INTRODUCTION
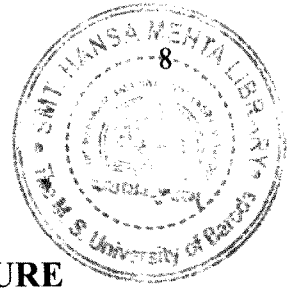
AND

REVIEW OF

LITERATURE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"And think not you can guide the course of love. For love, if it finds you

worthy, shall guide your course. " Kahlil Gibran.

Formation of intimate romantic relationships is an important developmental task and

also an integral part of identity formation during emerging adulthood. Relationships

are unique, in the sense they have their own internal dynamics and properties, for

example, patterns of interdependence, styles of conflict resolution, interpersonal

norms, private cultures, mutual regulation and control and interaction habits. Moss

and Schwebel (1993) define intimacy in enduring romantic relationships as

"determined by the level of commitment and positive affective, cognitive, and

physical closeness one experiences with a partner in a reciprocal (although not

necessarily symmetrical) relationship" (p.33).

The phenomenon of romantic relationships is not new to human beings across

cultures, yet it is very fresh to the world of scientific research. Work on romantic

relationships has expanded only recently in the West. Cultural values and societal

norms play a magnificently disruptive role in the manifestation of this biologically

innate phenomenon. Yet, it is important to note that although the intricate details of

pairing may vary, the form and styles may be different, the phenomenon is hard-wired

to our species and indeed universal (Bartels & Zeki, 2000).

Emerging Adulthood and Romantic Relationships

Emerging adulthood is a term coined by Arnett (2000) to indicate the lengthening age span of 'adolescence' to include individuals in the age range of 18 -25 years. It is a phase in life which is highly unstructured by social institutions where one is free to invest in explorations related to romance and love (Arnett, 2004; 2006). Although, emerging adulthood is not propounded as a universal developmental stage, Arnett argues that the current era affords for most of the youth, the luxury of emerging adulthood. The factors that constrained young people historically ranging from specific gender roles and poor economies that needed the youth to be 'productive' no longer hold true for most urban places in the world. Increasing affluence, focus on education and availability of various career options for both men and women and technological revolution in contraceptive methods have led to the postponement of marriage and parenthood. In response to the multitudinous changes of globalization, emerging adulthood, as a developmental phase, has become evident in many urban parts of the Indian society (Kapadia, Bajpai, Roy & Chopra, 2007; Seiter & Nelson, 2010). Financial independence and moving out of parents' household have emerged as salient markers of adulthood in the study on markers of adulthood in an Indian context by Kapadia et al. (2007).

Arnett describes emerging adulthood is described as an *age of identity explorations* in the areas of love and work. Ability to develop and maintain intimate relationships, apart from being a biological given, is also an important marker of adulthood in many cultures. There is a clear discontinuity in transition to these adult roles in several segments of 'modern' India, because of increased opportunities and need for higher education and career development. The individuals are neither adolescents nor young adults; therefore a transitional phase of emerging adulthood is becoming evident. In

addition, reduced gender gap in access to education and career development has need

for higher education and career development. The individuals are neither adolescents

nor young adults; therefore a transitional phase of emerging adulthood is becoming

evident. In addition, reduced gender gap in access to education and career facilitated

the interaction between young boys and girls creating more opportunities to develop

relationships (Pais, 2006).

A close bond with a romantic partner plays a pivotal role in the emerging adult's life.

Recent studies (e.g., Steinberg & Morris, 2001) have shown that romantic

relationships are important developmental milestones and have significant

developmental consequences for individuals engaged in them. Therefore, romantic

relationships are not only influenced by different contexts but themselves serve as

important contexts for growth. Romantic relationships provide a context where

emerging adults can discover aspects of their own selves, such as what attracts them,

what makes them attractive or otherwise to their partners and what kind of person

could be their "soul mate" (Arnett, 2004).

In general romantic love is a concept associated with the Western culture and

arranged marriages (implying absence of a romantic relationship or romantic love) are

associated with the east, especially India. However, many theorists, including

proponents of the ethological perspective, propose that romantic attachment is

universal to the human animal and in fact inevitable for the survival of the species.

Fisher, Aron and Brown (2006) talk about three distinct and yet inter-related brain

systems which are responsible for sexual drive, romantic love and attachment. While

sexual desire helps individuals to seek a range of mating partners, attraction help

individuals to stay with each other long enough to fulfill their parenting duties. Both

hormones and monoamines trigger, stimulate and facilitate the three brain systems. Therefore, developing a romantic bond and entering into a committed relationship are cross-cultural universals.

Romantic Love, Developmental Outcomes and Cultural Context

Development and developmental outcomes.

The present research adopts a developmental perspective to understand the phenomenon of romantic relationships and its impact on the development of emerging adults in a given context. Valsiner (1997) explains development comprehensively as a process which entails recognizable continuity of a system and a developmental perspective would focus on how this system is transformed to a 'novel' state. This view of development is based on processes and therefore "outcomes of the processes are artificially constructed static slices of the processes themselves" (p. 6). Developmental outcomes are rather dynamic and temporary. Hence the outcomes such as thoughts, feelings, expectations and worries resulting from romantic engagements are viewed as temporary developmental outcomes which in turn feed into other psychological processes.

Romantic love and culture.

The words "romantic love" evoke a spectrum of associations in the human mind ranging from "idealistic and impractical (which is also the dictionary meaning of the word 'romantic') to selfish and exploitative", from "pure bliss to heart aches", from "total surrender to conquests and betrayals", from "total liberation to deep repressions" or from "sacred to profane". This may be the reason why love is such a

universal theme, central to art, poetry, entertainment and popular culture since ancient times, in many cultures.

The same word, love, can urge the entire being of an individual to contradictory worlds, one which is rich, vibrant and playful and the other which is dark, murky and grave. The secret lies in the cultural memes of individuals. Memes are 'units of cultural transmission', mental concepts that are literally alive and capable of spreading from brain to brain.

> ... memes should be regarded as living structures, not just metaphorically but technically. When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for the meme's propagation ... [meme is] actually realized physically, millions of times over, as a structure in the nervous systems of individual men the world over (Dawkins,1976, p. 192).

The answers to questions like why some relationships lead to well-being and happiness while others give distress and pain or even lead to violence can be answered by examining the memes prevalent in a particular cultural ideology. Hence, it becomes vital to examine our memes about love, as an individual, as a society and as a culture.

Romantic Relationships and the Indian Context

India provides an interesting context to study romantic relationships. Indian mythology (*e.g., Mahabharata*), Sanskrit literature (e.g., *Puranas, Vatsayana's Kamasutra, Bhartruhari's Shringar Shatak*) and certain schools of Indian philosophy (e.g., *Carvaka, Tantramarg, Shaivamarg, Shaktamarg, Bhaktimarg)* hold one of the most comprehensive, realistic and a liberal and dispassionate view of human sexuality

and love as well as individual freedom. Yet, Indian culture is apparently not in favor of romantic relationships; in fact, it is a sort of a taboo.

While these paradoxes can be appreciated by recollecting India's history which is a tale of political and cultural subjugation, it is useful also to look at the nature of Indian modernity. Even though India is declared as an upcoming economic super power, and can boast of rapid industrialization and expanding IT sectors, there is a common denominator of traditional ideology that is reflected in contemporary norms and practices. Notwithstanding that many emerging adults uphold the ideals of duty towards their parents (Chopra, n.d.) as a marker of adulthood; they opt to move away from a joint family in order to pursue their careers. Despite the fact that many individuals prefer a semi-arranged marriage, they espouse conjugal love over family harmony as necessary for quality life (Derne, 2000). A nuclear family, however, may just be a geographical extension of a joint family for many, because important decisions related to marriage, for instance, are taken in consultation with the other family members (Saraswathi, Mistry & Dutta, 2011).

Booth (1995) notes that popular culture, films and myth alike uphold the ideals of personal freedom and romantic love. Sheth believes that Bollywood films play the same role as *puranic kathas* did in reviving traditionally upheld values (as in Kishwar, 2004). Bollywood films also present a good balance between the 'modern' and 'traditional' as Indians adapt to the changing world (Kishwar, 2004). Romantic love has been a dominant theme in Indian films. While some films endorse family honor and harmony, there are others countering stringent traditional values with youth rebellion and triumph. In sharp contrast to sacrificial films where the hero and heroine are forced to commit suicide, for example in *Ek Duje Ke Liye* (For Each Other), or

killed as in *Qayaamat se Qayaamat tak* (Eternity to Eternity) for challenging the social norms, there are also the successful 'romances' that often challenge these social norms and succeed in their quest of personal freedom and love across the time-line. For example, *Asli Nakli* (Genuine and Fake) challenged class discriminations in 1960s; *Prem Rog* (Love Smitten) and *Ishwar* (Lord) dealt with issues of widow's right to love and ended with the union of the lovers in the 1980s and 90s. Recent movies, such as *Jaane Tu Ya Jaane Naa (You May Know or You May Not Know)* portray parents who are very open and understanding towards their children's romances and emerging adults who have highly individualistic goals, still undecided about career and marriage. Both the characters of the movie however are chasing an elusive 'soul mate' until they learn that 'they' are meant for each other. *Love Aaj Kal* (Love Today and Yesterday) captures the spirit that pursuit of love does not change over time, however, the issues earlier were parental opposition while today the problem is, confusions related to who is the right person or soul mate. All of these suggesting the peculiar nature of Indian modernity.

The subsequent review begins with the theoretical perspectives on romantic relationships and empirical research in the Western Euro-American context followed by other cross-cultural researches. The section presenting the Indian perspective encompasses historical philosophical orientation of the Indian culture and empirical studies in the changing contemporary Indian scenario.

Perspectives from the West

"But how will I know who my soul mate is?"

"By taking risks," Wicca said to Brida. "By risking failure, disappointment,

disillusion, but never ceasing in your search for love. As long as you keep looking,

you will triumph in the end." Paul Coelho.

