendencies would likely to be aroused and more attention might be paid to aggressive cues. This was termed the 'cognitive neoassociation' model. According to this theory, people can reduce their aggressive behavior by learning new ways of coping with provocation.

5. **Social Learning Theory** - This theory holds that aggressive behavior is acquired and maintained in the same way as any other social behavior. According to Bandura (1973), human aggression adopts the position that man is endowed with neurophysiological mechanisms that enable him to behave aggressively, but the activation of these mechanisms depends upon appropriate stimulation and is subject to cortical control. This theory of aggression is based on a three-part model (Lefkowitz et al., 1977): the way in which aggressive behavior is learned (by imitation and by direct experience), is activated or provoked (modeling influence, aversive treatment, incentive inducement, instructional control, and bizarre symbolic control), and maintained (externally reinforced, vicarious or self reinforced). This theory explains why youngsters who display aggressive behavior tend to come from families in which parents behave aggressively or in which there is an attitude that favors aggressive solutions to problems. And behaviors that are reinforced are more likely to occur again.

The factors that induce an individual to act aggressively can be categorized under 3 subheads – Interpersonal factors, External factors and Personality factors.

1. **Interpersonal Factors**: Frustration and personal insult increases aggression. It has been observed that individuals who become frustrated through their own inability to accomplish a task showed more aggression (Geen, 1968). Attack can also be a key instigator to retaliatory aggression. Persons who have been insulted or physically attacked are likely to respond with verbal abuse (James & Mosher, 1967), or with physical counterattack (Baron, 1972; Berkowitz, 1974). Apart from these, some
aggressive acts stem from commands from superiors, and not from provocation or frustration.

2. **External Factors:** Various adverse environmental factors may increase the likelihood of aggression, for example, heat (high temperature), noise (loud and unpleasant noise), overcrowding, unpleasant odor etc. A substantial body of work has also linked violence in the mass media to aggressive feelings and behavior. Pain may also serve as an external factor increasing the likelihood of aggression (Berkowitz, 1983). The prime goal may be to escape, but where this is blocked it may lead to aggression. Substance abuse is another common factor in aggression of varying degrees of severity (Bushman & Cooper, 1990; Collins & Schlenger, 1988).

3. **Personality Factors:** Impulsivity, hostility, shame-proneness, and some other personality traits are thought to stimulate aggression in an individual. Individuals with Type A behavior pattern (characterized by excessive competitiveness, impatience and hostility) are more likely to exhibit hostile aggression in response to provocation (Carver & Glass, 1978) and to report more interpersonal conflict at work (Baron, 1989). It has also been found that people who believe in one’s own ability to control events are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior than those who feel powerless.

It has often been held that men are more aggressive than women, and also men are far more likely to serve as the target of aggression than women. It is often the cultural stereotype of masculinity and femininity that teach the individuals that males are ‘tougher’ and more aggressive than females. Based on informal observation, males usually did seem to be more aggressive than females (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963; Buss, 1963). But experiments conducted by Baron and Ball (1974) and Baron and Bell (1976), revealed that male college students have not been found to direct stronger and longer–lasting shocks to a victim than females. The absence of sharp or clear-cut sex difference has also been observed among young children (Liebert & Baron, 1972) and among subjects from racial, economic, and social backgrounds. Baron (1977) suggested that there might be a difference in the threshold for aggression on the part of men and women. He said that men turn to aggression much more readily or after milder provocation.
Disappearance of clear-cut sex differences has also been related to more general changes in sexual roles and stereotypes that have occurred in recent years. As noted by several different observers (Deaux, 1976), these changes have involved a reduction in the passivity on the part of the women, as well as growing self-esteem and confidence. Together, such shifts may have served to render women less inhibited about responding aggressively to direct provocation. Thus the two sexes may gradually become equal in their propensity for violence.

**Gender Role Identity**

Although sex and gender are often used synonymously, they are actually distinct concepts. Sex is a biological quality that is determined before birth and it remains stable throughout life. Whereas Gender comprises of “those non-physiological components of sex that are culturally regarded as appropriate to males and females” (Unger, 1979, p. 108). Gender is learned and varies in response to cultural settings and experiences over lifetime. Individuals acquire gender as they interact with specific others and the social world, and their understandings and performances of gender continuously evolve as they participate in different communities. Baron and Byrne (1995) defined gender as the sum total of all attributes, behaviors, personality characteristics and expectancies associated with one’s sex in a given society. In brief, sex refers to the biological distinction between females and males, while gender refers to its cultural counterpart.

