

PREMARITAL ROMANTIC PARTNERSHIPS AMONG YOUTH IN INDIA AND  
INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: FILLING THE KNOWLEDGE GAPS

by

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ABSTRACT

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a worldwide phenomenon with significant public health relevance for both married and unmarried individuals. The focus of IPV research in India is on married women, a significant proportion of who cite having experienced IPV. Though adolescents engaging in dating relationships face many of the same risk factors for violence that married women face, literature from diverse populations is limited. This review sought to assess the current literature related to premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity among youth in India to determine gaps in knowledge related to intimate partner violence.

Utilizing various combinations of search terms, a final sample of 13 articles was compiled based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The final sample of articles was reviewed for content related to attitudes and behaviors of adolescents regarding premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity.

The literature suggests that youth in India are engaging in premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity despite conservative social norms that discourage interaction with the opposite sex outside of marriage. However, violence among youth in India, particularly within their premarital relationships, is currently an understudied phenomenon.

There is reason to believe that adolescents engaging in premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity in India are facing IPV within these relationships. As the current literature

does not address this issue, future work must make an effort to assess the occurrence and correlates of violence within these relationships to best meet the needs of Indian youth and encourage the formation of healthy relationships.

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## **PREFACE**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to Nidhi. In you, I found one of my dearest friends. Your warmth and honesty is an inspiration. I hope one day we meet again.

To Chris, I could not have done this without your support, encouragement and understanding. To my parents, I can't tell you how much it has meant to have you two as my biggest fans since day one. I will forever be grateful for the sacrifices you've made for me along the way. To Yvonne, you have seen me at my best and my worst and have loved me just the same.

And, to my committee, thank you so much for your guidance during my time at Pitt. I have learned so much. Each of you has had your own impact on my development as a professional and as a person, and I am so much better having had such strong women as mentors.

My interest in pursuing a review of the literature related to violence among Indian youth who are engaging in premarital romantic partnerships arose from my experiences interning in Udaipur, India during the summer of 2013.

My homestay and the relationship I developed with my host sister afforded me access to a network of young men and women who were near the top of the caste hierarchy and currently engaging in premarital romantic partnerships. The conversations that I had with these individuals revolved around the necessity of keeping these relationships a secret from their

parents and the inability of these individuals to marry their current partner due to differences in caste.

My time in the field was spent conducting a health survey with adolescents from economically disadvantaged communities who were lower in the caste hierarchy. A number of survey respondents of both genders indicated their support of wife beating. Furthermore, one adolescent male questioned me as to why the survey did not inquire about whether or not he had a girlfriend.

These encounters encouraged my curiosity as to the experiences of youth in premarital romantic partnerships in a country plagued by high rates of violence against women. More specifically: to what extent are youth who are engaging in premarital romantic partnerships experiencing intimate partner violence, and do the factors that predict domestic violence in India also predict violence in these premarital romantic partnerships.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Violence that occurs against women in the context of an intimate relationship is a widespread, global problem. While wide variations exist by region, it has been estimated that between 13% and 61% of women experience physical violence by a male partner and between 6% and 59% experience sexual violence (World Health Organization [WHO], 2005).

Women in India face an exceptional risk of violence given the cultural and social norms that permit the recurrence of the phenomenon. In the words of one study, violence against the women of India is accepted as a “normal life phenomenon” (Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2011, p. 438). Estimates based on India’s National Family Health Survey conducted between 2005 and 2006 suggest that roughly one third of ever married women in India have experienced physical violence, and one tenth have experienced sexual violence (Kimuna, Djamba, Ciciurkaite, & Cherukuri, 2012).

When viewed within an ecological framework, risk factors for IPV can be found at all levels of Indian society. This is true for all societies facing high rates of IPV. However, India’s caste system adds a unique dimension to the study of interpersonal relationships. Given the degree to which the caste system is engrained in everyday life, it is unsurprising that it also dictates relationships patterns. Popular media suggests that caste can be a trigger point for violence, especially in the case of interpersonal relationships that defy caste boundaries and social norms.

