CHAPTER- II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand the research problem, it is imperative to undertake a survey of earlier studies. This would enable the researcher to fill the gaps in research and extend it further. This chapter focuses on romantic relationship among unmarried youth as the present study aims to understand the psychosocial determinants of romantic inclination among them. In this chapter studies done on the development of romantic relationship attachment style, interpersonal attraction, media and peer influence on romantic relationships are presented. A few studies on romantic relationship among youth conducted in Indian context is also presented. The studies are presented in the chronological order. While the main focus is on the studies done in the last decade, significant earlier studies are also included in the review. At the end of the chapter a summary of the review is presented.

STUDIES ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

Developing a romantic relationship is considered as an elating experience by many youth. Pre marital romantic relationships develop through the course of adolescence and young adolescents can characterize romantic relationships with passion and commitment which were consistent with adult’s view of love (Connolly, Craig, Goldberg & Pepler, 1999). Over a period of time
they develop strong beliefs about love and they endorse that involvement in romantic relationship conquers all aspects of life (Knox, Marty, Schacht & Zusman, 1999). During teenage years there was a significant increase in behaviors related to romantic interests and analyzing from a lifespan perspective, romantic experiences could represent a singular phase of meaningful development spanning across periods (Collins, Hennighawen, Schrinit & Sroufe, 1997). It was also understood that adolescents functioning in teenage romantic relationships were contributed by caregiver-child and peer relationships from early stages including preschool and middle adulthood.

Shulman and Scharf (2000) studied adolescent romantic behaviors and perceptions by examining demographic variables and dating experience. Furthermore, associations between the quality of relationships with parents and peers, and affective intensity with a romantic partner were investigated. One hundred and eight Israeli adolescents were interviewed and assessed. The results of the study suggested that older adolescents had more romantic partners and also showed fewer romantic perceptions pertaining to companionship and excitement. Nevertheless, across adolescents intimacy and level of emotional involvement were alike. Moreover adolescents who were currently dating perceived romantic relations more in terms of emotional involvement.
Connolly, Craig, Goldberg and Pepler (2004) conducted a study on mixed-gender groups, dating and relationships in early adolescence. In this study 1,284 adolescents from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds participated. The results revealed that dating practices were included in mixed-gender affiliations. Additionally, more stability was visible in group based romantic stages than the other stages and that romantic timing was influenced by ethnocultural background. Finally the outcome suggested that involvement in romantic activities amplified adolescents’ potential interest in having a romantic relationship.

Crissey (2005) used a sample of 12,973 adolescents to explain the perception of the likelihood of marriage and the role of heterosexual romantic relationship with regard to race or ethnicity. When studying expectation of marriage, race or ethnicity and romantic relationship history, results indicated that there was more probability for white adolescents to date than black adolescents to engage in serious romantic relationships that elevate marital expectations. Furthermore it was concluded that these adolescent romantic experiences play only a small part in formulating differential marital expectations.

Finkel, Eastwick and Matthews (2007) published an article about speed-dating procedures. The participants had to attend dates with a series of potential romantic partners. This method allowed for testing of many basic hypotheses related to attraction,
and also could combine the fields of initial romantic attraction and close relationships. This article addressed the methodological and logistical issues that the investigators and researchers would face while conducting speed-dating studies and also provided an illustration of a speed-dating procedure with a portrayal of speed-dating study.

The progression of social, romantic and sexual events was studied by Sullivan, Cheng, Harris and Brooks-Gunn (2007). The data consisted of 8438 adolescents aged 12-21 years. On analyzing the results, it was concluded that social and romantic events were more common than sexual events when considering the course of events in the relationship. Asian and Hispanic respondents had a lower share of reporting sexual events when compared with white respondents. Talking about prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases preceding sexual events was exclusive only to black adolescents, whereas both genders reported the same.

Solomon and Theiss (2008) conducted a longitudinal study to evaluate the associations between intimacy and relational uncertainty. On a web based study 315 undergraduates completed a survey on weekly basis for 6 weeks. A positive association was found between the partner's influence and facilitation of activities. The relationship between intimacy and a partner's influence were calculated by the partner's interference.
To examine the gender variation and correlates of relationship qualities in parents’ management of adolescents’ romantic relationships, Madsen (2008) examined 165 parents and their 103 children (17-19 years) from a European-American background. The parents answered scales on parental comfort, romantic relations and dating rules whilst the adolescents answered on psychological control used by parents and romantic relationship qualities. It was seen that dating rules, when provided by the parents was different between the adolescents and parents’ gender. Qualities of parents and adolescents’ relationships were associated differently when rule types were considered.

Dulmen, Goncy, Haydon and Collins (2008) investigated the processes of romantic relationship in predicting externalizing behaviour problems during adolescence. Data from 143 parents and children was collected from Minnesota Longitudinal Study. Results showed that during adolescence and early adulthood relationship security can be associated with lower levels of externalizing behaviour problems where this inverse relation was found to be stronger for early adults. This relation was not attributable neither to earlier quality of family and peer relationships nor emerging adulthood competence. When individuals transcend from adolescence to emerging adulthood, security of romantic relations could become predictive of individual differences in externalizing behaviour.
A review of taxonomies by Acevedo and Aron (2009) examined theories and research to assess long-term relationships with the possibility of romantic love throughout the course of the relationship. The review suggested that romantic love in long-term marriages could exist without the obsession and was linked to marital satisfaction, well-being and high self-esteem. Analysis suggested that community couples recognized autonomous latent factors for romantic love and obsession that support separate roles of romantic love and obsession in long-term relationships. Even when social desirability was controlled few individuals reported very high levels of romantic love.

Barry et al. (2009) examined the facets of identity development and achievement and its relation to friendship and romantic relationships in emerging adults. The data set comprised of 710 adults (18-26 years). It was found that four romantic relationship qualities were positively associated with identity achievement and not with friendship qualities. Numerous individuals who attained adulthood criteria were interrelated positively to romantic relationship qualities. However, achieved adulthood criteria were linked negatively to friendship qualities. The analysis suggested that developmental tasks of adulthood could carry vital implications for adults’ social relationships.

Sophia et al. (2009) investigated personality factors related to romantic relationships in a population with pathological love. The
data set consisted of 89 individuals including 50 people with pathological love and 39 people with no psychiatric disorder. It was found that high levels of impulsivity and higher-transcendence was relatively higher in individuals with pathological love. This suggests that such individuals are unconventional and hold a sense of unity with broad facets of reality and maintain dissatisfactory romantic relationships.