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theoretical constructs and perspectives have guided empirical research to

understand human relationships such as social exchange theories, attachment theories,

socio-cognitive, evolutionary, reproductive and sexual health perspectives,

transactional analysis and other schools of psychology. Yet, few attempts have been

made to develop theories of romantic relationships. This section provides an overview

of some of the seminal theories of romantic love, with their strengths and limitations

in understanding the phenomenon.

Romantic attachment theory.

What is an attachment relationship? Three functions appear in various taxonomies:

a. tendency to seek *close contact* with attachment figure,

b. attachment figure serves as a *safety haven* during times of distress, and

c. serves as a *secure base* for exploration.

The romantic attachment theory has evolved from the basic taxonomies of parent-

infant attachment described by Ainsworth (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Furman & Simon,

1999; Furman & Wehner, 1994). Hazen and Shaver (1987) for the first time gave a

theoretical framework to facilitate the understanding of the formative steps in the

development of romantic relationships and explain individual differences, as in infant-parent attachment. The basic tenets and strengths of this theory are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Romantic Attachment Theory

S.no.	Prepositions	Conceptually appealing features
1.	Emotional and behavioral dynamics of infant-parent relationships and adult romantic relationships are governed by the same biological system.	Provides an ethological or evolutionary framework and hence broadens the scope of questions asked.
2	Individual differences in approaching and experiencing romantic love can be explained by past attachment histories.	Love relationships can be classified[1] and origins of differences in these relationships can be explained.
3	Internal working models, which are relatively stable, set of knowledge structures that reflect early attachment experiences contribute to romantic beliefs.	Positive and negative models accommodate for both healthy and unhealthy relationships.
4	Romantic love involves mutual functioning of three behavioral systems attachment, care-giving and sex.	Reciprocal care and sex distinguishes romantic attachment from infant-parent relationships.

The attachment theory approach has generated most of the empirical work related to adult love and loneliness that began in the early 1980s using Bowlby's ideas (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Nevertheless, the major problem with this approach is the implicit assumptions that all romantic relationships are attachment relationships (Giordano,

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[1] Three main love relationships exist – secure, ambivalent and avoidant. This classification is parallel to infant attachment classifications and was later extended by Bartholomew in the 1990's to secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful.

2003; Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Furman & Wehner, 1994). With the standpoint, that mother-child attachment is the single determinant of adult romantic love, sex differences in romantic relationships cannot be explained, because although these differences do not exist in infants, they appear in adult attachments. Comparative literature suggests that attachment system is not the sole basis of adult pair bonding (Furman & Wehner, 1994).

Another problem is that contributions from peer networks are not acknowledged, even though friendships provide critical contexts for egalitarian, collaborative and affiliative exchanges. From the sociological standpoint the theory is very individualistic and does not account for other contextual factors (Giordano, 2003). As Waters, Kondo-Ikemura, Posada, and Richters (as cited in Furman &Wehner, 1994) aptly put it: "We have a theory of infant attachment, a theory of adult attachment, and a great deal in between left to the imagination" (p. 227).

Sullivan's theory of social personality.

Sullivan is a neo-Freudian and his theory focuses on social needs. Five basic needs essential for interpersonal development are enlisted a) tenderness, b) companionship, c) acceptance, d) intimacy, and e) sexuality. According to him development progresses through six stages, starting from infancy where parent-child relationship provides for security and companionship. At all but the last stage a new need is added to the existing needs which are fulfilled by key relationships at every stage. The last two stages include puberty and young adulthood, when there is a change in the key relationship to provide for intimacy. This is achieved in three phases: in pre-adolescence intimacy is sought from same-sex peers, later during mid-adolescence, adolescents enter into mixed-sex networks and this phase is viewed as a phase of trial

and error. Here the adolescents are engaged in a challenging process of coordinating differing needs of security, intimacy and sexual desire successfully. In the last phase, one enters into a committed relationship with a romantic partner.

The strength of Sullivan's theory is that it encompasses contributions from both parent and peer relationships. However, it is not so well articulated in matters pertaining to care giving and the last two stages are sketchily described. So, perhaps it has received little empirical attention (Furman &Wehner, 1994).

Behavioral systems theory.

Bretherton defined a behavioral system as a "goal corrected system that functions to maintain a relatively steady state between the individual and his or her environment" (as cited in Furman & Wehner, 1994, p. 11). This means that a behavioral system has a goal and demands constant appraisal process that ensures the goal is met through emotion related actions and action tendencies. There are four key concepts in this perspective:

a. *Biological perspective*: Romantic relationship needs to be traced back to its biological past, to understand the ultimate causal explanation for its evolution and at the same time include the cultural factors that will explain the proximal causes for specific manifestation of the biological process. Attachment, care giving, affiliative, and sexual reproductive behavioral systems are understood as discrete systems that evolved in order to increase survival in the past. In contemporary Western society, romantic partners are key figures for all behavioral systems, however, in different cultures different individuals may be involved in functioning for different systems.

b. *Relational views:* Relationship views are conscious and unconscious

perceptions of a particular relationship. Experiences in the particular

relationships, past experiences in similar relationships and past experiences in

other close relationships contribute to these views.

- There are distinct views for each relationship. These need not be

  consistent across relationships, depending on experience with a

  particular person.

- Consistency is more within a particular type of relationship. For

  example, within romantic relationships there are general views and

  particular views for particular romantic relationships.

- Views lead to expectations which, when fulfilled strengthen the views

  and when unfulfilled may lead to gradual alteration of the views.

To understand romantic love, both conscious styles and internal working models need

to be examined as they tap distinct facets of romantic experience and because

previous studies (Furman &Wehner, 1994) have found them to be only moderately

related. Therefore it would be interesting to find out the factors that may explain the

tangent between what is espoused and what is observed in practice.

c. *Cross-linkages with other relationships:* Although high degree of consistency

is proposed within one type of relationship, views of romantic relationships

are moderately influenced by other close relationships.

d. *Developmental Perspective:* Romantic relationships are not static, they evolve

over adolescence through adulthood:

- Changes in the hierarchy of figures, that is, pre-existing attachment, care

  giving and affiliative figures give place to romantic partners who

gradually move high in the hierarchy as prime sources for all the behavioral systems.

- Changes in the behavioral systems: A romantic partner may first emerge as a sexual/affiliative figure and only later be considered as a contestant in receiving care and attachment, and commitment comes much later.

- Views also change: This framework allows for continuities and discontinuities in views. Specific romantic experiences in the course of exploration may challenge existing views developed from other close relationships. Therefore, existing beliefs about romantic relationships may be altered with increase in romantic experiences. This would also depend upon the time, intensity and quality of the experiences. On the other hand, romantic relationships that challenge existing views may be terminated early. Experiences that strengthen existing views may last longer. So, there appears to be a tradeoff between longevity of the relationship and commitment to complementary views.

- Interestingly it may happen that an individual with dismissing views for example, can become more skillful with time in developing relationships characterized with dismissing patterns.

Empirical Studies in the West

Although romantic relationships have intimacy and closeness as a significant defining feature, they have been largely deprived of scientific query. This is evident from the review of Western and cross-cultural literature. Steiner (2000) has noted that love is not a subject that has received its due in psychological research. Yet, researches on adolescent interpersonal relationships focusing on family, peer networks and others

that concern adolescent development indicate the need to understand the pivotal role

that these relationships play in the lives of the adolescents (Steinberg & Morris, 2001;

Furman & Wehner, 1994). Similarly emerging adults' romantic relationships are seen

as largely exploratory (Arnett, 2004). However, when viewed from a life course

perspective, the choices and the experiences during emerging adulthood have

significant consequences for the subsequent stages in life (Fincham & Cui, 2011).

Conceptualizations of romantic relationships during adolescence and emerging adulthood.

Waldinger et al. (2002) reveal that despite changes in the romantic schemes from

early to late adolescents and into adulthood, there is equal amount of stability in the

schemes. Hence, it will be beneficial to include the developmental trajectory of

romantic conceptualizations from early adolescence through late adolescence and

emerging adulthood.

Table 2 depicts some of the key features of romantic relationships. Conceptualizations

of romantic relationships vary with age, depicted in the table as early (9-14 years) and

late (15-18 years) conceptualizations of romantic relationships and emerging

adulthood (18-25 plus).

Table 2

Conceptualization of Romantic Relationships during Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

Conceptualizations of Romantic Relationships

Early Adolescence	Late Adolescence	Emerging Adulthood
Early conceptualizations of romantic relationships include stereotyped media images of heterosexual love. Adolescents report being in love with a person, even when they have rarely spoken to that person (Fering, 1999)	Though akin to early conceptualizations of romantic relationships, affiliative features are still salient, however the late adolescents focus more on intimacy, commitment and security rather than passion (Connolly, Craig, Goldberg, & Pepler, 1999).	They focus on personality, intelligence, social class, ethnic background, religious beliefs, and sexual attractiveness while choosing a dating partner. They are looking for a 'soul mate', finding people with their own characteristics, which sociologists call 'consensual validation' (Arnett, 2004).
Homophily or love for similar others is emphasized (Dornbusch, 1989).		This was also revealed by Markey and Markey (2007) where they found that emerging adults desire people similar to them; however they found that romantic relationships were more fulfilling when the dyad had one dominant and one submissive partner.
View romantic relationships as opportunities of recreation, sexual experimentation, or social status. Attractiveness of the partner matters the most (Fering, 1999).	Socio emotional needs are emphasized (Connolly & Goldberg, 1999; Bouchey & Furman, 2001).	Eager to have variety of love relationships before settling down to marriage (Arnett 2004). Cohabitation has become a central feature for romantic relationships in emerging adulthood (Stanley, Rhoades & Fincham, 2011).
Activities involve 'hanging out' and sexual experimentation (Bouchey & Furman, 2001). Conversations are centered on media related topics (Davis, n.d.).	Attachment and care giving systems become more salient (Bouchey & Furman, 2001). Conversations are centered on personal issues (Davis, n.d.).	Cooper, Shaprio and Powers reveal that even when engaging in non-relationships sex, emerging adults intimacy motives are reported as most important and satisfaction of sexual needs and excitement and such enhancement motives were welcome (as cited in Lefkowitz,Gillen &Vasilenko, 2011).

Romantic relationships and other close relationships.