Even though interaction between males and females is frowned upon in the conservative society, India’s youth are pursuing friendships and premarital romantic partnerships with

individuals of the opposite sex. Those adolescents engaging in premarital romantic partnerships and sexual activity are at risk for many of the factors that lead to the victimization of married women. While IPV among married women in India has been widely studied, violence that occurs within premarital romantic partnerships among youth in India has not.

The focus of this paper is on the need for research that assesses the prevalence and correlates of gendered violence that occurs within premarital romantic partnerships among the youth in India. This review highlights the commonly cited correlates and consequences of violence that occur within Indian marriages, reviews the literature exploring patterns of premarital romantic partnership formation among India's youth, and comments on the need for further studies that assess the realities faced by adolescents in their premarital relationships.

## **1.1 RESEARCH AIMS**

The overall goal of this literature review is to discuss the rates that youth in India are engaging in premarital, romantic relationships with their peers despite perceptions to the contrary among older generations and whether violence could be occurring within these relationships, necessitating the study of this phenomenon to better understand the experiences of youth in India. This will be accomplished by addressing three distinct research aims. The first research aim is to summarize the relevant literature related to domestic violence in India. The second aim is to identify the gaps in research related to violence among youth in India involved in premarital romantic partnerships. The final aim is to inform the development of future studies assessing rates of violence among youth in India in premarital romantic partnerships.

These aims are divided between 6 sections. Section 2 presents background information that is necessary to understand the topic. Section 3 discusses the methods used to find and select literature for inclusion in this paper. Section 4 presents the results of the literature review and section 5 further discusses these results. Conclusions and limitations can be found in section 6.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 GENDERED VIOLENCE SEMANTICS**

The United Nations (UN) defines violence against women (VAW) as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (WHO, 2013). VAW is a general term used to describe the multitude of different forms of violence that women face. It is often used interchangeably with the term gender-based violence (GBV). However, GBV can refer to any violence committed against an individual, male or female, on the basis of gender.

The focus of this review is on intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV is defined as “behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors” (WHO, 2013).

### **2.2 TYPES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

The WHO divides violence into three categories: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence. Self-directed violence refers to violence that an individual commits

against him or herself, such as suicidal behavior or self-abuse. Interpersonal violence refers to violence that occurs between individuals. Collective violence refers to violence that is committed by groups of individuals or states (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi, & Lozano, 2002). Though important public health problems, the issues of self-directed violence and collective violence are not addressed in this review.

Interpersonal violence can be divided into family violence and IPV or community violence. Intuitively, family violence and IPV occur between relatives and intimate partners. Community violence occurs between unrelated individuals who may or may not be acquaintances. Common types of interpersonal violence that occur against women include IPV, child abuse, abuse of the elderly, rape and sexual assault, dowry-related violence (or violence related to payments made on behalf of a bride to the groom's family at the time of marriage), public sexual harassment, and female genital mutilation and other traditional practices (Krug et al., 2002).

Research on IPV in India focuses on violence between intimate partners within the context of marriage. This violence can be of a physical, sexual, or psychological nature. Deprivation and/or neglect are also included (Krug et al., 2002). However, as it is not uncommon for women in India to live with extended family (often her in-laws), some studies also report violence committed against a woman by any residents of her conjugal home. Unless otherwise specified, the information contained within this review reflects violence that occurs between intimate partners and not that committed by other members of the family.

### 2.3 IPV IN INDIA – RATES AND TRENDS

Reported rates for IPV in India vary in the literature. Data collected between November 2005 and August 2006 for India's third National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) suggest that 39.6% of women have experienced IPV in their lifetime (Yoshikawa, Agrawal, Poudel, & Jimba, 2012). When these data are broken down into physical and sexual violence, an estimated 31.0% have experienced physical violence and 8.3% have experienced sexual violence (Kimuna et al., 2012). However, this rate varies from 6% to 70% depending on the region studied (Babu & Kar, 2010; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012). Studies suggest that psychological violence is the most widely experienced, followed by physical violence and sexual violence (Babu & Kar, 2010; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012).

Long-term trends suggest that rates of violence against women have been increasing. Simister and Mehta (2010) found that "cruelty by husbands" rose between 1995 and 2006 by analyzing crime statistics and data from two DHS surveys. However, they also found that Indian women today feel less pressure to stay in a violent marriage and are less likely to be submissive to their husbands. In 2007, 75% of women and 78% of men with agreed with the statement, "domestic violence is sufficient for divorce" compared to 35% of women and 33% of men who agree with the statement in 1992. There has been speculation that these two trends coexist during an adjustment period when women come into conflict with other family members as they further assert their rights (Simister & Mehta, 2010).