*Gender Role Identity refers to what an individual considers himself or herself to be in terms of perceived masculinity and femininity.* In various earlier studies, ‘Gender Role’ has been interpreted from different angles. From a psychological perspective, it is defined as characteristics or qualities which have been defined as masculine or feminine (gender identity), from a psychosocial perspective, as attitudes governing the appropriate behavior of males and females (gender role identity), and from a sociological perspective, as a role relevant behavior of males and females themselves (gender ideology) (Boye-Beaman, Leonard, & Senchak, 1993).

The two core elements of masculinity and femininity are instrumentality and expressiveness. Instrumentality has been defined as goal-oriented action including the
manipulation of objects, the environment, or even people to attain goals, while expressiveness has been defined as action orientation toward maintaining interpersonal interaction and concerned with interpersonal relationships (Gill, Stockard, Johnson, & Williams, 1987). These two constructs were originally conceptualized as a single bipolar dimension (Parsons & Bales, 1953), such that high masculine individuals were characterized as inherently low in femininity, and vice versa. Males were more likely to draw on instrumental characteristics and therefore fall at the masculine end of the continuum and females more likely to draw on expressive characteristics and therefore cluster at the feminine pole.

In contrast to the bipolar theory, other researchers (Bem, 1974, 1983; Gill et al., 1987; Spence & Helmreich, 1980) contended that masculinity and femininity should be conceived of as two separate dimensions that vary relatively independently. Consequently, an individual could be characteristically high or low in either or both instrumentality or expressiveness. Hence, in the bidimensional theory of gender role, masculinity and femininity may exert an interactional influence, such that combination of the two is greater than the individual influence of each. Four categories of gender role identities may be discerned (Bem, 1983; Spence & Helmreich, 1980): Undifferentiated (low M, low F), Feminine (low M, high F), Masculine (high M, low F) and Androgynous (high M, high F).

It is important to note that researchers examining the impact of gender identity utilizing unidimensional measurement may arrive at very different conclusions concerning the impact of gender identity on various variables than researchers whose analyses are based on bidimensional measurement.

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Different schools of psychology have different explanations as to why or how these gender relevant qualities or traits develop in an individual.

1. **The Psychoanalytical Theories** – The essence of the psychoanalytical theories (Freud, 1905; Horney, 1926; Klien, 1928; Erikson, 1977) is that males and females are genetically predisposed toward different cognitive and affective behavior, and they are attached to different kinds of objects (example, boys develop intense attachment to their
mothers). The culture contributes to maintenance and modification of these basic predispositions and develops what we subsequently see as sex difference among adults.

2. The Social Learning Theory - Walter Mischel (1966) stated that children are rewarded for sex appropriate and punished for sex inappropriate behavior. It thus locates the source of sex typing in the practice of sex differentiation in the process of socialization.

3. The Cognitive Developmental Theory - This theory, by Piaget (1932, 1965), considers child as an active agent of her/his development of gender identity and gender stereotypes. The major focus is on the child’s cognitive consistency and self-categorization. The major basis of this categorization is gender – a feature most discernable in society. Once gender concept is acquired, the child behaves in a gender consistent way, and values objects and ideas that help her/him to sustain this gender identity.

4. The Gender Schema Theory - Its basic idea is that stereotypes are developed on the basis of schema. Bem (1984) suggested that sex typing derives from a gender schematic processing, from a generalized readiness on the part of the child to encode and organize information about self and others. The gender schematic processing itself, however is a learnt phenomenon derived from the sex differentiated practices of the community.

In the present study, Sandra Bem’s gender schema theory (Bem, 1984) has been accepted in understanding identity. Bem (1974, 1981, 1983) proposed that there exists a generalized readiness to process information on the basis of sex linked attributes. From this bias in cognition arises gender schema which is constituted of cultural definitions of maleness and femaleness. This schema is readily available and through social learning incorporated in the individual’s identity.