Harris and Kalbfleisch (2010) conducted a study on interracial dating. The study suggested that participants defied the idea of dating a person from another race. They implied to external factors like family and society to be reasons to curb interracial romantic relationships. Moreover, social distancing strategies were used to initiate interracial dating relationships than same-race dating relationships.

A meta-analytic synthesis was done by Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn and Mutso (2010) on the predictors of non marital romantic relationship dissolution. This meta-analysis used 137 studies including data from 37,761 participants from over 33 years. This study investigated individual, relationship, and external variables. Results implied that the strongest predictors of dissolution were commitment, love, inclusion of other in the self, and dependence. Personality measures were found to have limited predictive utility of dissolution.
DeLemus, Moya and Glick (2010) researched on adolescents romantic relationship predictors where they measured the sexist beliefs and romantic relationship occurrence in Spanish adolescents. Their findings revealed that age predicted less sexist beliefs. Also when age was controlled, amplified hostile sexism in girls and benevolent sexism in boys can be predicted with their relationship experience. Moreover, younger boys aged 12-14 years who had a relationship experience tended to display excessive hostile sexism. It was found that contrasting effect of romantic experience and the general decline in sexism over the course of adolescence indicating that an adolescent’s interest to attract romantic partners could foster sexism than reduce this phenomenon.

**STUDIES ON ATTACHMENT FRAMEWORK**

Attachment has long been studied in the context of close relationship. Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the pioneers in relating attachment paradigm to romantic relationship and conceptualized romantic love as an attachment process. According to them romantic love is a “biosocial process by which affectional bonds are formed between adult lovers, just as affectional bonds are formed earlier in life between human infants and their parents”. They empirically tested these conceptualizations and found that relatively in adulthood and in infancy three similar attachment styles prevailed namely secure, avoidant and anxious-ambivalent styles.
Those adults with these three styles of attachment differed in the way they experienced romantic love.

Studies linking these three attachments with family relationships revealed that those individuals with secure attachment styles reported considerable positive perceptions of their family in the early ages. Childhood separation from their mother and mistrust of others was mostly expressed by avoidant. Subjects with anxious-ambivalent attachment style than avoidant were less expected to acknowledge their parents as supportive and also they displayed lack of independence and a desire for deep committed relationship. Moreover, attachment style could be strongly associated with various form of love (Feeney & Noller, 1990). Studies examining transfer of attachment among youth identified that parents are the primary attachment figures but were later in the course of shifting attachment related functions to their peers that included best friends and romantic partners. This shift increased with the duration of the relationship (Fraley, Davis & Shaver, 1997).

Roisman, Madsen, Hennighausen, Oufe and Collins (2001) in a longitudinal study involving adolescents (age 19) studied their attachment using Adult Attachment Interview. The results showed significant relations between adolescents’ representations of their relationships with parents and the quality of their interactions with romantic partners. Finally mediational analyses results
implied that experiences between the parent and child are internalized and transcends into those relationships held in adulthood.

Bogaert and Sadava (2002) studied 792 Canadian young adults on the associations between adult attachment processes and sexuality. Individuals filled questionnaires on adult attachment, erotophilia, physical attractiveness, and sexual behaviour. Associations can be found between secure attachment and perceptions of physically attractiveness, and an inverse association between anxious attachment and perception of physical attractiveness. Stronger results were generally seen in women especially with associations to sexuality or attachment.

Moore and Leung (2002) studied the associations between romantic attachment styles, romantic attitudes and well-being among 461 tertiary students, aged 17–21 years. Results suggested that those students with secure romantic attachment styles displayed higher academic satisfaction. Moreover, they were less stressed and less lonely as opposed to those with clingy or casual styles and independent of current relationship status.

Collins, Cooper, Albino and Allard (2002) analyzed of attachment style during adolescence and predicting the nature and quality of romantic relationships in early adulthood. The adolescents were interviewed and completed a questionnaire on
attachment style. Roughly after 6 years later, a follow-up interview was taken with the 224 participants on their current romantic partners. Results indicated a risk factor for adverse relationship when the individuals held insecure attachment style in adulthood, even though these effects were more prominent in avoidant attachment. Those adolescents with avoidant style reported relationships to be less satisfying. This provides proof that avoidant attachment exposes individuals to a risk of adverse relationship outcomes.

Ditommaso, McNulty, Ross and Burgess (2003) examined in a sample of 183 university students the association between attachment, social and emotional loneliness, and social skills. The data set consisted of 183 university students. Analysis showed multiple important dimensions on the relation between secure attachment and social skills. Also, attachment security and social skills were significantly related to loneliness. Further results indicated the link between secure and fearful attachment, and the mediation of social skills on social loneliness.

Tracy, Shaver, Albino and Cooper (2003) examined the link between the attachment style and adolescent sexuality drawing 41 participants (aged 13-19) from a longitudinal study on psychosocial factors affecting health risk behaviour. Participants completed the attachment style measure and participated in in-person interviews using a structured interview schedule. The results showed that
avoidant adolescents were least likely to be currently involved in a romantic relationship. Anxious adolescents were frequently been in love. Among dating adolescents secures reported most frequent dating, a consequence of their being more likely to be in a long-term relationship. Anxious adolescents showed fears of rejection and abandonment in dating. Anxiously attached girls had the most sexual experience and securely attached boys had the most sexual experience.

Roisman, Collins, Srofe and Egeland (2005) involving data from a longitudinal cohort examined correlates, antecedents and behaviors of young adults in romantic relationships. Results suggested that individuals with secure attachment showed higher quality of romantic relationship. Individuals’ self-reports about their romantic experiences was mediated by the relation between infant and romantic experiences. One plausible mechanism to explain this result could be that early experiences with caregivers model young adults’ depiction of their attachments with romantic partners, and this through the expectations adults’ hold with their perceptions of love relationships.