Romantic relationships are considered more intimate than opposite-sex friendships and are characterized by affiliation, which includes dating and companionship, while in opposite-sex relations affiliation refers only to companionship. Even though, opposite-sex friendships are marked by strong emotions, romantic relationships in addition to emotions also include physical contact and commitment (Connolly et. al., 1999). Among human beings, emotional attachments are diversified and flexible, for example, non-sexual bonds between parent and children or between same-sex and opposite-sex friends. Thus, close relationships become contexts for understanding the intricate social complexities of human interpersonal relationships. This section presents various studies that indicate the influence of parent and peer relationship experiences on the formation and quality of romantic bonds.

Role of parents and peers.

Romantic relationships occur within a social context and are linked to other close relationships such as parents and friends. Furthermore, prior romantic encounters may influence subsequent relationships. Way back in 1940, Freud posited the influence of parent-child relationships on romantic relationships. Empirical data on this process variable is sparse, yet theorists hypothesize the following mechanisms of influence:

Quality of early interactions and socialization practices.

Recently, Ha, Overbeek, de Greef, Scholte and Engels (2010) examined the impact of quality of parent-adolescent relationship on intimacy, commitment and passion in adolescent's romantic relationships. They found that ethnic Dutch adolescents who

experienced low quality relationships with parents showed more commitment in their romantic relationships compared to the indigenous Dutch adolescents. The ethnic group also displayed more passion in their romantic relationships when they experienced low quality best-friend relationships. Interestingly, for both ethnic and indigenous groups, lower quality parent-adolescent relationships and higher quality best-friendships were related to being involved in a romantic bond.

Apart from the quality of relationship between parents and with parents, parental practices also affect adolescent romance. Better romantic outcomes were associated with more autonomy oriented parental practices. However, although restrictions were more for girls, they were able to develop intimate relationships in contrast to the boys. Also, early positive parent-adolescent relationships acted as buffers against negative parent involvement in romantic relationships, and therefore were linked to positive romantic outcomes (Kan, McHale,&Crouter, 2007).

Bucx and Seiffge-Krenke (2010) discovered that early interactions with opposite gender parents deeply influence self-worth and relational skills. They also revealed that not only adolescent's own parent but the partner's relationship with his or her parent also influenced the level of passion and intimacy in their romantic relationship.

More direct influence is documented by Lee, Swenson and Niehuis (2010) who report that parental disapproval of emerging adult's romantic relationships is a strong predictor for the emerging adult's relationship distress. This was stronger for one's own parents when compared to the partner's parental approval.

Parental Modeling.

Reese-Weber and Marchand (2002) examined parent-adolescent conflict and late adolescents' attachment anxiety and depressive symptoms as predictors of late adolescents' romantic relationships. They found that conflict resolution styles were similar across parent-adolescent and adolescent-romantic partner dyads. However this was more true for females in case of both mother-adolescent and father-adolescent dyads, while for males only conflict resolution behaviors experienced within the father-adolescent relationship, not the mother-adolescent relationship, predicted conflict resolution in the romantic relationships. Depression had relevance to conflict resolution for both females and males; however, attachment was more relevant for females.

Parents' own courtship experiences help them model communication, conflict resolution and support in relationships. For instance, Newcomer et al. (as cited in Dornbusch, 1989) marks that the greater a mother's sexual experience as an adolescent, the greater the sexual activity of her adolescent daughter.

While acknowledging the importance of family and culture, Furman, Brown, and Feiring argue that peers are the most important social influence on romantic affiliations in the adolescent period (as cited in Bouchey & Furman, 2001).

Peer influence on choice of romantic partner.

Brown reveals that peers provide a context (facilitate meeting and serve in interpreting) for establishing opposite-sex relationships (as cited in Bouchey & Furman, 2001). In turn having a large number of other sex friend network facilitate the formation of romantic ties showed Connolly, Furman, and Konarski (as cited in

Bouchey & Furman, 2001). This is also illustrated by Ha et al. (2010) in their study with Dutch adolescents.

Peers influence choices of potential partners. Giordano, (2003) suggests that adolescents' conceptions about romantic relationships and their conduct within these relationships are heavily influenced by interaction and communication with other girls. Specific rules emerge (e.g., one should always be in love, it is wrong to date more than one person, heterosexuality is the only acceptable romantic option), and gossip (Reeder, 2003) and other social sanctions serve as important sources of informal social control around these prescriptions. Sociologists have made substantial contributions to this literature by focusing on the norms and values that are communicated and refined within these interpersonal contexts from those reinforced within small friendship groups to those that contribute to a school's social climate (Giordano, 2003).

Spending large amounts of time with peers may help adolescents in skills necessary for pro-social horizontal relationships. Skills acquired in friendships are transferred to romantic relationships, for example, pro-social skills such as co-construction of positive emotions, companionship and intimacy (Furman,2002; Bouchey & Furman, 2001).

Links between friendships and romantic relationships are more consistent than those between parent-child relationships and romantic relationships during adolescence. Youniss and Smollar reveal that close friendships facilitate self-disclosure as they are more accepting than parents, since the latter are future oriented and concerned about negative consequences of adolescent behavior (as cited in Giordano, 2003). Dornbusch et al. (as cited in Dornbusch, 1989) explains that parental concerns may

stem from societal expectations, for example, early Black maturing girls enter dating relationships quite late due to parental concerns that in turn stem from the larger societal expectations. However, a longitudinal study by Crockett and Randall (2006) suggests that the quality of adolescent family relationships affect their romantic relationships in young adulthood by fostering interpersonal behaviors that impact relationship quality compared to the adolescent peer relationships which did not show any main effects on the young adult's romantic relationships. Hence it is clear that romantic relationships are themselves impacted by the context in which they are played out.

In compliment to this segment, the following segment presents researches that depict romantic relationships as a process variable influencing various developmental outcomes.

Romantic relationships and developmental implications.

Interdependence and close relationships inevitably go together. The 'other' in the relationship, be it a friend, a family member or a romantic partner undoubtedly makes a unique contribution to the developmental outcomes, as the self and the other are interdependent partners in the relationship. As in any relationship, the participants in romantic relationships are interdependent and the behavior of each affects the outcomes of the other. The features also include the positive and negative aspects of these romantic relationships.

Lanz and Tagliabeu (2007) reveal that in Italy there exists heterogeneity amongst the emerging adults and their developmental pathways, not just owing to the different cultural factors, but influenced by the presence of a romantic partner. Dating and non-

dating emerging adults were different in making personal adjustments with family, time of leaving parental home, and in explorations of different life paths such as starting a family and having babies vis-a-vis pursuing academic and economic goals. Presence of a romantic partner was of a greater significance to women as the world outside the parental home became more accessible and thinking about the future became easier.

Waldinger et al. (2002) found that with age and experience in romantic relationships, the relationship schemas change and the chances of perceiving oneself as being rejected decreases, thus improving interpersonal functioning and subsequent relationships. The associations of interpersonal power in romantic relationships with self-esteem and depression reveals that relationships that report to be less egalitarian have a negative impact on the partners especially increasing depressive symptoms in girls (e.g., Galliher, Rostosky, Welsh, & Kawaguchi, 1999).

These dangers are further augmented with emerging adults as today they experience what Arnett (2004) calls 'unprecedented freedom' in matters of love and sex. Long term cohabitation or cohabitation with multiple partners undermines the significance of marriage and establishment of sustained relationships (Stanley et. al., 2011). Unwanted pregnancy rates are high among emerging adults and this may add to the difficulties that come with being single mothers. Sexual violence, compliance and unwanted sex within 'intimate' relationships are a common feature during emerging adulthood and need research attention (Lefkowitz et. al, 2011).

However, 'love' is not about reducing negative states or emotions but about promoting positive states and emotions. Bartels & Zeki (2000) states that romantic love " ... is a complex sentiment involving erotic, cognitive, emotional, behavioral

components ... " (p. 3829). Romantic love enhances holistic thinking and creative thought as it promotes long term perspective taking vis-a-vis sex which focuses on the present and enhances analytical thought (Förster, Epstude, & Ozelsel, 2009).

Gonzaga, Keltner, Londahl, and Smith (2001) found that romantic partners enjoy more positive states such as laughter and amusement. Also, positive states induced by playfulness in romantic relationships bring about experiences of positive emotions and relationship satisfaction (Aune & Wong 2002). Lefkowitz et al. (2011) also reveal that emerging adult college going men became more satisfied with their body image after the initiation of sexual intercourse in the context of romantic relationships.

Karney, Beckett, Collins, and Shaw (2007) suggest that there is strong evidence that adolescent relationships lay a foundation for adult romantic relationships and marital outcomes. Emerging adulthood is particularly important because these individuals are in the process of making long term commitment and a romantic bond often contests with other close relationships such as friends and family, many a times gaining priority over other relationships (Young, Furman, &Laursen, 2011).

Most Western studies focusing on developmental trajectories highlight the timing of dating and quality of the interactions through adulthood. In addition, contextual factors affecting formation of romantic relationships have been studied. The review also shows that romantic relationships serve as important contexts for growth, influencing an individual's life in various ways, such as self-esteem, emotional well-being and mental health and determining relationship satisfaction in future relationships including marital adjustments.

Limiting one's focus on the Western relationships beliefs and predictors may lead us to a bias because any discrepancy would then appear as bizarre or even pathological. For example 'dating' is seen as a normal developmental task in the West and having several romantic experiences is encouraged before one gets into a commitment. However, this is not a universal norm, because in various cultures there is no such practice as dating. Individuals may enter a long term commitment and then discover love. Also, in many cultures, opposite-sex interactions are discouraged. The following section includes researches from other cultures, drawing comparisons with the Western societies as and when appropriate.

Cross-Cultural Perspectives

Romantic love and cultural orientation.

Close relationships are grounded in culture. "Broadly defined, cultural influences on romantic relationships might include numerous factors ranging from cultural norms about dating, sexuality, and marriage to media portrayals of romantic relationships and culturally prescribed gender roles" (Simon, Bouchey, & Furman,1999, p.22).