Bem’s special credit lies in assertively eschewing the earlier conceptualizations of masculinity and femininity as opposed to each other (Constantinople, 1973) and prescribing these two as orthogonal components of stereotype. Thus each person has one’s own share of both. Depending upon the relative contribution in identity formation, a person may be Masculine (high in masculinity, low in masculinity), Feminine (high in
femininity, low in masculinity), Androgynous (high in both masculinity and femininity) and Undifferentiated (low in both masculinity and femininity).

The concept of self-schema is not a new one (Markus, 1977). The novel aspect of Bem's theory consists of two interrelated theories. Individuals differ in the centrality or strength of their gender schema and hence in the degree to which they are sex-typed in their behaviors, attitudes, attributes and readiness to process information about themselves and external events in gender terms. Moreover it is important to note that gender schema theory is a theory of process, not of content. Thus it is more flexible as it is not culture bound in terms of its content.

A review by Taylor and Crocker (1981) suggested that the schema concept is heuristically valuable. Although the concept of maleness and femaleness may be somewhat fuzzy and organized around vague cultural prototypes (Cantor & Mischel, 1979), the theory does not explicitly commit itself with respect to the exact nature or structure of gender schema. The intent of this theory is not to specify the precise structural representation of gender knowledge for even to establish that the gender schema satisfies some well-defined set of necessary and sufficient conditions for calling it a schema. Rather, the purpose of the theory is to provide a new perspective of the process of sex typing and to test a set of empirical properties deriving from that perspective.

**Love**

Love is a feeling. It is a feeling of attraction and attachment between two individuals. Erich Fromm (1956) defined love as an active power in man (people). According to him, through love we find the paradox of two beings becoming one yet remaining two (Fromm, 1956).

While trying to define love, many psychologists distinguished it from other types of feelings or emotions that evolves between two human beings. Rubin (1973) differentiated between 'loving' and 'liking'. He said, liking is a positive evaluation of another and consists of respect and affection. But the feeling of loving is much more intense than liking. Loving is qualitatively different and composed of attachment,
caring and intimacy. Attachment is the need for the physical presence and support of the loved one. Caring is a feeling of concern and responsibility for the loved one. Intimacy is the desire for close and confidential contact, and wanting to share certain thoughts and feelings with the loved one more fully than with anyone else.

Even in laymen's view, love encompasses two kinds of emotions: passionate love (which they call "infatuation") and companionate love (which they call "fondness"). According to Hatfield and Rapson (1993), passionate love is an intensely emotional state identified with a confusion of feelings: tenderness, sexuality, elation, pain, anxiety, relief, altruism and jealousy. And companionate love is "the affection people feel for those with whom their lives are deeply entwined" (p.9).

**Theoretical Perspectives**

Researchers have studied love from different angles.

1. **Exchange Theory of Love** - (Blau, 1964) characterized the development of love as requiring a nicely balanced degree of mutuality and the consistent exchange of rewards between partners.

2. **Passionate and Companionate Love** - In 1974, Bersheid and Walster proposed an approach to love which described romantic love or passionate love as physiological arousal accompanied by appropriate cognitive cues. This type of love is characterized by intense feelings of tenderness, elation, anxiety, and sexual desire. In 1978, Walster and Walster differentiated the romantic love from companionate love. Companionate love (sometimes called true or conjugal love) is less intense and involves a thoughtful appreciation of one's partner. It is characterized by a tolerance for weaknesses and a desire to solve conflicts and difficulties in a relationship. Most of the times romantic love evolves into this second category of love, which is more enduring than the first one.

3. **Prototype Approach to Love** - Fehr (1988, 1993 and 1994) listed 68 features of love, among which some of the consistent features were 'trust', 'caring', 'honesty', 'friendship' and 'respect'. In 1991, Fehr and Russell, reported that maternal love, parental love and friendship love were three most prototypical examples. Romantic
love was ranked fifth, but passionate love and sexual love were ranked quite low on the list.

4. **Romantic Love as Self-Expansion** - According to Aron and Aron (1986) romantic love stems from two major components of self-expansion model - the idea that a close relationship is the inclusion of the other within oneself (and oneself within the other), and to physically possess and manipulate interpersonal power and influence.

