



## Love, Attachment, Romance and Dating in Indian culture

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### ABSTRACT

In India very few studies are available on the human perception about “Love, Attachment, Romance & Dating. Even though many of researchers have thrown the light on the importance of these relationships with its overall impact on life satisfaction achieved by the individual, his or her happiness and interpersonal relationships. The present study on “Love, Attachment, Romance & Dating and our increasing knowledge about the complex factors and its impact in others areas of individual can be put to valuable use. Hence research on this particular field is important. Present study entitled “Love, Attachment, Romance & Dating in Indian culture” was undertaken to understand the Indian’s perception and understanding on these concepts and how their perceptions and understanding is different from western countries. For this purpose available literature on love, attachment, Romance & Dating from Newspapers, magazines, Research Paper and internet were analyzed and reviewed. While reviewing articles on Love, Romance and Dating it was found that very few studies are available in India on Love, romance and dating. Reviewer found difficulty in comparing Indian and Western people perception and understanding on Love, Romance and Dating. Present study suggests that there is an urgent need of such kind of study in India.

### Introduction

Human sexuality plays a major role in everyone's life. Regardless, whether we are young or old, man or woman, Indian, American or Japanese, it is an integral part of what people do and who they are. There has been much done by way of research and scholarly writing examining human sexuality (e.g., Abramson & Pinkerton, 1995; Diamond, 1997; Tiefer, 1995). This chapter will explore the topic of human sexuality as a motivation. Of course, there are many emotions associated with human sexuality, but the primary aim of this particular chapter is to

provide a general overview of sexuality with special attention to the various perspectives, including the: 1) biological perspective, 2) cognitive perspective, and 3) learning perspective. Next to sleeping and eating, it seems that it is one of the most important drives we have to deal with as humans. That is, it takes up so much of our time in thought and behavior that it sometimes seems that every facet of our life revolves around this to a certain extent.

Human sexuality may also involve a person's sexual attraction to another person – which may be determined by their sexual orientation –

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whether it is to the opposite sex (heterosexuality), to the same sex (homosexuality), having both these tendencies (bisexuality), or not being attracted to anyone in a sexual manner (asexuality). Human sexuality impacts cultural, political, legal, and philosophical aspects of life. It can refer to issues of morality, ethics, theology, spirituality, or religion. Some cultures have been described as sexually repressive.

### DEFINITION OF LOVE

TOI (23rd Dec 2012) There is fresh proof of this fact of modern life in search engine Google's annual year-end list of top searches for this year. Alongside the usual suspects celebrities, news making politicians, athletes and musicians were two gems: the world's most popular "what is" query was "what is love," and the second-highest trending "how to" query was "how to love".

The answers, however, are as many as there are people. "It's interesting that so many people are searching for the meaning of love online; typically, people look at their own life experiences, parents, movies and books for it." The definition of love changes according to age, experience and relationships. According to Shoma Narayan (Mills & Boon author) "For me, it's finding someone you trust, someone you are attracted enough to want to spend the rest of your life with."

Ganga Kadakia – painter says "Ultimately, love is freedom and a state of mind where there is unconditional giving and selflessness. Whereas Subi Samuel - fashion photographer says "I don't think love is something people will ever get bored of. The fact that movies are still making the world over on the subject and songs are still written about it shows that every person is looking for love". Author CS Lewis' wrote that there are four loves stage (Greek for affection), *philia* (friendship), *Eros* (between a man and a woman) and *agape* (unconditional love)." "Love is not just about man woman relationships. It goes beyond our narrow human definitions; it's the fabric of the universe. Randolph Correia - guitarist and music producer

"Love is when somebody becomes the center of your world, affects you the most, and

inspires you the most. Someone whose companionship is the most valuable to you. When a person becomes an extension of you. It's rare for all these qualities to come together, but when they do, it's real love". Gaurav Chopra - Television anchor

### ATTACHMENT STYLES AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP

A new study claims insecurity that men feel in their relationships with women stems from styles of attachment. A study led by Joshua Hart, assistant professor of psychology at Lawrence University, New York, conducted the survey on a 400-strong sample of heterosexual men and found an attachment style refers to the way people relate to others in the context of intimate relationships, defined by two personality traits: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Both traits reflect different kinds of relationship insecurities; people who are low in both traits are considered secure, hostile sexism depicts women as mean-spirited foes who aim to dominate men. Benevolent sexism regards them as objects of adoration and affection, but also fragile and needy of chivalrous treatment. Hart's study found that anxiously attached men tend to be ambivalent sexists - both hostile and benevolent - whereas avoidantly attached men typically endorse hostile sexism." In other words, anxious men are likely to alternate between chivalry and hostility toward female partners, acting like a knight in shining armor when she fulfills his goals and ideas about women, but like an ogre when she doesn't," Hart explains. The survey results also showed that anxiously attached men tend to be romantics at heart who adopt benevolently sexist beliefs, while avoidantly attached men lean toward social dominance. That, in turn, leads them to hostile sexism. (TOI 23 Dec, 2012)

The study also showed that attachment avoidance was positively associated with extradyadic sex, while attachment anxiety was unrelated to it. Overall, the findings suggest that attachment avoidance increases people's irritation relative to their partner's desire for engagement which, in turn, increases their likelihood to engage in extradyadic sex. The possibility that individuals characterized by attachment avoidance might use extradyadic sex as a

way to distance themselves from their partner (Genevieve et.al., 2011).