Birnbaum, Reis, Mikulincer, Gillath and Orpaz (2006) in two studies examined individual differences in attachment orientations and sexual intercourse. In the first study 500 participants were asked to complete self-report scales on attachment orientations and sexual experience and in the second study 41 couples for a period
of 42 days had to report on their attachment orientation, sexual experiences and relationship interactions. The analysis for study 1 implied the associations between anxiety attachment and sexual experience that is ambivalent and between attachment avoidance which was related with added aversive sexual feelings and cognitions. Results from study 2 revealed that anxiety attachment increased the effects of positive and negative sexual experiences on relationship interactions and an inverse relationship avoidance attachment and the positive effect of having sex and damaging effects of sexual interactions that was negative.

Lehnart and Neyer (2006) conducted a longitudinal study on 253 young adults age ranging from 18-29 years to explore the link between attachment, relationship satisfaction and personality at three time lines. In two groups namely stable continuers and relationship changers the dynamics between personality and relationship development were examined. Partnership satisfaction but not personality predicted relationship stability. Continuers exhibited more stable neuroticism and attachment than in changers. Cross-lagged analyses revealed a more consistent pattern of reciprocal influences of personality and relationship quality in stable relationships.

Nofle and Shaver (2006) conducted two studies to explore the associations between attachment style and personality traits and also the comparative abilities to predict relationship quality. Study
1 involved 8318 university students who filled the Big Five Inventory and Close Relationships scale and in study 2,285 students filled the 240-item NEO-PI-R. Results in study 1 revealed that attachment anxiety was related to neuroticism and conscientiousness, whereas avoidance was related to low sociability and warmth of introversion and depression aspect of neuroticism. Regression analysis showed that anxious attachment was most strongly related to neuroticism, avoidance was related to both agreeableness and extraversion, and both attachment dimensions were relatively uncorrelated with openness. Results of study 2 suggested that people currently in a relationship tended to be lower in attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance and rated their relationship quality higher. Neuroticism and attachment anxiety were highly correlated. Neuroticism was modestly correlated with avoidance. Extraversion was correlated moderately negatively with avoidance and slightly negatively with attachment anxiety. Openness was modestly correlated with avoidance but not significantly with attachment anxiety. Neither attachment anxiety nor avoidance was correlated significantly with agreeableness. Both attachment anxiety and avoidance correlated moderately negatively with conscientiousness.

Simpson, Collins, Tran, and Haydon (2007) in a longitudinal study examined 78 individuals from infancy to their mid-20’s involving 78 individuals. They tested the interference of
interpersonal experiences in three pivotal target points. This predicted the state of emotions whether positive or negative countered with their current romantic partner. Analyzing the results of a double-mediation model revealed that individuals who had secure attachment at 12 months old were later rated as socially competent during early elementary school. Social competence for targets predicted them with more secure relationships with close friends at age 16. This later forecasted more positive emotional experiences in their adult romantic relationships. Also, with their romantic partners they exhibited less negative effect in conflict resolution and collaborative tasks.

Schindler, Fagundes and Murdock (2010) in a prospective study involving 90 students (18-27 years) aimed to test on general attachment and process of dating. Results showed that avoidance attachment style predicted not entering committed dating relationship. The shift in dating status was from not dating to casual or committed dating was foretold by prior dating experience with the desire for a committed relationship.

In a cross cultural study conducted among Australian and Japanese university students, Joel, MacDonald and Shimotomai (2011) aimed at establishing the association between anxious attachment and romantic commitment. Individuals completed questionnaires of attachment style, felt security, satisfaction and commitment. In the Australian sample, an association existed
between satisfaction and felt security which in turn acted as mediating variables between anxious attachment and commitment. Data from Japan imitated the same suppression effect and also displayed the underlying residual positive relation between anxious attachment and commitment. These results suggested ambivalence about commitment among the anxiously attached. Downward pressure on commitment was exerted by dissatisfaction and worries about negative evaluation.

Jones and Furman (2011) conducted a study on adolescents to explore the associations between romantic representations and sexual behaviour. Two hundred adolescents were asked to complete Behavioral Systems Questionnaire, Romantic Interview, Sexual Attitudes and Behavior Survey and Dating History Questionnaire. Analysis indicated an inverse relationship between avoidant styles and frequencies of genital sexual behaviour. Low levels of associations could be found between avoidant working models and heavy/ light non genital frequency. Nevertheless, low level of significant difference was found between the time of onset and avoidant working models.

Karandashev, Benton, Edwards and Wolters (2012) examined the development of attachment in romantic relationship with regard to their love styles. Two hundred and ninety undergraduate students recalled their stories of love relationships that occurred approximately between ages 15-19 and filled in the Love Attitude
It was found that avoidance feelings natural for partners not well acquainted but romantically attracted to each other significantly decreased during first encounters when partners knew each other better. Eros, Storge, and Agape love styles shared their features in attachment progression, although Eros being more passionate decreased avoidance faster but unstable while Storge and Agape were more precautious in this respect. Ludus was not avoidant but painfully controversial and demonstrated great fluctuation from low to high avoidance and back. Pragma seemed to display uncertainty in the ability to be close to a partner, but events played a significant role in such fluctuation. Avoidance progression of Mania love style demonstrated small but stable turbulence characterized by emotional ups and downs. Anxiety did not decrease as expected and remained moderately high in the relationships with some fluctuations depending on events. The study showed that neither general nor typological tendencies, but rather specific events played the most important role in determining attachment progression through early romantic relationships.

**STUDIES ON INTERPERSONAL ATTRACTION**

Interpersonal attraction may be viewed as a precursor of romantic interests in a partner. Physical attraction towards the partner provides the first step in developing interest and attraction towards the partner and the other aspects such as social
functioning, attraction towards style of functioning and perceived power and prestige of the partner develops in due course of time.

Gender differences in romantic attraction have been examined by many studies. Studies revealed that men perceived physical characteristics to be more important, whereas women laid emphasis on personal qualities. But, when the choice came down to a meaningful relationship, both men and women stressed on personal qualities (Nevid, 1984). Pierce (1996) studied body height and romantic attraction and it was found that females showed greater effect of body height when it came to dating or mating preferences. The study also supported the male-taller norm in romantic attraction. On priorities on romantic attraction, men emphasized on physical attractiveness while women on sense of humor with physically attractiveness (Lundy, Tan & Cunningham, 1998).