Most of the cross-cultural researches have used the individualist and collectivist orientations to study and explain the differences between the cultures. In these studies, idealistic romantic beliefs include ideas that there is a suitable partner for all in the world and that true love lasts forever, while those with more 'practicable' beliefs would focus on qualities of partner such as education or career vis-à-vis interesting or humorous. For example Medora, Larson, Hortaschu and Dave (2002) found American youth to have the highest romanticism scores compared to the Turkish and Asian-Indian young adults because U.S. is an individualistic culture, while the later are

collectivistic societies. Sprecher et al. (1994) had reported a similar trend with

Japanese scoring less on romantic beliefs scale but they were also more likely to link

love and marriage compared to American and Russian samples. Interestingly, Japan

had the least gender differences on how men and women viewed and experienced

love, wereas the Americans had the highest gender differences. This finding is

intriguing because Japanese society supposedly has traditionally more gender

differentiations compared to the American society.

In contrast, Sprecher and Morn (2002) report that in China which is also a

collectivistic society, people scored higher on romantic beliefs scales and on certain

dimensions of romanticism scales when compared to samples from North America.

They also found that the Chinese were more idealistic and practical in approach to

love beliefs than the North Americans. Interestingly, Americans had more selfless

love and men were more likely to adopt the game playing approach.

Similarly, while studying the independent and interdependent self-construal of Turks

and American-Europeans it was found that interdependent self-construal was higher

among Turk participants while there was no difference in the independent self-

construal. Both Turkish and Euro-Canadian participants reported feeling closest and

ideally wanting to be closest to their romantic partner, and then to their families and

friends, followed by acquaintances. However, Turkish participants desired more

closeness with family members and acquaintances than Euro-Canadian participants

(Uskul, Hynie & Lalonde, 2004). Therefore, interdependent goals need not

necessarily contrast with individualistic goals.

A recent study comparing adolescent romantic relationship across Mainland China

and Canada reported modest levels of romantic involvement amongst 16-17 year olds,

including only 10% of girls as compared to 45 % in Canada. In addition, the numbers of past relationships were very less for both Chinese boys and girls owing to cultural restrictions on romantic activities (Li, Connolly, Jiang, Pepler, & Criag, 2010). There were similarities in interrelations between parent, friend and romantic relationships in both the cultures.

From these cross-cultural studies it is evident that interpretations based on individualistic and collectivistic framework captures a limited understanding of cultural difference in romantic beliefs. Other important perspectives to understand the phenomenon of romantic relationship are gender norms and its relation to global changes and increasing affluence.

Culture and gender in the context of globalization.

Culture and gender are closely linked. Therefore, the gender differences that are found in the American and European samples may not represent differences in all cultures. For example Spreche and Morn (2002) revealed that Chinese men were more romantic (particularly in the belief that love can overcome any obstacle) than Chinese women; and also more likely to view physical pleasure as important for maintaining marriage; but less likely to believe in destiny or fate concerning love. Whereas, North American men were more likely to marry without love and also did not consider emotional satisfaction as an important factor in maintaining marriage and were also found to be less erotic in their love styles. One of the factors that is thought to determine these changes in trends, despite China being a collectivist culture, is the changes in the economic norms in China that may have freed the people from the earlier practical approaches to love and have the luxury to now emphasize on emotional and physical aspects of love. Other examples are Japan and Hong Kong

which have achieved great economic prosperity and hence score higher on emphasis on romantic love as a basis for marriage compared to other Eastern nations such as India, Pakistan, Thailand and Philippines (Levine et al., 1995).

Pagano and Hirsch (2006) found that across both American and African-American adolescents, girls revealed greater self-disclosure and intimacy compared to boys. However, among the White adolescents, girls used self-disclosure more with the same-sex friends rather than with the romantic partner, whereas boys showed the opposite trend. Among the Black adolescents both boys and girls displayed similar levels of self-disclosure in their romantic relationships as they did in their same-sex friendships. This difference between the races was attributed to strong kin networks among Blacks which afford more resources for positive cross-gender interactions. In case of the American boys such a support was provided by the mothers; however the impoverished quality of father-daughter relationships may account for the negative cross-gender ties.

Various studies on immigrated individuals also reveal the influence of contextual factors. Vaidyanathan and Naidoo (1990) report that acceptance of dating as a practice amongst the Indian-Canadians varies across generations. While only 27 % of the first-generation found dating to be healthy, 81 % amongst the second generation agreed with this stance.

While free-choice of romantic partner is revered as a right of an autonomous individual in the West, in many Eastern countries marriages are arranged (Moore & Leung, 2001). Gupta and Singh found that there is more romantic love later in arranged marriages, than that which remains in love marriages (as cited in Simon, Bouchey & Furman, 1999).

Also, it can be argued that 'love' being important to maintain a marriage is more a pan cultural idea, than love being a precursor to marriage. Levine et al. (1995) reveals that cultural norms that lay emphasis on love as a basis of marriage do not necessarily believe that it is important for maintaining marriage. For example U.S placed the highest importance on love as a prerequisite for marriage compared to India, Pakistan and other Eastern nations, yet the differences for placing love as important for maintaining a marriage were not so strong. Interestingly, the marriages based on 'love' do not seem to endure as U.S. also has the highest divorce rates. Love may have different meanings in different cultures and languages and most researches fail to account for this.

Overall, the studies reveal that there are differences among cultures and gender differences within the cultures and across the cultures. However, the factors explaining these changes need to move beyond the individualistic-collectivistic dimensions, looking for more macro level changes impacting economies and technologies that promote the pursuits of individual goals in various cultures. It has been noted that romantic love is influenced by a number of contextual factors such as affluence, gender power parity, education, technological advancement and such. For example Simpson, Campbell, and Berscheid (1986) report that romantic love which is now the "only right basis of marriage" in the West, is a relatively recent proposition. The authors replicated a survey conducted in the mid-1960s for American college going men and women using Kephart's (1967) scales to determine the association of romantic love as the basis for marriage, and as an important factor for maintaining a marriage. They found that since the 1960s, more college going men and women have viewed love as a critical factor determining a long term commitment owing to dramatic social changes such as the status of women. Therefore, the global factors

that have given birth to the new life phase of emerging adulthood have also made it possible for these individuals to pursue relationships which are based on egalitarian values.

Recent studies conducted in China reveal that Chinese scored higher on romantic beliefs scales and on certain dimensions of romanticism scales when compared to samples from North America (Sprecher & Morn, 2002). They also found that Chinese were both more idealistic and practical in approach to love beliefs than the North Americans. The researchers attributed this trend to various social and cultural changes that have taken place in China after it embraced the market economy. Romantic love was no longer treated as a "bourgeois" sin punishable with years in prison. Young men and women now have increasing freedom to choose their partners. Thus, both emerging adulthood and romantic relationships appear to be a phenomenon of an economically affluent, socially liberal and non-discriminating society.

Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, and Verma (1995) revealed that economic standards of living were highly correlated with beliefs about love. They compared 11 cultures including India, Pakistan, Thailand, Mexico, Brazil, Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, England and United States and found that countries which assigned higher importance to love also had high standards of living, higher marriage and divorce rates and low fertility. They suggest that the shift towards individualistic values for mate selection in the US coincided with the industrial revolution and that Japan and Hong Kong which are high in collectivist ideals are slowly moving towards egalitarian forms of mate selection with economic prosperity.

As mentioned earlier, in order to understand the cultural perspective on romantic relationships, it is important to look at the historical and philosophical factors that

shape a culture's ideologies as well as the current changes that influence the existing ideologies. This is even more so in case of India, because the modern Indian society is marked by a "different modernity" (Chatani, 2011, p.1) or "a variety of modernity" (Krueger, 2004, p.1), to indicate the apparent dichotomies and contradictions between the traditional - religious and Western-modern (industrial) ways of life. The following section presents perspectives from the Indian context.

Perspectives from India

"For love is the ultimate meaning of everything around us. It is not a mere sentiment; it is truth; it is the joy that is at the root of all creation."
Rabindranath Tagore.

This section presents a glimpse into the Indian history and draws from the rich literary works of ancient and medieval philosophers, poets, artists, sages and scientists in order to understand and study the cultural values that may be present in the Indian society today. It also discusses changes in these memes over time and depicts the contemporary scenario in light of the global changes.

Historical and philosophical perspectives from ancient and medieval India.

Indian philosophy has been aptly summarized by Mahadevan as, "Indian philosophy is essentially a philosophy of values" (p. 326, as in Goodwin, 1955). The highest value being individual's freedom to work towards self-realization and realize the freedom of all (any kind of) bondages.

In India, romantic love has served to express the Indian philosophy. The term romantic love denotes the highest possible 'ideal', which when aspired by men would lead them to understand their own nature, the highest form of consciousness. Indian epics and mythology have ample examples that depict the glory of romantic love as well as its dangers and tragedies (Punja, 1992). For instance, the legend of the exquisitely beautiful *Shakuntala* and the prodigious king *Dushyanta* is sung by the famous poet *Kalidasa* in the play *Abhijnanashakuntalam* (Emeneau, 1962). *Nalopakhyanam,* the story of prince *Nala,* who because of his extraordinary qualities had won the heart of the most beautiful *Damyanti.* Although the story does not entail much of premarital courtship, it is a story of rebellion and self-selection (*svayamvara*) on part of *Damyanti,* who even rejects the Gods who had come to marry her in favor of the mortal. The couple is united after great difficulties (Srinivasan, 2006, Rudolph, 1902). The immortal love of *Savitri* for her husband *Satyavan,* where even the God of Death, *Yama* had to cave in to her strong will and determination, which consequently earned *Satyavan* a new life is another example for the same (Monro, 2006). Moreover, Sanskrit literature is rampant with quixotic love stories, apart from those mentioned in the great epics (Ali, 2002).