## 2.4 CORRELATES OF RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE IN INDIA

The factors associated with the experience of IPV have been well documented around the world. The main factors reported in the literature from India include: standard of living, education, age (Babu & Kar, 2010; Boyle, Georgiades, Cullen, & Racine, 2009; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012;), residence (Babu & Kar, 2010; Boyle, Georgiades, Cullen, & Racine, 2009; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012;), family type and size (Babu & Kar, 2010; Boyle, Georgiades, Cullen, & Racine, 2009; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012), religion (Babu & Kar, 2010; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012), marriage type and length (Babu & Kar, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012), caste (Babu & Kar, 2010; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012), prior exposure to violence (Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012), alcohol use (Babu & Kar, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012), and attitude toward control and mistreatment (Boyle, Georgiades, Cullen, & Racine, 2009; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012).

Standard of living (SOL) or family income was associated with relationship violence across all included studies. Though measured differently, a common pattern of decreasing violence with increasing wealth emerged. Dalal and Lindqvist's (2010) analysis best supports this pattern. The authors found an increase in the risk of violence with each decrease in wealth index for emotional, psychological, and sexual violence. Mahapatro, Gupta, and Gupta's (2012) analysis found that the risk of domestic violence was highest among the poorest (OR=1.22) and the richest (OR=1.00). In another study, 52.6% of women categorized as having a low standard

of living reported any intimate partner violence compared to 43.9% of women categorized as medium SOL and 28.0% of women categorized as high SOL (Yoshikawa et al., 2012).

The effect that education has on IPV has been assessed based on both partners' education attainment. The pattern is the same in both cases. Increasing educational attainment among wives and their partners decreases the likelihood that violence occurs within their relationship (Babu & Kar, 2010; Boyle et al., 2009; Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). For example, Yoshikawa et al. (2012) found that 49.3% of wives with no education had experienced any IPV compared to 12.5% of wives who had completed higher education, and 50.1% of wives whose partners had no education reported experiencing any IPV compared to 21.2% of wives whose partners had completed higher education.

Studies in India have failed to find a consistent relationship between age and IPV. Some authors found that increased age is associated with an increased risk for psychological, sexual, and physical violence (Babu & Kar, 2010). Other results were not as decisive and failed to find a significant pattern associating age with experiences of violence (Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Still others found that violence tended to decrease with increasing age (Boyle et al., 2009; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010).

The consensus in the Indian literature is that women residing in urban areas are at a greater risk for emotional and physical violence (Babu & Kar, 2010; Boyle et al., 2009; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Odds ratios ranged from 1.29 to 1.76 for emotional violence and 1.30 to 1.48 for physical violence (Babu & Kar, 2010; Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010).

The type of family a woman lives in may contribute to her risk for experiencing violence from her husband. Babu and Kar (2010) found that sexual violence was correlated with living in an extended family as opposed to a nuclear family (OR=1.51). However, Boyle et al. (2009) found an increased risk for IPV in nuclear families (OR=1.25). Related to the type of family, family size is also correlated with violence. Larger families are associated with a higher risk (Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012). Also, number of children is also correlated with violence with more children meaning more risk (Babu & Kar, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012).

The religion that she follows also impacts a woman's risk for experiencing IPV. Christian women were less likely to experience physical (OR range=0.18-0.68) or sexual (OR range=0.45-0.57) violence when compared to Hindu women (Babu & Kar, 2010; Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012). Muslim women were at the greatest risk for all types of violence (Babu & Kar, 2010; Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012; Yoshikawa et al., 2012).

Three different types of marriage exist in India: arranged marriage, love marriage, or love marriage arranged by elders in the community. Love marriage has been associated with less violence when compared to either an arranged marriage or a love marriage arranged by elders. Babu and Kar (2010) found that love marriages arranged by elders are associated (OR=0.27) with less psychological violence than an arranged marriage. Another study found that wives in arranged marriages were 2.18 times more likely to experience IPV while wives in love marriages arranged by elders were 3.77 times more likely to experience IPV when compared to wives in love marriages (Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012). Related to type of marriage, marital duration also appears to be relevant. However, the literature reports different results regarding the effect. Some authors report greater risk for violence in shorter marriages (Mahapatro, Gupta,

& Gupta, 2012) while others report a greater risk for violence in longer marriages (Kimuna et al., 2012).