Regan, Levin, Sprecher, Christopher and Gate (2000) conducted a study on 561 college students, where they were randomly assigned to examine traits that were favored in a short-term sexual relationship against a long-term relationship. Individuals gave preferences for 23 traits in a “short-term sexual” or a “long-term romantic” relationship partner. Results indicated that higher preference was given to internal qualities than external qualities. With regard to gender differences men valued attributes of sexual desirability and woman emphasized on social status. Also,
when short term sexual relationships were considered both sexes focused on sexual desirability, and when long-term relationships were considered emphasis was laid on similarity and personality characteristics that was found to be socially appealing.

Hoyt and Kogan (2001) examined 101 men and 187 women in a college setting on their body image and peer relationships. Results suggested that women were unhappy with their appearance if they weighed under or above average weight. Also, men as opposed to women found their relationships and sex more dissatisfactory. Both men and women suggested their dissatisfaction on those body parts that were considered ideal in the respective gender.

Lisa (2003) conducted a study on sexual orientation among the youth. The hypothesis of the study was based on bio behavioral model which distinguished romantic love and sexual desire. It was revealed that sexual desire and affectional bonding followed independent evolutionary processes. Also, the processes underlying affectional bonding were not intrinsically oriented toward other-gender or same-gender partners. It was concluded that for women the bio-behavioral links between love and desire are bidirectional.

Kniffin and Wilson (2004) conducted a study on the effect of nonphysical traits on the perception of physical attractiveness. The results of the study based on known social partners indicated that judgments of physical attractiveness are strongly influenced by nonphysical factors. It was also found that women are more
strongly influenced by nonphysical factors than men and there were individual differences within each sex.

Sheets and Ajmere (2005) conducted a study to explore the paradigm of weight-related concerns in romantic relations using a sample of 554 undergraduates (17-50 years). Results indicated that women who were overweight were less probable to be dating. Also a positive association was found between satisfaction in the relationship and weight among men, whereas an inverse correlation was found in women. In relationships men were generally asked to gain weight and women were asked to lose weight and these individuals reported lower satisfaction in their relationships.

Another study relating body image dissatisfaction and romantic partner support styles, done by Weller and Dziegielewski (2005) examined 117 participants. Results showed that there existed an inverse relationship between body dissatisfaction and perception of support from romantic partners. Findings suggested that support from a romantic partner and general support could be associated to disturbance of body image, associated anxiety and physical characteristics. Another finding was that higher levels of disturbance in body image and associated anxiety regarding appearance were reported when individuals received support from their partners or others in general.

Markey and Markey (2006) examined the associations between young woman’s romantic relationships and their body
image. Ninety five heterosexual couples participated in the study where they filled questionnaires on self-perception of body image and significant others perception of body image. Results suggested that high dissatisfaction in women regarding their bodies lead to the belief that their partners were unhappy than the actual scenario. Further analysis showed that those in the relationship for a longer period of time believed that their partners had a desire for them to look thinner.

Barelds and Dijkstra (2007) studied love at first sight or friends first. Data set consisted of 137 married or cohabiting couples who were assessed on various aspects of a relationship. Results indicated that those individuals who fell in love at first sight tended to involve themselves romantically swiftly and showed dissimilar personalities. They also didn’t show lower relationship quality. Finally, an association between personality trait of the partner and quality of the relationship was found.

Li (2007) chose 61 individuals to study mate preferences in short term and long term mating. Individuals were asked to allot mate dollars to mark attributes to their ideal partners and selves for both short and long term mating. Men preferred physical attractiveness and women opted social status in a long term mating ideal. Physical attractiveness was favoured when it came to short-term mates with both men and women. Individuals, preference of
their ideal selves reflected what the opposite sex preferably looked-for in their mates

Sanchez and Kiefer (2007) designed a study on body shame and its links to problems of sex and pleasure. The study was conducted on 320 adults (male and female). Concerns on appearance were reported alike among men and women across both sexual and non-sexual connotations. Body shame among both genders was associated to sexual self-consciousness, which lead to lower sexual pleasure and arousability. Finally, less sexual self-consciousness and less orgasm difficulty were found to be associated with individuals being in a relationship for both genders.

Sanchez and Broccoli (2008) conducted a study on Objectification theory. They tried to study among 86 women how contexts and thoughts influenced self-objectification. In this study they tried to examine if there existed a link between self-objectification and romantic relationships. Women had a task to make decisions when exposed to neutral words or relationship-related words. Results showed that women displayed higher sense of self-objectification as opposed to women in relationships who displayed this quality in lower proportions.

**STUDIES ON PERSONALITY**

The relationship between antecedent personality traits and different aspects of romantic relationship has been recorded in the previous studies. Pines (1998) examined personality characteristics
preferred by couples in a romantic relationship and the results revealed that men were more attracted to the physical appearance whilst higher levels of security, intimacy and commitment were preferred by women. Asendorpf and Wilsper (1998) did a study on personality effects on social relationships using a longitudinal design, for a period of 18 months and it was revealed that personality affected social relationship but not vice versa indicating that personality factors had an influential role in determining relationship.

In a study to understand the role of pathological aspects of personality Daley, Burge and Hammen (2000) conducted a study on 142 late adolescent women with borderline personality disorder in the context of romantic relationship dysfunction. The results showed an association between BPD and dysfunction in romantic relationship relationships indicating the importance of subclinical psychopathology in early intimate relationships.

Robins, Caspi and Moffitt (2002) did a study on personality and experiences in relationships such as quality of the relationship, relationship conflicts and abuse in a relationship. It was found that these experiences showed relatively smaller changes over time and relative priority also changed during the course of the relationship. Antecedent personality traits assessed at age 18 predicted relationship experiences at the age 26 and change in relationship experiences.
White, Hendrick and Hendrick (2004) carried out a study on relationship constructs and big five personality traits using a sample of 196 students. Results suggested an inverse association between prediction of satisfaction and intimacy. Among females possessiveness and dependent love were predominant and among men there seems to a positive relationship between extraversion and agreeableness which mediates neuroticism and satisfaction in a relationship. A positive relationship was shown between conscientiousness and intimacy for males.

Donnellan, Rife and Conger (2005) conducted a study on early adult romantic relationships by analyzing family history, personality, and competence. The results suggested that variations in personality in an individual and developmental experiences lead to romantic relationships.