In fact, *Ved Vyasa,* the most revered figure (teacher/poet/prophet) in Hinduism and a scribe of the *Vedas, Puranas* and the great epic *Mahabharata,* and the author of the *Brahmasutra* exemplifies the all-inclusive nature of Indian thought. *Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa* or *Ved Vyasa* was born to *Parashara Maharshi* and *Satyavati* or *Matsyagandha. Matsyagandha* was the daughter of a ferryman and her name indicates that her smell (vaginal and cervical secretions) is sexually intoxicating just like the smell of shrimps. *Parashara,* while being ferried by *Matsyagandha,* enamored by her, expressed his amorous desire which she accepted, engendering the birth of *Ved Vyasa*

on the banks of Yamuna out of 'wed-lock' (Chakravorti, 1963). This shows that neither caste nor marriage was held as ultimate criteria to judge the legitimacy of the individual. Later, King *Shantanu* of Hastinapur fell in love with *Satyavati* and they married. This depicts that questions on virginity were not the focus.

Love and marriage.

Counter-intuitive as it may sound, love and marriage have never been treated together in the Indian context. Observations from remote antiquity suggest that the God of love (*Kamadev*) and that of marriage are different (De, 1959). While marriage was treated as a social duty, a social ideal, love was celebrated as a personal ideal and was thought to be possible only when it was free of all compulsions. Therefore, marriage was looked upon as a matter of arrangement for political alliance and economic exchange and was founded on the ideal of duty (*dharma*).Finding a partner through selection (*varana*) or through gift of a maiden (*kanyadan*) was regarded as higher forms of marriage in the *sastras*. Therefore, marriages were usually arranged except the *Gandharva* marriages, the only form of marriage, which entailed pre-marital courtship and were sanctioned by the *sastras* (Ali, 2002). Because romantic love was hierarchical and class defined, *gandharva* marriages were rare and appeared mainly amongst the Kshatriya classes (Ali, 2002;De, 1959). Romantic love was considered an evolved form of pairing as in Ali (2002).

> The *gandharva* marriage, according to *Vatsyayana*, was the superior form because it was attained without much difficulty, without a ceremony of 'selection' (*avarana*), and was based on mutual affection or attachment (*anuragatmakatvat*) which was said to be the 'fruit' of all marriage in any event (p. 129, *Kamasutra* 3.5.29–30).

Although romantic love was highly institutionalized in the sense of complexity in etiquettes and concerns with refinement of the self and other 'ornamentations' of the courtly life, 'love' was conceived to be beyond social mores and expectations. This apparent contradiction is exemplified in *Radha's* love for *Krishna*.

However, some scholars have argued that *kama* and *rati* (related to pleasure arising from sexual union) are different from *anuraga (affection)* or *bhakti (devotion)*. The same *Krishna* can be quoted from *Bhagvadgita* for recommending *bhakti* over *kama*. In fact, most of the religious texts have admonished *kama* and associated it with the downfall of the *yogis* (*yogabrashta*).

Kama, anuraga and bhakti.

"Sensual love seeks meaning and significance in the eternity of the sacred; spiritual love seeks meaning and impact in the immediacy of the profane ". Lee Siegel.

Radha's love for *Krishna* is a response to the divinity that is manifest in his being. *Radha* was not only older to *Krishna* but also married to someone else, and yet passionately loved *Krishna*; not because she *had to* but because she could not help doing so. She is an ideal lover, in love with the ideal 'man' and they both share the ideal bond, suffer ideal separations, and enjoy ideal union. In them the 'profane' (carnal) and the 'sacred' (spiritual) dimensions of 'love' merge as sung by the poet *Jayadeva* in his legend *Gitagovinda*. In fact, commentators have compared the devotion in *'Gitagovinda'*, which is of a passionate lover and the devotional relationship of *Jayadeva* with his wife *Padmavati* which is dutiful. *Padmavati* is an

ideal wife, established in the *Dharmashastras*[2] while *Radha* is the ideal lover (Siegel,

1978). *Krishna* again is the ideal man (*poorna purshottam* as against his earlier avatar

Rama who was *maryada purshottam*) because he is free of bondages. Hawley (1979),

beautifully illustrates this by comparing *Krishna's maakhanchori lila* (play of the

butter thief) to the *raslilas* (dalliances with the *gopis or* cowgirls, *Krishna* being a

thief of love). He says that *Krishna* loves butter because it is dense, concentrated and

yet simple (*saral*) and so is the love, simple and pure. Therefore, when *gopis* offer

butter to *Krishna* they offer him the concentrated love, which is a product of

transformation from gross emotion through the disciplined churning of *bhakti*. And

Krishna must 'steal it' because unless he steals it, conventions and hospitality

(*aupcharita*) on part of the *gopis*, would not let his approach remain as simple,

spontaneous and intimate as the 'butter' itself. Another folktale motif, which is very

common to Indian art and poetry and a part of Indian *bhakti* is the stealing of *gopis'*

clothes (*chirharana*) by *Krishna*, when they go to the river for bathing (Emeneau,

1989).

With reference to *Krishna bhakti* it is vital to mention *Mirabai*, a queen who

experienced such peaks in *Krishna*'s love that she would dance ecstatically on the

streets, and that too in an era, in Rajasthan where women observed *parda*! *Mira* came

five thousand years after *Krishna's* death, during the times of the Muslim rulers.

Mirabai's love demonstrates that love is beyond time, place and society (Abbot &

2The Dharmashastras are traditional tests that prescribe the code of conduct for each stage and assign a crucial place for the emerging adults

(Verma and Saraswathi, 2002).The Hindu Ashrama Dharma Theory or "Duties of life's stages." prescribes four stages for the fulfillment of

developmental tasks. They are - brahmachari (student), grihastha (householder), vanaprastha (elder advisor) and sannyasa (religious solitaire)- in

pursuit of the four human goals: dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (pleasure) and moksha (liberation). Here it is important to note that

the final pursuit for any Hindu is 'moksha' or 'enlightenment'. Therefore the Ashrama Dharma is one such prescription and the second stage the

'grihistha' is meant for 'artha' and 'kama' which actually dictate the goals of marriage (e.g., Aggarwal, 2000, Kulkarni, 1999).

Godbole, 1933). Another path is the yoga of love that is *Tantra*. *Tantra* is a way of reaching enlightenment by using sex, the most powerful and basic energy of human beings (Chakravorti, 1963).

Romantic love in ancient art and sciences.

In this sense Indian philosophy recognized the rightful place that physical pleasure, sex and love have in human existence, as depicted in many of the Indian arts. The erotic sculptures in temples of Khajuraho, also called 'poetry in stone', celebrate the oneness and union of lovers, conferring a divine quality to it (Punja, 1992; Kakar & Kaker, 2007).

This is reiterated in *Vatsyayana Kamasutram* ('Vatsyayana's Aphorisms on Love') written around the time of the *Upanishads* (third to fifth century A.D.), where everything pertaining to attracting a partner, courtship, sexuality, and making love was treated as a science, one of the 64 arts. In fact the very conceptualization of *kama* by *Vatsayana* is very telling of the convergence between self-discipline and pleasure. Ali (2002) elaborated that according to Vatsyayana the senses (*indriya*) should be engaged with their particular fields (*visaya*), but simultaneously they must be overseen with the mind (*manas*) and the soul (*atmasamyukta*). And therefore, Doniger (2003) pleads, that

> The real Kamasutra, however, is not just about the positions in sexual intercourse, not the sort of book to read in bed while drinking heavily, let alone holding the book with one hand in order to keep the other free. It is a book about the art of living-about finding a partner, maintaining power in a marriage, committing adultery, living as or with a courtesan, using drugs-and also about the positions in sexual intercourse (p.20).

This is of course not the only work or even the first of its kind. His work is a comprehensive compendium of earlier works of *Auddalaki Svetaketu*, a Vedic Sage, who had written five hundred and thirty chapters later condensed into one hundred and thirty chapters under seven definite sections by *Bablravya* and then specialized by courtesans of *Pataliputra*. The precision and practicality of *Vatsyayana's* work makes it the most famous thesis even today in modern times and has implications for history, psychology, sociology and even medicine. Hence it is not merely a thesis on sexology, but a serious and scientific composition in a forbidden area which he urges is a part of humanistic science (De, 1959; Doniger, 2003; Kakar & Kakar, 2007).

Women and virginity.

Going further into the history, even before *Vatsyayana* during the times of *Rig Vedas*, when sexual taboos were current in various parts of the world, in India virginity was not a pre requisite for marriage (Chakravorti,1963). Young people had many opportunities to meet and interact with each other intimately during various festivals and ceremonies. Chastity or virginity was not stressed upon (Fiser, 1967). The woman was considered always pure as her menses cleanses her physically and spiritually (Chakravorti, 1963, Thomas, n.d.). According to Chakravorti (1963), "Women belong first to three Gods: *Soma* (the moon), *Gandharva* (libido) and *Agni* (heat). *Soma* gives them cleanliness (through the menstrual cycles), the *Gandharva* (through the libido) gives her the melodious voice and *Agni* (passionate fire) destroys all ills. So women are pure especially during dalliance" (p.67).

Indian civilization: From peaks to valleys.

Although, in the Indian tradition, 'love' is a *value* for which one is ready to die, a value beyond one's life, in practice, there appears to be a disjunction. As Kapadia (1998) has observed, romantic love seems acceptable only if it eventually leads to marriage and that too, if the mate is from an appropriate class, caste and religion.

Memes pertaining to 'true love' have been tragic across the globe and Indian psyche has been influenced by them. *Heer-Ranjha, Sheerin-Farhad, Laila-Majnu, Salim-Anarkali* all meet with the tragic fate of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Steiner (2000, para. 36) pointed out that "They [Romeo and Juliet] meet at a dance one evening, before dawn declare their undying love for each other, marry the next day, and are dead within a fortnight", has become a guiding meme for romantic love all over the world. Popular culture reinforces it. From 1931-76 Bollywood has produced five films on *Laila Majnu* and not to mention thousands of others spreading the tragic meme. Today, honor-killing or customary killing is painfully common in certain parts of India. Honor-killing is the name for preserving the 'honor' of the community or purifying the community whenever traditional norms are challenged. As Dave (2011) comments that the most common behavior posing challenge to authority is choosing one's own marital partner.