5. **Triangular Theory of Love** - In 1986, Sternberg proposed that love has three basic components, intimacy, passion and decision / commitment. The presence or absence of these produces different types of love. Intimacy is the emotionally based part of love, and refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness and bondedness in loving relationships. Passion is the motivational component of love. It refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction and sexual consummation. Decision or commitment is the cognitive ‘controller’ in a loving relationship. The short-term decision involves acceptance of such a relationship. The long-term aspect involves the commitment to maintain the relationship.

6. **The Colors of Love** - Lee in 1976 proposed that love styles are related to each other in much the same way as primary and secondary colors. He used Red to represent Eros, Blue to represent Ludus and Yellow to represent Storge (though the choice of colors were rather arbitrary). Eros, Ludus, and Storge – are the basic styles of loving. These are the primary colors of love. By combining these primary kinds of loving, other kinds may be produced like Mania, Agape and Pragma, called the secondary compounds. Then there comes more complex colors – called the secondary mixtures – like Ludic eros, Storgic eros and Storgic ludus.

   Like chemical compounds, the secondary love styles do not retain the properties of its primary elements. Hence Mania, which is a compound of Eros and Ludus, possess very different properties. The color of Mania is violet, which is formed by mixing red and blue. Another secondary love style is Pragma, a combination of Ludus and Storge. Hence the color denoted for Pragma is green, obtained by combining blue and yellow. Agape is the combination of Eros and Storge. It’s color is orange (red + yellow). So, like chemical compounds, all the 6 love types (3 primaries and 3 secondaries) possesses
distinctly different properties, and each love style has qualitative properties independent of all the other styles.

Lee believed that it is practical to use the color analogy for explaining love styles because he believed that no color is superior to all others. Hence there is no ‘best’ attitude to love. But later Hendrick, Hendrick and Adler, (1988) and Meeks, Hendrick and Hendrick (1998) refuted this point and proved that some love styles are better in maintaining relationships than others. Meek et al. in 1998, combined Eros, Agape and Storge to form the ‘positive love’, and proved that these three love styles were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. Ludus was found to be negatively related to satisfaction and was hence called ‘negative love’.

According to Lee (1976), love styles are like life styles, they can change and they can even be deliberately chosen.

**Eros:** Typical erotic lovers are ready for love and its involved risks, but are not anxiously searching. Such individuals have clarity on the physical type they are attracted to, and are quite demanding in their specifications for an ideal beloved. These lovers seek a deep, pervasive rapport with the partner as quickly as possible. They also feel intense emotion and strong physical attraction, and express it in both verbal and tactile ways. Erotic lovers are open and honest and strive for sincerity. It is by its very nature exclusive. They elicit reciprocal feelings from their beloved but do not demand them. Erotic lovers consider love to be the life’s most important activity but will not abuse or abuse for the sake of love.

**Ludus:** Love as an interaction game to be played with diverse partners appears to be the main attribute of the Ludic type. There is not great depth of feeling; indeed the ludic lover is wary of emotional intensity from others. Ludic love has a manipulative quality to it. Insincerity and lies may be justified by the rules of the game. Actually, for a game playing lover, an emotional relationship is a challenge to be enjoyed, a contest to be won. Commitment is virtually anathema to this style of lovers, and is also not exclusive or possessive. Ludic lovers seek sexual enjoyment with good technique, but for fun, not for emotional rapport.
Storge: Storge love reflects an interaction to merge love and friendship. There is no fire in storgic love; it is solid, down to earth and most likely to be enduring. Here love is a comfortable intimacy, which slowly grows out of companionship, mutual sharing and self-disclosure. Storgic lovers are warm, thoughtful and companionate. They prefer to talk about, and do things of common interest, rather than to express direct feelings for each other. Storgic lovers are quietly possessive, but not jealous or fearful of rivals until a real threat to the relationship occurs.

Pragma: Rational calculation with a focus on desired attributes of the lover is central to pragmatic love. Pragmatic lovers know exactly what type(s) will be suitable, but tend to define these by biographic qualities (race, job, education, etc.) rather than by physical appearance. The top priority goes to those with qualities most compatible with their own biographic data. Pragmatic lovers expect their partner to reciprocate feelings, but will change partners rather than force reciprocation. Such lovers are usually possessive about highly suitable candidates but avoid jealous conflicts or ‘scenes’, and are probable to seek a new partner if the present one is unfaithful.