Demir (2008) investigated the romantic relationship quality among emerging adults on a sample of 221 students in study 1, and 187 in study two. Of the many facets of romantic relationship quality, emotional security and companionship significantly predicted happiness. Also the association between quality of relationships and happiness was influenced by identity formation.
SOCIAL INFLUENCE ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

a. Media Influence

Exposure to entertainment and social media might influence the interests and attitude of youth towards romantic relationship. Bachen and Illouz (1996) analyzed various cognitive facets to understand children’s idea of romance and the results suggested that a child’s imagination that had a romantic connotation could be shaped by an associated line of events from the media, whose behaviour need not be evident. This study explained how a child’s vision about romance shifts from ideas of leisure and luxury undermined by strain to understanding the intricacies of love. Studies have shown that romantic love had been significantly influenced by the exposure to westernized mass media and the conceptualization about love among youth is shaped by media representations (Illouz, 1998).

With CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) on the rise, Cornwell and Lundgren (2001) compared of chat room users to face-to-face relationships. The researcher gathered data by collect messages from the 36 men and 44 women users in a chat room over the weekdays and weekends for two and a half weeks, among which a section of users were questioned on virtual romantic relationships and romantic relationships outside the cyber world. Results suggested low level of seriousness and commitment in
virtual relationships. Also, falsification of characteristics like age and physical characteristics were high in cyberspace relationships.

Donn and Sherman (2002) conducted a study to probe into young adults’ attitudes and practices about virtual relationships. The data set consisted of 235 undergraduates and 76 doctoral students who were either asked to fill in surveys on dating sites that they were permitted to explore or only answer questions without exploring the site. Results suggested that progress in the relationship or an initiative to meet the person whom they met on the site was taken by more graduates than undergraduates and also had a positive opinion on virtual relationships. There was an overall concern about false information and apprehension on meeting people without visual cues.

Aubrey, Harrison, Kramer and Yellin (2003) studied the differences in gender in sexual expectations when previously exposed to sexual content in television, which included 202 undergraduates as participants. Results suggested that men when previously exposed to sexual content, they also expected variation in sexual activities from their partners and women expected the same as previous relationships.

Song, Larose, Eastin and Lin (2004) conducted a study to understand conceptualizations of gratifications specific to the internet to explore into different types of gratifications. Virtual community was identified as a new gratification. Results showed
that virtual community, monetary compensation, diversion and personal status gratifications accounted for 28% of the variance in internet addiction tendency. The study also threw light on internet addiction in the context of media habit formation and the distinction between content and process gratifications.

Eggermont (2004) aimed to explore the relationships between overall and romantically themed television viewing and adolescents’ expectations of a romantic partner. He found moderate but significant associations for overall television viewing, after background variables and the quality of other relationships were accounted for in the 428 adolescence aged between 15- and 16-year-old, who rated the importance of physical attractiveness and a pleasant personality in a romantic partner. These associations are unrelated to direct experience and the perceived similarity of televised portrayals.

Huang (2004) considering arousal and pleasure to be two mediating mechanisms of romantic love in media, he studied its impact on advertisements attitudes. In this study spiritual compassionate love and sexual passionate love were considered as types of romantic love. He used 60 separate but homogenous manipulation samples to conduct the study where four colorful print ads similar in format were used. Also, 256 participants assigned randomly were measured on pleasure and attitudes. Results suggested that passionate love has an impact on
advertisement attitudes that resembled sex than compassionate love and also that arousal and pleasure had distinctive pathways of effect.

Anderson (2005) investigated on the perception of virtual romantic relationships. The data set consisted of 177 individuals who never had a relationship online. These individuals had to finish a survey on various views of virtual relationships. The results suggested that there existed a positive relationship between affinity of spending time online with perceptions supporting virtual relations, while no association was found between perceived realism, romantic beliefs and were not related to perceptions of virtual relationships. Henceforth, conventional ideas of relationships were lead by beliefs in romance.

Maddox (2006) examined how a difference in appearance that was similar to the ideologies publicized by the media would change the daily living of women. The data set consisted of 109 participants who had to respond to questions that pertain to how life style changes would affect their chance and positive outcomes. Results indicated that there existed an association between fitting in with ideals from the media and dissatisfaction in appearance with both positive outcomes and expectations in life. Nevertheless, the association between life outcomes and dissatisfaction in their appearance was moderated by internalization.
L’Engle, Brown and Kenneavy (2006) in their study included 1011 adolescents who were asked to complete questionnaires on sexual intentions and behaviors in order to monitor the influences from the media in multiple social situations. The key influences included sexual content, sexual behaviour and perceived social support from the media world. The results inferred that 13% of behaviors sexual in nature can be attributed to, across several contexts. Intentions and behaviors showed significant relationship when several other factors were measured. Those adolescents with high exposure to content sexual in nature, perceived support and influenced by sexual behaviour in teenage displayed intentions to partake in sexual activity.

Anderson and Emmers-Sommer (2006) conducted a study to examine the factors in online romantic relationships that predicted satisfaction in relationship. The data set consisted of 114 individuals involved in virtual relationships. The strongest predictive factors of virtual relationships were satisfaction in communication, intimacy, and trust. Moreover, length of the relationship and number of hours of communication altered their perceptions of the relationship.

Pauley and Sommer (2007) studied the after effects of technological changes from the internet on romantic relationships. The data set consisted of 36 participants who responded to a questionnaire on virtual relationships who were later segregated
into three different groups. Participants who were using virtual modalities to manage a secondary relationship showed more satisfaction and better plans for the future as opposed to those in exclusive relationships on the internet.

Shapiro, Kroeger and Madd (2007) explored the association that lied between attitudes about close relationships and media that was popular. The data set consisted of 109 adults. Results suggested that people with an unrealistic belief system regarding close relationships would have been exposed to media that was romantic in nature, more than the normal.

Holmes (2007) looked for evidences for a relationship between media linked with romance and beliefs about destiny in romantic relationship destiny. The participants for the study included 294 undergraduates. The results suggested that there was a relationship between preference for media with romantic content and beliefs in soul mates and mind reading in relationships. When gender influences were analyzed these association were found to be pronounced among both genders.

Peter and Valkenburg (2007) conducted an online survey with 745 adolescents to examine if the exposure to media that was sexual in nature will influence their ideologies into viewing women as sex objects. It was found that exposure to sexualized media environment and notions as women as sex objects had been transformed from semi-explicit to explicit sexual content and from
visual and audio-visual formats. On analyzing for gender differences, the association between media with a sexual content and ideas of women as a sex object did not vary among both boys and girls.

Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (2008) studied adolescents’ relationships with their social support system in the perspective of virtual communication. The study suggested that adolescents use virtual communications methods as a primary means to foster or maintain active relationships. Such means of communication might have certain benefits such as to build confidence to face social situations, or alleviate anxiety in social situations. Also content available online could have both positive and negative effects. Online interaction, though, built communication among the peers, it might cost interaction with parents.

Whitty (2008) in his study showed the positive effects of relationships formed online while taking into account the characteristics of an individual, time spent online and the length of online relationship with regard to its effect on relationships from outside the internet and their activities. The results suggested that numerous individuals could be benefitted from the environment offered in cyberspace as they learn about relationships and sexuality.

Bleakly, Hennessy, Fishbein and Jordan (2008) conducted a longitudinal study with 547 adolescents aged 14-16 years to find
associations between viewing media that had a sexual content and sexual behaviour among adolescents. Results suggested that sexually active adolescents who had engaged in a sexual activity were probable in viewing media that contains sex whereas those adolescents who view such content was to progress to an active sexual life.

Billedo (2009) studied the development of interpersonal attraction and intimate relationships on online chatting forums. Survey and in-depth interview were used, where the participants were selected using purposive and convenience sampling method. Results suggested that interpersonal attraction in face-to-face, online and intimate relationships developed in a similar fashion in the initial stages, however when people meet online they will have to take initiative to meet face-to-face. The results also suggested that attraction cues were significant in both forms of the relationship but looking deeply, it might vary in quality and prominence.

Bridges and Morokoff (2011) conducted a study among couples the use of sex in media and relational satisfaction in couples. A sample of 217 couples was studied. Results indicated that when men were highly exposed to sexual content in media, it lead to lower satisfaction, whilst among women when the frequency increased it was linked to high satisfaction among their partners. Sexual media among men was used for masturbation, while among women as a part of sex.
Coyne et al. (2011) carried out a study on the depictions in media regarding relational and physical aggression. A sample size of 369 young adults was studied. It was found when men were exposed to media that contained physical violence it could be associated to the display of physical aggression against their partners. Nevertheless, both genders when they viewed media that contained relational aggression, it leads to the same in their romantic relationships.

Coyne, Stockdale, Busby, Iverson and Grant (2011) in an article discussed the usage of media in romantic relationships among individuals. In the study numerous participants communicated with their partner through mobile phones and messaging. Different forms of media were utilized by the younger participants as opposed to older individuals. Multiple reasons to use media were practiced by relationship satisfaction and exclusive use of media. Further analyses stated that positive and negative communication in romantic relationships was highly related to text messaging.

Greenwood and Long (2011) conducted a study to predict imagined intimacy with media figure. A sample size of 173 undergraduates was taken for the study. Results suggested that there existed a positive correlation between a friend and intimacy that was imagined with a figure in the media of the same gender as the friend. Nonetheless, those who were single said that they had
strong intimacy that they imagined with the media figures of the opposite sex. Also, single individuals showed a positive prediction for anxious attachment and the need to belong with imagined intimacy with opposite gender media figures.

Thieme et al. (2011) conducted a study on “Lovers’ Box” to understand the intimacy and communication among couples. It was found that the communication of messages in the digital artifact served as both mirrors and sources for reflection of couples’ relationships. The Lovers’ box became a keepsake or digital storybook of their meaningful experiences and an enjoyable hobby shared with their partner. It also provided them a snapshot into the loved one’s mind and thoughts.

Zurbriggen, Ramsey and Jaworski (2011) investigated on self and partner objectification in romantic relationships. The data set consisted of 91 women and 68 men. Results suggested that among men, a low level of sexual satisfaction was associated with self- and partner-objectification. From this study one could determine that the ill effects of objectification among young adults in the framework of romantic relationships.

Coyne, Busby, Bushman and Douglas (2012) conducted a study on love and conflict. The data set consisted of 1,333 heterosexual couples. Results showed that among males, time spent playing video games was associated with increased conflict over the amount of time spent using media, as well as the content
of those media. An association was seen between conflict over the media and increased physical and relational aggression in the relationship. Thus, conflict over the media offers one explanation for why video game play might increase aggression in romantic relationships.

Hernandez (2012) conducted a communication study using cultivation theory to analyze college student attitudes about the dating process following exposure to romantic films. Results showed that female students as opposed to their male counterpart were inclined to be more romantic, and view romantic films more frequently. No significant correlation was established for the thought that beauty is a form of power.

b. Peer Influence

Peer network involving same sex and heterosexual group exerts a major influence on romantic interests of youth. In fact, western studies have revealed that romantic relationships begin from late childhood and such early involvement in romantic relationships might be both deviant and have pro social pathways (Neemann, Hubbard & Masten, 1995). However it was also reported that relationships in late adolescents could lose its negative effects to give way to normative development. Studies exploring friendship networks and the progress of romantic relationships found that the development of qualities of affiliation could be associated to a huge network of opposite sex friendship in early adolescence. Also,
maintaining long romantic relationships was more a feature of middle and late adolescence (Feiring, 1999).

Connolly, Furman and Konarski (2000) conducted a longitudinal study on adolescents on the role of peers in relationships. The data set consisted of 180 high school students (grade 9 to grade 11 was studied) for a period of 3 years. Results indicated that opposite sex network of friends and the emergence of romantic relationships could be foretold by a small group of close friends. Groups of close friends of the same gender and same gender networks caused indirect effects on romantic relations.

Scharf and Mayseless (2001) did a study on romantic intimacy. The data set consisted of 84 Israeli adolescents of age 17 years and their parents were studied. The results showed that potential for intimacy was associated to higher relational qualities while there also was an association with all relational contexts. Effect on the relationship between a parent and child was allied to the association between marital relationship and intimacy. Adolescents’ potential for socio-emotionality was mediated by the same factors as mentioned above.

Zimmer-Gembeck (2002) examined the progress of romantic relationships and adaptations in peer relationships. It was found that the initiation and growth of any romantic relationships usually happened in the context of existing peer relationship and close
friendship. Keeping friendships that were close aid adolescents to develop romantic relationships.

Brendgen, Vitaro, Doyle and Markiewicz (2002) studied peer relations and romantic relationships. The data set consisted of 312 students. It was found that unpopular adolescents showed poor emotional and behavioral adjustment if they had a romantic relationship while popular kids did not exhibit the same. Negative association found between performance in academics and acceptance of same sex peers and romantic involvement.