Kakar and Kakar (2007) suggest that the ascetic ideals and virtues of celibacy pervasive in the Hindu thought is a plausible cause for the sexually repressive ideologies post *Vatsayana*. The "ascetic life" of conquering the senses or the lower self to attain freedom from desire, passion and attachment, would sound incredible for a "life-affirming" westernized mind. But, in the Indian context, Radhakrishnan observes, from the standpoint of civilization and sanskritization, the highest pleasure

is attaining to the infinite, and the love for the finite is only instrumental to that purpose (as cited in Goodwin, 1955). Therefore, the emphasis on self-discipline can also be read as, " ... the proper enjoyment of pleasure is not conceived of in opposition to self-discipline and mastery of the senses, but as a proper function of it" (Ali, 2002, p. 212).

Scholars also contend that the liberality of pre-colonial India was destroyed by the Victorian and Moghul influences on Hindu religious practices (e.g. Riencourt, 1960; Sen, 2001; History of sex in India, n.d.). Sen (2001) scrutinizes the Anglo-Indian discourses in colonial India on women's rights in the native as well as their home country and reveals the fundamental contradictions with which European media constructed the image of the native Indian woman as sensuous, morally debased and on the other hand as epitome of self-sacrifice and self-denial. Gender was used as a tool to further their "civilizing mission" and "advancing their larger imperialist design" (p.19). Many centuries of subjugation to external and brute forces, led not only to synthesis with the other ideologies, including Islam and Christianity, but also "monstrous distortions" within the Hindu practices. The entire history of modern India explains how it has fallen from her ancient civilization. It is a history of sloth, corruption and inertia (Riencourt, 1960, p.220).

The next section focuses on the contemporary Indian context, which is industrial and global, but has at its core the light of its ancient antiquity as well as remnants of the repressions from what Kakar and Kakar (2007, p. 84) call its "dark ages" of sexuality.

Contemporary Indian context.

"I cannot cure myself of that most woeful of youth's follies--thinking that those who care about us will care for the things that mean much to us". David Herbert Lawrence.

Many paradoxes are apparent in contemporary India. Both, the thoughtless compliance to tradition as well as oblivious endorsement of 'modernity' are discredited. Netting (2005) in her study on love and arrange marriage in India observed that, a competing, "underground" system of romantic relationships amongst the young adults (average age 25) exists in most Indian cities. In fact over 75% of her sample had reported being currently engaged in a romantic bond and more than half of the couples had met in schools and colleges. India seems to be moving towards less stringent attitude towards "love", especially in the urban areas. This can be attributed to various macro forces. It would be interesting to understand how the contextual influences, for instance changing economies, institutional contexts, technological advancement, and lesser parental control, shape social attitude towards romantic relationships.

In India, studies on heterosexual relationships amongst unmarried youth have focused on sexual and reproductive health issues. Although, important work has been done in the area of adolescent reproductive health and sexuality, (e.g., Jeejeebhoy, 2000) that addresses important health concerns such as STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), there is little attention to spheres of development pertaining to romantic relationships. Sujay (2009) has also looked into sexual norms and behaviors of college going youth in Gujarat. Studies pertaining to marriage partner selection (e.g., Banerjee, Duflo, Ghatak & Lafortune,

2009) focus on socio-economic variables such as caste, education and SES rather than love as a prerequisite or an important ingredient in maintaining marriages.

Even studies in which romantic relationships figure in the titles, have primarily focused on sexual behavior and gender differences in sexual behavior, while a romantic bond only provided a context for the same (International Institute for Population Sciences & Population Council, 2010) . In addition, they mentioned power dynamics and violations of the individual's rights, mostly women's rights to say no to physical relationship before marriage. Moreover, there are very tangential references to parental support and control. Also, all these researches have focused on youth from an economically disadvantaged background or slums. For example, Jaya and Hindin's (2009) study on Delhi youth from a low Socio-Economic status (SES) background reveals that boys were more active in seeking opposite-sex partners and more likely to initiate a sexual relationship, and may resort to forcing the unwilling partner. Alexander et al. (2006) echo similar findings and concerns about unprotected sex amongst unmarried youth in Pune slums.

Gender difference are highlighted by Banaji (2006) in her study on the impact of Bollywood films on the sexual attitudes, values and behavior of the youth in Bombay and she confirms the gender disparity in engaging in sexual activities and the pressure to remain a virgin on the girls. Vivid descriptions of rape scenes and glorification of suicide by the victims as a sign of virtue are a part of the "formula" film cult. In contrast, not until recently, the Indian movies were not allowed to show kissing, based on mutual love and desire by the characters. The society seems to be shy of genuine intimacy and is satisfied with sexual violence as a form of entertainment. G.D. Khosla's rejoinder against this hypocrisy is apt, "In a country where the *lingam* and

the *yoni* are publicly worshipped and where a book on Kamasutra has been written [sic], what will happen if a couple is shown kissing as a mark of love and affection? Surely the Ganga will not be on fire!" (as cited in Booth, 1995, p. 171).

The depiction of so called traditional-modern conflicts in popular Bollywood movies has been analyzed by Krueger (2004). The question of marriage, especially by self-selection is seen as a threat to *'parampara'* or traditions. One such film *Mohhabhatein* (love stories) was about challenging an authoritative figure; his dictatorial world view and the movie ends with him softening and realizing that change and love are important aspects of life. A dialogue in the film *Mohhabhatein* between *Narayan Shankar*, the disciplinarian father and *Nandini*, a loving and obedient daughter effectively illustrates the power struggle.

> *Nandini: "These days everything has changed."*
> *Narayan Shankar: "Nothing has changed, Nandini."*
> *Nandini: "But these days children make their choices themselves ... "*
> *Narayan Shankar: "Nothing has changed, Nandini."*
> *Nandini: "What I meant was ... "*
> *Narayan Shankar: "Nothing has changed."*
> *Nandini: "But ... "*
> *Narayan Shankar: "I said It ... didn't I? That's it!"*

Far from empathizing and understanding their children, many parents do not even facilitate communication in these matters. Peers too often indulge in teasing and making fun, which may be too embarrassing or undesirable for the lovers. Sharply contrasting with the history of Indian philosophy, whose central ideas are individual freedom, we come across some extreme instances that chastise romantic partners. For example, in the Meerut incidence of 2005, the police beat up young lovers in the

garden on the grounds of having illicit affairs (Chatterji, 2010). Such incidences demonstrate that for certain Indians, romantic love is almost a crime!

Visibility of romantic relationships.

Despite restrictions, more and more young individuals seem to engage in premarital courtships. Abraham (2002) has identified platonic ' *bhai-behen* ' ('brother-sister like'), romantic 'true love', and transitory and sexual 'time-pass' relationships amongst unmarried youth in the low income group of Indian Metropolis. Traditionally, the provision of early marriages arranged by adults fulfilled the relationship needs of individuals in a culturally approved way. With changes leading to extended periods of education, especially of girls, increased opportunities of interaction between boys and girls, various career options, role confusions, increased legal age of marriage, the relationship establishing patterns have also changed.

The changes in ICT (Information and Communications Technology) are affecting lives of young individuals in profound ways. Firstly, the transition periods are lengthened due to changes in the institutional structures, educational requirements and delaying full time occupation, and also marriage and child bearing, giving rise to emerging adulthood. Consequently this affects the ways in which individuals relate to each other. More time spent in educational settings, wider social network, and technological advancements such as the internet increases the opportunities to interact with opposite-sex peers (Larson, Wilson, Brown, Furstenberg, & Verma, 2002), and increased anonymity in the larger cities facilitate the growth of romantic relationships. The internet creates a "social space" for emerging adults that provides numerous choices for forming and maintaining social networks (Mortimer & Larson, 2002).

Context for the present study.

The context for the present study is Baroda, Gujarat. Baroda or Vadodara has been known as the *sanskari nagri* (cultured city) of the state. The rich cultural traditions of the city are most evident during the festive occasions *Navratri, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Id,* New Year, *Uttarayan, Holi,* campus fun fairs and other musical and art oriented activities which keep happening in the city.

The *Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III* in 1875 had introduced many reforms including a focus on girl's education and adult education and the benefits of which we reap even today. Baroda's cultural life is very dynamic as it is remarkably cosmopolitan. The average Barodian is open to the world and overflowing with hospitality.

Although Baroda amply serves as an example of a modern urban Indian city. Baroda has been nominated as the safest city for women in Gujarat and the second safest in India in an online survey of 37 cities conducted by a global market research firm. (Tere, 2011). It is remarkable for the 'mobility' that it allows its youth, especially the girls. Here the term mobility is used in a broader way encompassing not only geographical mobility but also mobile technologies. Having a personal two-wheeler and a mobile phone and easy and affordable accessibility to internet is very common for the young. The changes and effects of mobility on adolescents include the opportunities to develop intimate relationships, maintaining secrecy and privacy, satisfying the intrinsic needs of 'contact', and at the same time freeing them from physical proximity and spatial immobility (Gala & Unhelkar, 2008).
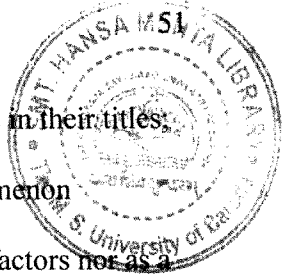
As aptly put forth by Larson et al. (2002), the expansion in adolescent romantic relationships in recent times have less to do with adolescence and more to do with

society in general. Thus it would be intriguing to explore the cultural values that guide romantic beliefs and behaviors, define the unique features of these relationships and determine individual outcomes influencing the quality of romantic experiences within the given context.

In India researches that exclusively focus on the romantic phenomenon are scarce. Therefore, with the purpose of understanding the way romantic relationships are viewed in the present Indian context a concept mapping exercise was undertaken by the researcher. The concept mapping process is described in detail in the subsequent section after the highlights of the present review.

Highlights from the Review

- Romantic relationships in adolescent and young adulthood are considered important milestones in understanding adult relationships and well-being.

- Studies on romantic relationships have expanded recently in the last decade with a shift from attachment perspective to developmental and cultural perspectives.

- Work on adolescent relationships focuses on friendships, opposite-sex friendships and developmental trajectories or gender role differences in the developmental patterns and timings of these relationships with a very recent attempt in evolving a theory for romantic relationships.

- Researches in some collectivistic societies show that collective goals do not necessarily subordinate individual goals and instead are an expansion of individual goals. Cross-cultural researches thus need to move beyond the individualistic and collectivistic frameworks for interpreting romantic relationships.