### **DATING, ROMANCE AND BREAK-UP IN LOVE RELATIONSHIP**

Romantic love is involved in the process of a couple dating, becoming engaged, and marrying (de Munck, & Korotayev, 2007; Hatfield & Rapson, 2009). Falling in love seems to be an occurrence that happens at least once to most people at some point in their lives (Hatfield & Rapson 2002). Selecting a mate and falling in love is seen as a developmental task and considered normal for most late adolescents and young adults. United States culture endorses and promotes romantic love (Zhang & Kline, 2009). As a general rule we are to select a mate, marry, and live together for the rest of our lives (Medora et. al., 2002). Some anthropologists and social psychologists report that love is universal and not limited to certain cultures (Munck, & Khaltourina, 2011; Vangelisti & Perlman, 2006).

The idea that one must remain in-love or that romantic love is to last a lifetime also prevails (Hatfield et. al., 2007; Fisher, 2006). Romantic love is even thought to thrive in some enduring, long-term relationships (Acevedo & Aron, 2009). Studies have also found the belief that love is necessary to maintain a marriage (Acevedo & Aron, 2009). The beliefs that love should be a basis of marriage and true love lasts forever are two of several beliefs about love included in a larger belief system known as "romantic ideology" (Regan, 2012). However, Simpson et. al., (1984) found the belief that love is necessary for the maintenance of marriage, to be lower in their 1984 research sample than in their 1976 sample. This could suggest that romantic ideologies may be more fluid rather than set and may change over time. In addition, we still know very little about love in long term marriages (Hatfield et. al., 2008).

In the Indian scenario, India today (monthly magazine) in its 2012 survey found 22 per cent unmarried women surveyed in small towns have dated a member of the opposite sex compared to 30 per cent in metros. 31 per cent unmarried women in

both small towns and metros dated for the first time between the age of 16 and 18.

The study examines student attitudes, knowledge, and sexual behavior in India. Women were more sexually conservative than men in sexual attitudes and sexual behavior. 49.5% of males and 36.1% of females had a steady dating partner with whom they were romantically involved (Sachdev, 1998). Current research says friends seal the deal in relationships. A newly launched double dating website conducted a study with 1,193 single women to discover how important their friend's approval is when they start dating a new partner. More than 10 per cent of women would dump a partner if their friends didn't approve of them. And two-fifths admitted that they need their friends' approval before they continue with the relationship (TOI Feb, 10, 2013).

A new study (TOI news published on 26th January 2013) found that nearly half of older teenagers and young adults break up and get back together with previous dating partners and over half of this group has sex as part of the reconciliation process. It was found that approximately 44 per cent of emerging adults who had been in a romantic relationship in the past two years had experienced at least one reconciliation with an ex romantic partner and 53 per cent of those who reported reconciliations also reported having sex with their ex-partner. Additionally, racial minorities in particular were even more likely to experience reconciliation or sexual relationships with previous romantic partners.

Parents often believe that strict supervision of children inhibits their formation of romantic or sexual partnerships; findings from a 2007 survey of 15-24 year-olds in Pune district in Maharashtra indicated that this belief may be unfounded (Alexander M et. al., 2007). Evidence suggests that despite a conservative environment that disapproves of interactions among adolescent males and females, there are opportunities for social mixing, and young people have devised ways of developing romantic partnerships with the opposite sex (Abraham L. 2008 and Sodhi et. al., 2008).

### **FRIENDS WITH BENEFITS**

Most young people don't actually use the term "friends with benefits," at least not when they describe such relationships for themselves. Some associate these with casual sex, but this is not quite accurate. Casual sex implies no relationship at all, like a one-night stand. Researchers found that friends-with-benefits relationships actually impede openness rather than foster it, and exhibit little sustained passion. Only 1 out of 10, such relationship blossoms into a romantic relationship. Friends with benefits are almost always exclusive relationships, meaning they don't coexist alongside a romantic relationship. Despite the media attention, longstanding friends-with-benefits amount to just over 1% of all sexual relationships among adults ages 18 to 23 in the Add Health study (and are only slightly more prevalent after that). Easy, accessible, and stable sex with "no strings attached" is rare and far more the domain of fantasy than reality. The vast majority of sex is still experienced in romantic relationships. However, even many of those relationships are fragile and succumb within six months (Wellings, and Johnson, 2008).

Within more stable relationships, sexual frequency tends to increase for a period of time and then diminish with familiarity, as is the pattern in marriage. Among college relationships that lasted at least four months, one study notes that 63% of respondents reported having sex at least twice a week. That figure rises to 72% and 80% among relationships that lasted seven months to a year and more than a year, respectively, then drops into the 40s and 30s as relationship duration increases from one to three years and beyond (Wellings, and Johnson, 2008).

Bissonet.al. (2009) studied college students to investigate both the prevalence of the practice of having sex in a nonromantic relationship with a friend and what such relationships are like. Six out of 10 respondents reported having had at least one such relationship. Concerns included the obvious—that sex would complicate a friendship and raise one-sided desires for romance and commitment. It was also found 60 percent of college students had a casual sex relationship with someone they knew, referring to this relationship as "friends with benefits." Using samples of college students, research has shown that

casual sex behavior is experienced by a large portion of individuals Zusman (2007).

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