In general, women in either an “other backward caste” or a “scheduled tribe” fared better than women in a “general caste” or a “scheduled caste” (Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012). An estimated 48.5% of women in a scheduled caste faced IPV compared to 31.4% of women in a general caste (Yoshikawa et al., 2012). However, one study found that backward castes faced the highest risk (OR=1.28) of physical violence when compared to general castes, schedule castes, and scheduled tribes (Babu & Kar, 2010).

Despite extensive evidence that it is an important factor related to violence perpetration and victimization, the relationship between current violence exposure and prior violence exposure was largely ignored (WHO, 2005). Studies that did consider prior exposure to violence as a risk factor found that it was significantly correlated with IPV in India (Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012). For example, Dalal and Lindqvist (2010) found that a history of family violence correlated with an increased risk for emotional violence (OR=2.23), less severe physical violence (OR=3.06), severe physical violence (OR=2.49), and sexual violence (OR=2.02).

Habitual alcohol use was found to be a significant risk factor for IPV in three of the reviewed studies. Odds ratios for experiencing IPV when the husband consumes alcohol range from 2.08 to 13.33 depending on the type of violence (Babu & Kar, 2010; Kimuna et al., 2012; Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012). Alcohol put women at the greatest risk for physical violence, followed by sexual violence and psychological violence (Babu & Kar, 2010).

Attitudes toward controlling behavior or mistreatment give insight into what behaviors a community finds appropriate. A general acceptance of mistreatment on the part of the wife

(OR=1.29) and the whole community (OR=1.19) results in a higher risk for violence (Boyle et al., 2009). Going out without telling her husband, neglecting children, arguing, refusing to have sex with her husband, and burning food were all significantly associated with an increased risk for violence (Kimuna et al., 2012). Furthermore, Dalal and Lindqvist (2010) found an association between controlling behaviors, such as a husband being jealous if his wife is talking with other men, accusing his wife of unfaithfulness, prohibiting her from meeting her girlfriends, limiting contact with her family, insisting on knowing where she is, and not trusting his wife with money, and different forms of violence. Odds ratios for each controlling behavior ranged from 1.99 to 3.15 for emotional violence, 1.13 to 2.79 for physical violence, and 1.59 to 2.31 for sexual violence (Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010).

## **2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE**

This section provides an overview of the various consequences that occur as a result of violence within an intimate relationship. Though the consequences are not mutually exclusive, they have been divided into these four categories: physical consequences, psychological consequences, reproductive consequences, and other consequences.

### **2.5.1 Physical Consequences**

While most physical ailments resulting from a violent encounter with an intimate partner are minor, such as scrapes, bruises, or cuts, more severe injuries are commonly seen. Some violent episodes can be fatal. Women who have experienced violence are more likely to report poor

health, difficulty walking and carrying out daily activities, and pain (WHO, 2005). Other reported physical symptoms can include abdominal pain, fibromyalgia, gastrointestinal disorders, irritable bowel syndrome, fractures, reduced physical functioning, ocular damage, and chronic pain syndromes (Krug et al., 2002).

### **2.5.2 Psychological Consequences**

Suicidal thoughts, mental health problems, and emotional disturbance are common among women who have experienced partner violence (WHO, 2005). Other mental health consequences can include substance abuse, depression, low self-esteem, suicide attempts, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, phobias, panic disorders, anxiety, shame, guilt, risky behaviors, and psychosomatic disorders (Krug, et al., 2002).

### **2.5.3 Reproductive Consequences**

Women in violent relationships have a difficult time maintaining their reproductive health. Reproductive concerns associated with violence include genital sores, vaginal discharge, reproductive tract infection symptoms (Winter & Stephenson, 2013), gynecological disorders, infertility, pelvic inflammatory disease, less contraceptive use, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (Krug et al, 2002). Violence can also occur during pregnancy, leading to health impacts for both the mother and her baby. Consequences directly related to pregnancy include: maternal mortality, unwanted pregnancy, increased risk for low birth weight infants, induced abortion, miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and other adverse outcomes (Krug et al., 2002).