- In the Indian context, very few studies mention romantic love in their titles, and even these have not focused on understanding the phenomenon exclusively, neither as an outcome influenced by contextual factors nor as a process influencing developmental outcomes. There is a body of research pertaining to adolescent reproductive health and sexuality especially in the lower SES context and a few studies on marriage partner selection.

- India has been stereotyped as a repressive society owing to Hindu religious practices; however, the present review of Indian antiquity suggests the opposite. Contemporary changes in the Indian society due to modernization, globalization and technological advancement have led to conditions that can afford a rise in romantic relationships.

To sum up, although we know how often young individuals engage in intercourse or other forms of sexual activities, we do not know what their 'encounters' are like, what their relationships are like. We only know their desire for close, intimate relationships because it is an important developmental task and a basic need, but we do not know whether they understand what they seek and what values they seek for themselves and in their partner. We know little about whether they have the interpersonal skills to get what they truly desire. We do not know their experience of these relationships in contexts that do not play a facilitating role to help these young people and its subsequent impact on individual functioning and future relationships.

Concept Mapping Exercise

"Concept maps are graphical tools for organizing and representing knowledge" (Novak & Canas, 2006). As a research tool it has a major advantage of placing the interpretation of data in the hands of the participants (Campbell & Salem, 1999).

The concept mapping process

Research question.

What are the linkages between emerging adults' opposite-sex romantic relationships quality and their socio-emotional development?

Sampling technique.

Sampling technique: Purposive, snow balling

Participants:20

Emerging adults who were currently engaged in a romantic relationship or had one in the past or had never been in such a relationship.

Tool.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted and tape recorded with the participant's permission. Each interview took approximately 60 minutes.Interviews were transcribed.

Analysis.

a. Three separate matrices were prepared for all the three sample groups

b. Significant concepts were identified based on the available data and a visual concept map (see Figure 1) based on the hierarchal structure and cross linkages between the concepts is the outcome.

c. The map was interpreted.

The construction and interpretation of the map was jointly done by a smaller group of participants and the researcher in two sessions. In the first session, a focus question

and a parking lot[3] of concepts to be included in the map was given to the participants. The participants had the freedom to evolve new categories, club similar ones and also omit categories they thought were insignificant. Each category was written on post-its which could be moved around on a chart paper by the group. A skeleton map was finally evolved after two hours of group discussion and the final map was drawn up in the following session.

The following map was constructed with the help 20 individuals who participated in the concept mapping study.

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[3] A list of concepts waiting to be added to a concept map is referred to as a parking lot of concepts (Novak & Cannas, 2006).

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Factors that determine Formation and Quality of Romantic Relationship in the Indian Context and its Implications on Individual's Development.
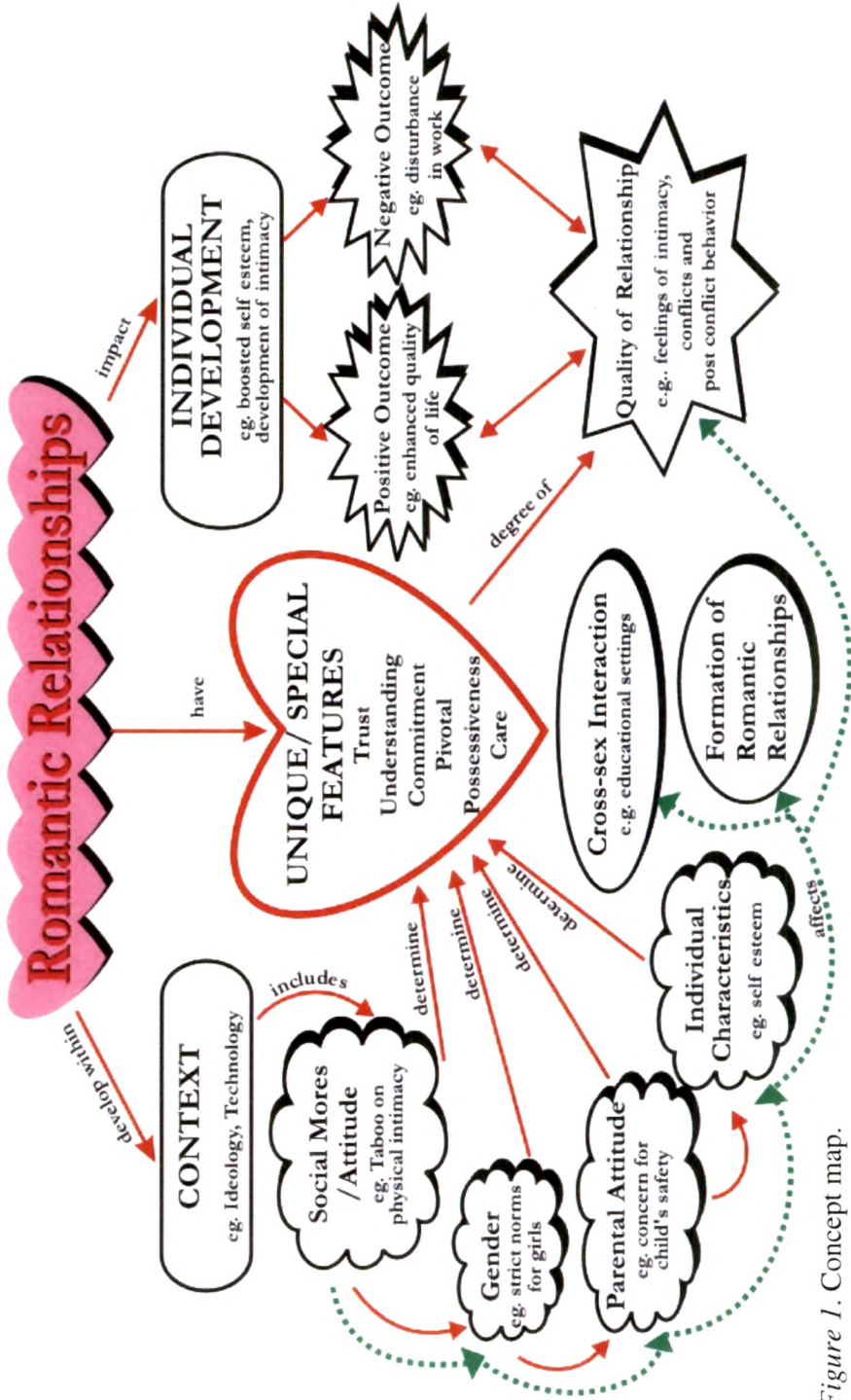

Figure 1. Concept map.

Concept map.

The concept map that evolved centers on the theme, "Factors that determine

formation and quality of romantic relationship in the Indian context and its

implications on individual's development". Romantic relationships and its special

features are depicted in the center and the impact of context, at various levels, that is,

chrono (cultural ideology) to micro (personal characteristics) are presented with the

help of connectors.

The special features enlisted are also influenced by the context. For example, the

feature that romantic relationships are central to one's life or pivotal was more often

reported by the girls. Contexts are interlinked with each other and influence one

another. Further, they jointly influence opposite-sex interaction, subsequent formation

of romantic relationships and consequently the quality of these relationships. The

quality of romantic relationships is also affected by the intensity of the special

features. For example, possessiveness is reported to be desirable to some extent;

however, beyond a point it can become obsessive, especially when accompanied by

lack of trust and understanding. Positive and negative outcomes and relationship

quality share a reciprocal relationship and these aspects together have developmental

implications for the individual. The map has also served to develop the conceptual

framework that will guide future research in this area.

Results from the concept mapping exercise.

This section begins with the highlights of the general trends revealed in the data

Following are some observations of the general trends that the data revealed:

- Most of the participants had many opposite-sex friends.

- All couples met at some educational setting.

- All relationships are reported to be hundred percent committed; however, they have revealed that the future also depends on parents and other societal factors.

- All the participants reported to have faced disagreements in their relationships.

- Parents do not support or appreciate opposite-sex interactions or romantic relationships. Most participants feel that the parents have some doubt or notion about their involvement in a relationship, but there is no direct conversation between the parents and children. For instance, *"My mom heard me talking to my girlfriend once ... she has not told me directly, but she taunts me at times ... like I know what's going on"*

- There is not much discrepancy in the way romantic relationships are conceptualized by individuals who are currently involved and those who are not currently involved.

Due to modernization and subsequent change in people's mind set, romantic relationships come about less secretively. This is in line with reports from other studies which indicate that in the present context, rules limiting opposite-sex contacts and romantic relationships are becoming more flexible for urban India youth (Booth, 2000). The changes in the modes of socialization owing to the changes in the social, political, economic and technological scenarios as Indian identities become fragmented between Western ethos and traditional Indian culture (Verma & Saraswathi, 2000), could explain this trend among the urban middle and upper classes in India.

However, the negative attitude of the people towards romantic relationships is still the norm of the day. All couples, even when their parents knew about the relationship, found it extremely difficult to meet. In the words of a 22 year old boy, *"Milne mein problem hote hai, sab chup ke karna padta hai"* *(meeting each other is a problem, we have to hide from the public glare)*. Because of these restrictions, the couples feel that the relationship suffers, communicating with each other becomes difficult, and hence the personal and private contact which is required for intimacy to germinate and develop is unavailable. Interestingly, despite an increase in romantic involvement among the upper classes in the urban settings, 'romantic love' is rarely considered as a source of mate selection.

In the Indian context, the everyday experiences of romantic relationships are greatly influenced by the prevalent gender norms. With social mores being stricter for girls, problems are accentuated for them. For instance, *"There are problems for me, not for him ... whenever we meet I have to tell him ke aju baju dekha karo (be vigilant) ... he doesn't have a problem, even to meet on the roads but I get afraid ... "* Another major concern expressed mainly by the girls was that due to the clandestine nature of the relationship, they needed to lie to parents, which in turn created feelings of distancing from parents and also a sense of guilt.

Summary of findings from the concept mapping process.