Mania: Mania is based on uncertainty of self and the lover. Manic lovers are emotionally intense, jealous and obsessed with the beloved. They are highly dependent on the beloved and therefore fear rejection. Lovers are extremely possessive and are constantly on guard over their partner. They try to create problems if there are none in order to intensify feelings, and periodically try to calm and control their own intense feelings. Manic lovers try to force the partner to show more affection and commitment. They become convinced that life without the partner’s love is hardly worth living and will abase and abuse themselves in the hope of winning the partner’s love.

Agape: Agape is an all-giving, non-demanding love. It is unconditionally caring and nurturing, giving and forgiving and at its highest level self-sacrificing. Such lovers are ruled less by their own needs, and more by the needs of other. These individuals control their feelings, not to restrain or manipulate the partner, but to best meet the partner’s needs. Agapic lovers strive for honest, open rapport based on trust. Lovers are happy if
the beloved reciprocates but do not depend on reciprocation. They do not feel jealous or possessive of the beloved or fearful of rivals. Such lovers may even step aside in favor of a rival who seems more likely to meet the partner’s needs. They never try to compel the partner to reciprocate or show love and never demand commitment from the partner.

Many studies have shown that there is a well pronounced sex difference in styles of loving. Men are usually more ludic, and women more storgic, pragmatic and manic. But the findings are not consistent in the case of Eros and Agape (Hendrick, Hendrick, Foote & Slapton-Foote, 1984). According to the socio-biological theory, men can maximize their fitness by impregnating as many women as possible and hence men are more game playing (ludic) in their love styles. While women maximize their fitness by investing heavily in each of the relatively few infants they may produce (Kenrick, 1987) and that is why women are more practical (pragmatic) and friendship oriented (storgic). The Social Learning theory (Bandura, 1977) states that men are expected to be more sexually active and exploratory, as part of a traditional men’s role of being more sexually permissive and game playing in love. While women, perceived as guardians of their own sexuality, as well as restraining forces for men’s sexuality (Cate & Lloyd, 1992), should be more oriented to the emotional aspects of sex, to the stable and practical aspects of love, and potentially also to relationship investment and commitment (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1995).

In the present study, Lee’s typology of love styles would be used and would be measured by the Love Attitude Scale by Hendrick, Hendrick, and Dicke (1998). The reason behind choosing Lee’s theory (Colors of love) is that this theory encompasses almost all of the other theories of love. For example, Eros and Storge are clearly Bersheid and Walster’s (1978) passionate love and companionate love respectively. The concept of Pragma or logical love is similar to Blau’s (1964) Exchange theory. Then the communal type of relationship as mentioned by Clark and Mill (1979) is displayed by Agapic lovers. In a word, it can be said that Lee’s theory is all inclusive. It talks about all the love types that human beings can possibly engage in.
The Present Study and its Objectives

Though dating and consequently dating conflict is gradually becoming more and more common in our society, yet, only a minuscule amount of Indian studies are found in this field. Quite often, we hear and read about specific incidents of dating violence occurring in our culture. Nevertheless, very little formal research has been conducted to study dating aggression among Indian youths. The variables that has been indicated in this chapter as influencing dating aggression in the western culture may not interact in the same way in the Indian culture which is at the present moment semi-traditional and semi-modern. The type of conflict tactics used, and the frequency of dating aggression can altogether be different in our culture owing to the intrinsic ambivalence toward free mixing of sexes.

In this sense, the present study is largely exploratory in nature. Its purpose is to study conflict in dating relationship among young adult students in the Indian (Bengali) culture, and to find out the role of aggression, gender role identity and love attitude – three most important variables – in predicting dating violence.

The broad objectives of the study are:

1. To study whether there is any sex difference in the conflict tactics in the dating relationship of college students.
2. To study whether dating conflict tactics acknowledged for oneself is associated with conflict tactics reported on the part of one’s partner.
3. To study whether there is any role of general aggressiveness, gender role identity and love attitude in the various types of conflict tactics used in dating relationships among college students.
4. To predict the degree of different types of conflict tactics used from the three independent variables.