Bearman, Moody and Stovel (2004) explored among adolescents, romantic relationship and sexual networks. The sample consisted of 800 adolescents. Reports and images of network structure and relationships were taken into account for a period of 18 months. Comparisons were drawn on the characteristics of the network that was observed to initiate ties that were conditioned to the network. The observed structure revealed networks characterized by longer contact chains and fewer cycles than expected. The analysis also revealed the micro mechanisms that generated networks with structural features similar to the observed network. The results had implications for disease transmission dynamics and social policy.

Gembeck, Sienbenbruner and Collins (2004) studied peer influences on adolescents’ romantic and sexual behaviour. They identified a model to understand the developmental pathways to
adolescent sexual behavior which included individual early adolescence experiences dyadic experiences in adolescence. The analysis showed that the pathway to greater sexual involvement was marked by some desired personal attributes and peer experiences. Earlier initiation of romantic relationships and alcohol use in adolescence mediated these associations. Together they predicted greater sociability and less impulsivity in childhood, higher quality friendships and greater peer acceptance in early adolescence. The model explained the complex association between early, middle and late adolescence experiences which predict sexual relationship

Kuttler and Greca (2004) examined the linkages among adolescent girls’ romantic relationships, best friendships, and peer networks. A sample of 446 students was selected for the study. This study implied that dating was associated with more optimistic and less depressing interactions with friends, trust came on romantic partners if the age was more, romantic relations had high negative reciprocal action than friendships and the size of the network of peer and system was connected with dating. From mid till late adolescence was the time where girls move away from friends and go in search of romantic partners.

Greca and Harrison (2005) conducted a study on adolescent peer relations, friendships, and romantic relationships. It was found that peer crowd affiliations, positive qualities in best friendships and
the current existence of a relationship helped adolescents to come out of anxiety, but relational persecution and negative connections in friendships which were most predicted elevated social anxiousness. In difference, relationship with peers who were high in status was able to provide shield in opposition to depressive influence, though, relative persecution and unconstructive qualities in both friendships and romance lead to depression. Findings indicated that multiple aspects of adolescents’ social relations uniquely contributed to feelings of internal distress. Through thorough examination it was clear that adolescents’ internal stress contributed to social affiliation.

Lehmiller and Agnew (2007) in a longitudinal study analyzed how perceived marginalization of one’s romantic relationship was associated with level of future commitment to and stability of that involvement. This longitudinal study took for a period of seven months and 215 romantically involved individuals participated in the study. Results revealed that perceived social network marginalization at Time 1 predicted breakup status at Time 2, with commitment level at Time 1 fully mediating this association. Among those individuals whose relationships remained intact, social network marginalization predicted Time 2 commitment above and beyond satisfaction, alternatives, and investments. It was also found that perceived general societal marginalization was a less
robust predictor of relationship commitment and stability compared to social network marginalization.

Etcheverry, Le and Charania (2008) examined the influence of social network on romantic relationship. The data set consisted of 254 college students who had a relationship. Along with them a male and female friend finished a survey concerning the participants’ relationship. The results showed that belief of social network members mediated social network approval on relationship commitment. There was a mediating effect between participants’ reports of relationship commitment and effect of certain norms in the persistence of the relationship. It was also found that participants’ normative beliefs could be foretold by peer’s approval of the relationships and the individuals’ satisfaction.

Schad, Szwedo, Antonishak, Hare and Allen (2008) examined the broader context of relational aggression in adolescent romantic relationships. With 97 adolescents as participants it was seen that pressure from peers lead to more romantic affiliation which lead comparative hostility and persecution.

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Very few studies have been reported in India on romantic relationships, that too, with the limited scope of understanding it from the perspective of premarital sex. These threw light on the
association of romantic relationship with socio-demographic characteristics of Indian youth.

Abraham and Kumar (1999) conducted a study on college students in Mumbai. It was found that 47% of boys and 13% of girls had some form of premarital sexual experience. Amongst them 26% boys and 3% girls, respectively, had sexual intercourse. Age and personal income were two factors that had an effect on the sexual behaviour of students. Students' knowledge about sexuality-related issues, attitudes toward sex, and levels of social interaction and exposure to erotic materials emerged as stronger predictors.

In another study using focus group discussions, survey and in-depth interviews among college students from Mumbai, Abraham (2002), studied three typologies of heterosexual peer networks identified namely 'bhai-behen' ('brother sister like'), romantic 'true love', and transitory and sexual 'time pass' relationships. The three typologies were the outcome of strong cultural norms of heterosexuality and they define the boundaries of sexual behaviour for unmarried youth. The bhai-behen category distinguished the tabooed true love heterosexual relationship and time pass friendships from a more socially acceptable brother sister like relationships. It was also found that boys took advantage of the fluidity in the categorization as they wished to engage in multiple relationships, while girls mainly engaged in single, true love relationships. These findings contribute to an understanding of
premarital relationship culture among college youth in metropolitan India.

Dhal, Bhatia, Sharma and Gupta (2007) intended to study the association between self-esteem, loneliness and attachment styles with their age and gender in a sample of 110 adolescents aged 10-13 years. Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (School Form), Attachment Scale and UCLA Loneliness Scale were administered to the participants. Results showed that early adolescents aged 10-11 years showed higher self-esteem as compared to older adolescents. Among the adolescents, level of loneliness was associated with global, general and home-parents self-esteem. High self-esteem adolescents were found to be securely attached and low self esteem was associated to preoccupied and fearful attachment. Students who were from public school showed higher levels of self-esteem, moderate level of loneliness and a secure attachment style. The study also recommended psychological intervention for self esteem related issues.

Alexander, Garda, Kanade, Jejeebhoy and Ganatra (2007) conducted a study using a qualitative and survey design among youth in rural and an urban slum setting in Pune district, India. It was found that 25-40% of young men and 14-17% of young women reported opposite-sex friends in spite of strict social norms against gender mix. Youth had such friends from their neighborhood using different strategies. Boys and girls differed with regard to their
initiations in romantic relationship, proposal and partners. They also differed in terms of physical intimacy such as hand-holding, kissing and sexual relations. Onset of sexual relations was shorter for those who involved in sexual intimacy. Sexual intercourse happened without protection or communication and for women only after persuasion or without consent. Among unmarried youth, a majority of them had expected to marry their romantic partner, but for one third of girls and a half of boys the relationship had been discontinued.