Romantic relationships are a common phenomenon. Nevertheless most of them are hidden from the public eye. The cultural and societal mores interfere not only with the formation and quality of romantic relationships, but also the parent-adolescent relationship. The couples fail to receive the required support and understanding from

them. The partners are more often looked upon negatively by the "custodians of morality" and their feelings are not respected.

Romantic relationships are the most salient of the interpersonal relationships and have a great potential for directing individual development positively. However, this possibility has not been explored. The concept map study provides a direction for focused research in this area. It presents a framework interlinking the various factors impinging on romantic relationships in the Indian urban upper middle class context; and the in-depth personal interviews with the respondents have given insights into the areas that need intervention, which in turn can guide emerging adults towards healthy adulthood.

The concept map along with the theoretical framework was used to develop the conceptual framework of the study. The conceptual framework is depicted in the next section following the rationale and the theoretical framework.

Rationale

Romantic relationships are important developmental milestones and have significant developmental consequences for individuals engaged in them. There is much that needs to be understood about the phenomenon central to identity formation during emerging adulthood, especially in post-industrial non-western cultures. The delicate balance essential for developing 'healthy relationships' and navigating through the ecstasies and agonies of intimacies, calls for understanding links between romantic experiences and various developmental outcomes. Studying the cultural values can help reflect whether these values promote individual development or stifle individual freedom. Discussions pertaining to ancient practicality of the culture in matters of

love and problems faced due to present repressions in the society may help us revive and relive the 'old' but practical approaches towards romantic love. The broader implication of the study is to restructure the society in a more intelligent way, keeping in mind the direction of change in the present scenario due to myopic imitation of the westernized worldview. This kind of work, though important, has not been a subject of intense study and deliberation in the Indian context.

Theoretical Framework

The behavioral systems theory draws from the seminal work of attachment theory and Sullivan's theory, integrating some of the best components from both theories and moving ahead to overcome some of the previous limitations.

Key ideas from the behavioral systems theory that guides the present conceptual framework.

1. Romantic relationships are pivotal in one's life.

The first key idea of behavioral systems theory is that the romantic partner becomes the foremost attachment figure in the functioning of the attachment, care giving, affiliative, and sexual/reproductive behavioral systems in the adult life. Before adolescence, parents and peers play an important role in functioning of attachment, care giving and affiliative systems and later on as adolescence progresses, romantic partners become "central to life" as also revealed in the concept map.

2. Romantic love is a universal phenomenon but mediated by cultural factors.

The ethological approach to romantic relationships suggests that pair-bonding had evolved as an adaptation instinct in the species and hence is universally applicable to homo-sapiens. Some of the reasons suggested by the evolutionary history for the need for pair bonding include concealed ovulation and prolonged parenting required to raise the human offspring. Given the historical cause for the phenomenon, the theory however does not deny the proximal causes for the manifestations of the behavior in various cultures. The timing for the activation of these behavioral systems will depend largely on cultural norms.

3. Focus on intra relationships views that shape current relationships experiences.

People generally enter relationships with preconceptions about what a relationship should be like based on views of a particular relationship shaped by the nature of interactions and experiences in that relationship, by past experiences in similar relationships, and finally by past experiences in other relationships. This also suggests cross-relationship links.

In behavioral systems framework, views of different types of relationships are expected to be moderately related, not highly related nor unrelated. Therefore, the framework places emphasis on the ongoing experiences of particular romantic relationships, which is also the focus of the present study. The reason is that romantic relationships have distinct features that will lead to distinct experiences and views with each new romantic bond. Also, the specific

partners are not the same individuals as in the previous relationships; hence they shape the course of the current relationship. The framework also has a developmental perspective as it suggests continuities and discontinuities in views and developmental changes which may occur both within the course of a particular relationship, and over the course of a series of relationships.

The concept map validates ideas presented by the theoretical framework. It clearly shows that relationships are shaped by the context and delineates contextual factors that shape views about romantic relationships and also depicts how they in turn impact development.
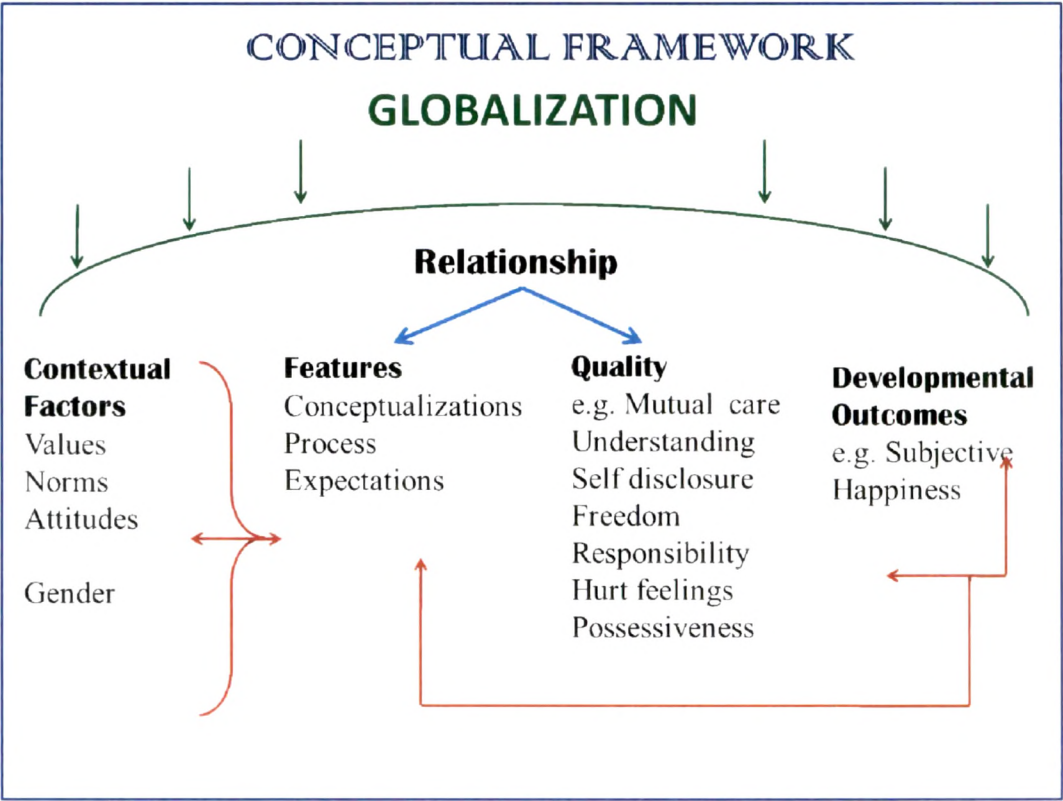
Conceptual Framework

Figure 2. Conceptual framework.

Figure 2 depicts the conceptual framework guiding the present study. Romantic relationship like any human phenomenon under study is a product of its socio-cultural milieu. The city of Baroda is dynamic under the influence of globalization. Globalization, free market economy, consumerism change the basic value structure in any given society. The technological advancement, education oriented towards developing human resources for enhancing Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and empowerment of emerging adults in terms of information technology and mobility dramatically affect the choices an emerging adult faces compared to not only one's grandparents or parents, but even older siblings. For young women this change is even more striking. Yet, some conventional memes may persist because of the context's unique history and traditional ideologies.

This contextual understanding is important in trying to understand romantic relationship as a construct in a particular society. One part of the study unravels the beliefs, attitudes and concepts related to romantic love, intimacy, close relationships, marriage, commitment and related concepts. Taking the developmental perspective, the framework helps in appreciating the impact of romantic relationship on developmental outcomes such as emotional states, behaviors and competencies. Here, the romantic relationship serves as a context for development and therefore is a process variable.

The framework provides for the bi-directional relationships between the context, romantic relationships and the variables under study. Contextual factors such as the prevailing norms, values and attitudes in the contemporary society along with the prescribed gender roles determine the relationship experiences. Relationships experiences in terms of relationship timing, unique features, rules and norms within

particular relationships influence relationship quality and consequently affect developmental outcomes, for instance, subjective well-being. Psychological well-being (developmental outcome) will in turn determine relationship states and quality that will redefine relationships and experiences.

The research questions for the study are as follows.

Broad and Specific Research Questions

- **What are the romantic experiences and beliefs of emerging adults in the Indian context?**

  o *How do emerging adults and middle adults conceptualize a romantic relationship and what is its connection to marriage in an Indian society?*

    In the Indian context getting to know the views and attitudes of middle adults (parents) is crucial in understanding emerging adult's experiences of romantic relationships. Although various relationship variables have been included in the study, the special mention of commitment to marry is hypothesized to be a distinct feature of the Indian context.

  o *What are the age and gender differences in the beliefs and perceptions?*

    The participants include emerging adults as well as middle adult men and women to find out intergenerational and gender differences. In societies all over the world and specifically the contemporary society

of India there exists gender disparity and subjugation of women. This question would highlight specific gender norms and also reveal important memes regarding the onset and nature of romantic relationships.

- **What contextual factors shape the romantic beliefs and attitudes of emerging adults in the Indian context?**

Here the investigator is looking for the memes pertaining to heterosexual romantic love before marriage and the resulting attitude of the members of the society towards emerging adults engaged in romantic relationships.

  o *What are the perceptions and experiences of emerging adults about parental and societal attitudes towards romantic relationships?*

  o *What is the attitude of middle adults towards romantic relationships of their emerging adult children?*

The answer to the first specific question would reveal the perceptions and experiences of the emerging adults while the second question will give direct information about societal attitudes by unraveling the attitudes of the middle adults as parent figures of emerging adults.

- **What is the nature of romantic relationship and how does it influence developmental outcomes?**

Researches show that there is a direct relationship between relationship quality and positive feelings and general well-being.

- o *What is the impact of quality of romantic relationship on perceived happiness of individuals involved in a romantic relationship?*

- o *How does gender mediate the way relationship quality affects happiness?*

Subjective happiness is a good indicator of positive developmental outcomes or general well-being and hence it has been specifically mentioned here, even though various other outcomes have been discussed in the study. Gender differences are likely because both ethological and cultural theorists suggest that the two sexes relate differently and hence are likely to experience the relationships distinctly.

The next chapter 2 documents the methodological approaches adopted for the present study.