#### **2.5.4 Other Consequences**

Women who face IPV also suffer social and economic consequences as a result of their experiences. IPV impacts the use of health services. Many women in violent relationships report poor access to healthcare or an unmet need for care (Plichta, 2004). However, the WHO's World Report on Violence and Health (2002) suggests that women who are victims of IPV utilize more health care services over longer time periods, resulting in higher health care costs for these patients. Women may also be forced to miss work, resulting in lower wages and lost productivity (Krug et al., 2002). Others report feelings of isolation, inability to participate in normal activities, or difficulty caring for their family (WHO, 2013).

Beyond the social and economic costs of violence, children raised in violent homes face higher rates of morbidity and mortality. Those who witness violence are prone to behavioral and emotional difficulties including depression, anxiety, poor academic performance, low self-esteem, and disobedience (Krug et al., 2002). These individuals are also more likely to be both victims and perpetrators of violence later in life. Furthermore, they are at a greater risk of suffering from numerous health consequences including diarrheal disease and malnutrition (WHO, 2013).

### **2.6 INDIA'S CASTE SYSTEM AND IPV**

Though not a focus of the current review, the author felt it necessary to include a very brief note about the caste system given its importance in Indian society. Interested readers are encouraged

to see R.K. Pruthi's *Indian Caste System* (2004), Ghanshyam Shah's *Caste and Democratic Politics in India*, Narendra Jadhav's *Untouchables: My Family's Triumphant Escape from India's Caste System* (2007), and William Dalrymple's *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India* (2011).

The caste system in India is a complex social hierarchy dating back thousands of years as a way to distinguish between the conquerors and the conquered. Today's castes are derived from the ancient four Varnas: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra. A fifth caste, the Panchamas, includes the untouchables or dalits (Pruthi, 2004).

The Indian Constitution divides the castes in four basic categories. These categories are "general castes", "scheduled castes", "scheduled tribes", and "other backward castes". Special entitlements have been provided to members of the certain castes in an effort to provide more opportunities, better economic stability, and eliminate discrimination. In practice, members of these groups are still marginalized in society and economically disadvantaged (Borooah, 2005; Gang, Sen, & Yun, 2008).

Evidence suggests that caste is relevant to the exploration of IPV in India. As noted previously, women who are part of the lower castes in society may face a greater burden of IPV. This becomes an important consideration during the discussion of premarital romantic partnerships among India's youth and their experience of IPV (see section 5.0).

## **2.7 PREVIOUS WORK ON DATING VIOLENCE AMONG YOUTH**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2014) defines dating violence as a type of IPV that "occurs between two people in a close relationship." This violence can be physical,

psychological/emotional, sexual, or stalking in nature. Many of the same risk factors for IPV among married individuals apply to adolescent relationships as well, though adolescents may be impacted by those risk factors in different ways.

The majority of literature focused on adolescent dating violence discusses youth in the United States. Studies utilizing more diverse samples, especially in the less developed world, are still relatively uncommon (Rivera-Rivera, Allen-Leigh, Rodrigues-Ortega, Chavez-Ayala, & Lazcano-Ponce, 2007). Rates of perpetration and victimization in these populations are variable. For example, a study in Mexico estimated similar rates of psychological violence victimization for both men and women (9%), but women (23%) were more likely to be victims of physical violence than men (10%) (Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007). In a different study of Chinese adolescents who had dating experience, 27.3% reported perpetrating controlling behavior, physical violence, or sexual violence while 39% reported experiencing dating violence victimization (Shen, Chiu, & Gao, 2012). Cited risk factors for the dating violence found in these studies include: traditional gender-role beliefs (Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007; Shen, Chiu, & Gao, 2012), substance use, family violence exposure, socioeconomic status, higher age, and higher number of sexual partners (Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007).

As current studies have not yet assessed dating violence in India's adolescent population, this review explores the nature of premarital romantic partnerships among youth in India in order to inform the design of future work that assesses the experience of violence within these relationships. A more detailed exploration of global adolescent dating violence patterns and the relevance to youth in India will be pursued in the discussion (see Section 5.0).