Similar study focusing on premarital romantic relationship by the same researchers (Alexander, Garda, Kanade, Jejeebhoy & Ganatra, 2007) revealed that among boys, 17–24% had a romantic relationship and 20–26% had engaged in some form of physical intimacy. Also, and 16–18% of boys had completed sexual intercourse. The proportions among girls on the same parameters were found to be 5–8%, 4–6% and 1–2%, respectively. Usage of alcohol, watching pornographic films, frequent interaction with peer group and usage of drugs were positively associated with romantic and sexual relationships for both genders. Educational qualification was negatively associated with both types of relationships for girls, but only with sexual relationships for boys. Closeness to parents had a negative relationship with such relationships. For girls whose father beat their mother were more likely than other young women to form romantic partnerships, and those youth who were beaten by
their family were vulnerable to romantic and sexual partnerships. Strict parental supervision was not related to formation of such relationship significantly.

A more representative study done by International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS, 2010) involving students from five states in India namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu reported that despite the fact that youth tended to report relatively traditional attitudes, opportunities to form romantic relationships did exist for some of them, irrespective of rural-urban residence or sex. Among youth 23% of boys and 21% of girls had experienced romance either by initiating or accepting a proposal.

SUMMARY

The above mentioned studies on romantic relationship examined various aspects of development of romantic relationship among youth. They also studied the differences among youth in terms of age, gender and race/ethnicity in romantic relationship. It was found that older youth were more likely to have romantic relationship. Girls give more value to intimacy, attachment and care than boys. Racial and ethnic group differences were established by some studies. It was found that romantic events were more common among all youth belonging to different ethnic group, however, Asian and Hispanic youth tend to be relatively
conservative in sexual events. Studies have explored that romantic relationship qualities were positively related to identity achievement among emerging adults. Also several achieved adulthood criteria were related positive to romantic relationship qualities.

Studies on attachment in romantic relationship showed that youth transfer their attachment from parenthood to romantic partners and best friends. Secure attachment was related to commitment, trust, satisfaction and interdependence. Insecure attachment in adolescence was a risk factor for adverse relationship outcomes and less satisfaction. Cross cultural studies showed that relationship satisfaction and felt security suppressed anxious attachment among Australian youth. For Japanese youth the suppression effect and anxious attachment could be partly explained by dependence of the partner. Study examining attachment and love styles showed that specific events played an important role in determining attachment progression than typological tendencies in love. Studies linking attachment and personality revealed that anxious and avoidance attachment was correlated to neuroticism. Extraversion was negatively correlated with avoidance and anxious attachment. Both anxious and avoidance attachment negatively correlated with conscientiousness but not related to agreeableness. Studies linking attachment and sexuality in romantic relationship showed that avoidant youth were least likely to have a romantic relationship and more aversive for
sexual feelings. Anxious and secured youth tend to have more dating and sexual experiences. Youth scoring higher on secure attachment perceived themselves as more physically attractive compared to youth with anxious attachment. Anxiously attached youth had an early first intercourse, more infidelity and took more sexual precautions.

Studies reviewed above on interpersonal attraction revealed that men lay more emphasis on physical characteristics and sexual desirability on a romantic partner where as women look for personal qualities, social status and compatibility. However both genders placed importance on socially appealing personality characteristics while considering long term relationships. Studies focusing on reasons for attraction found that warmth and kindness, desirable personality, something specific about other and reciprocal liking were found to be most rated reasons. Studies on body image and attraction suggested that overweight women were less likely to date and less satisfied in relationship. Male partners were told to gain weight while females were asked to lose weight suggesting that weight is differentially important for men and women in romantic relationship. Studies based on objectification theory showed that men and women’s body shame was related to greater sexual self-consciousness which in turn reduces sexual pleasure and arousability. It was also shown that higher body dissatisfaction is inversely related to perception of romantic partner support.
Studies on the role of personality on romantic relationship showed that personality factors influenced social relationship but not vice-versa. Antecedent personality traits predicted relationship experiences. Neuroticism is negatively associated with satisfaction in relationship. Extraversion and agreeableness were positively associated with satisfaction and intimacy in a romantic relationship. Personality disorders among youth predicted relationship dysfunction and also subclinical psychopathology in an intimate relationship.

The above mentioned studies on media influence on romantic relationship demonstrated that children’s romantic imagination is largely shaped by the content and forms of romance portrayed in media associating romance with luxury and leisure. Studies also suggested that exposure to media influenced the intentions and behaviour of youth towards romantic and sexual activity. Studies indicated that exposure to popular romantic media would create more dysfunctional and unrealistic beliefs about intimate relationships. Studies demonstrated that higher frequency of men’s sexual media use related to negative satisfaction and men primarily use sexual media for masturbation whereas women use as part of love-making with their partners. Studies on computer mediated communication among romantic couples found that intimacy, trust and communication satisfaction predict relationship satisfaction. Online romantic partners had higher levels on relational
expectation. Further studies showed that youth use cell phones and text messaging to communicate with their partner. Exposure to mass media leads to higher level of partner objectification in men than women. For men, spending more time on video games, conflict over the media was associated with physical and relational aggression in relationship.

Studies on the role of peer group on romantic relationship showed that small groups of close friends predicted other sex peer networks and future romantic relationships. Initiation and development of any romantic relationships usually took place in the context of existing peer relationship and maintaining close friendship help in development of romantic relationship. Experiencing peer pressure from friends and larger peer group influenced involvement in romantic relationship in future. It was also found that peer crowd affiliations, positive qualities in best friendship and the presence of a dating relationship protected youth against social anxiety where as negative interactions in friendship predicted high social anxiety.

An examination of the above studies done among Indian youth indicates that prevalence of premarital romantic relationship with or without sexual contact is on the rise and the attitude of youth towards such relationships are fast changing. Individual level factors such as attitude and knowledge on premarital sex, exposure to alcohol, watching pornographic films and self efficacy were
related to premarital relationship. Opportunities to interact with peer group, peer pressure, family environment, strict parental supervision and educational attainment also do play a role in development of such relationship. More men reported to have such relationship than women, though, the possibility of underreporting from both genders couldn’t be ruled out.