## **3.0 METHODS**

### **3.1 SEARCH STRATEGY**

The literature gathered for this review was located via a search of articles available in the PubMed database through the University of Pittsburgh. Search terms were utilized in various combinations to identify relevant literature. These search terms included: violence, gender, intimate partner violence, India, gender-based violence, adolescents, youth, premarital romantic partnerships, abuse, and sexuality. Additional resources were located by reviewing the bibliographies of selected articles. The references of those articles located through bibliographic searches were also reviewed for additional sources that may have been missed.

### **3.2 SELECTION CRITERIA**

Inclusions and exclusion criteria were developed to assist with the selection of relevant articles. Given the limited research on the topic of premarital relationships and intimate partner violence among youth in India, a broad set of criteria was employed. These criteria are as follows:

1. Include only articles published in journals. Exclude all other sources such as newspapers, magazines, and books.
2. Include only articles discussing projects conducted in India.

3. Exclude articles that do not report on analysis of primary or secondary data, such as literature reviews.
4. Include only articles from projects that focused on attitudes and behaviors related to premarital romantic partnerships and sexual activity.
5. Include only articles from projects that included in their sample males and females between the ages of 15 and 24.

### **3.3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCEDURE**

Initially, articles were selected by assessing the title for relevance to the current review. Those articles determined to be relevant based on their title were further assessed for relevance based on their abstract. Those articles selected based on the abstract review were read in their entirety to determine inclusion. A final set of 13 articles was selected for inclusion, summarized in Table 2 (see Appendix B). Focus of research is organized into three categories reflecting studies that assessed attitudes toward premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity, behaviors reflecting premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity, and both attitudes and behaviors reflecting premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity.

## **4.0 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The following sections contain a review of the relevant literature required to understand the current need for studies assessing rates of gendered violence among youth engaging in premarital romantic partnerships and/or sexual activity in India.

### **4.1 CLASSIFICATION OF FRIENDSHIP AND PREMARITAL ROMANTIC PARTNERSHIPS IN INDIA**

Each culture has its own terminology for describing the life situations that they experience. For India's youth, the terms "boyfriend" and "girlfriend" are often not well understood; the term "proposed" is used to denote the initiation of a romantic relationship among Indian youth, the equivalent of what American youth call dating (Santhya, Acharya, & Jejeebhoy, 2011). The author can speak to this on a personal level from her interactions with the youth in India. While the terms "boyfriend" and "girlfriend" were used on occasion, the preferred expression of indicating the initiation of a romantic relationship was "he/she proposed me."

Though the findings are not generalizable, Abraham's (2002) qualitative work on the types of friendships and premarital romantic partnerships that exist between unmarried males and females in India sheds light on the culture. Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews revealed three main relationships: Bhai-Behan, or "brother-sister" relationships, "time pass"

relationships, and “true love” relationships. Bhai-Behan relationships are platonic friendships that do not include any form of physical intimacy. Establishment of this type of relationship allows males and females to interact together without suspicion. “Time pass” relationships are characterized by physical intimacy and short duration, typically no longer than a month or two. These relationships are intended to be temporary and afford participants sexual experiences without commitment. “True love” relationships are characterized by the emotional involvement of both parties and are intended to be long-term with the goal of marriage. While some participants in “true love” relationships engage in physical intimacy, many do not, as society’s standards dictate that self-respecting girls should not engage in “time pass” relationships; many fear that a “true love” relationship will evolve into a “time pass” relationship if they engage in sexual activity (Abraham, 2002).

#### **4.2    PREMARITAL ROMANTIC PARTNERHIPS AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY           AMONG YOUTH IN INDIA: ATTITUDES**

Attitudes toward sexuality, premarital sexual activity, and the interaction of opposite gender individuals outside of marriage are conservative in India, especially among older generations. Many young men and women indicate that they believe they have traditional attitudes toward premarital sexual activity (38.3% of males and 65.9% of females) (Abraham & Kumar, 1999). In a large survey of young men and women, 83.3% of males and 96.4% of females reported that sex is acceptable only after marriage (Nair, Leena, George, Thankachi, & Russell, 2013). Differences between urban and rural adolescents were negligible when asked if it was acceptable for young men and women to kiss, hug and touch each other, though a much larger proportion of

males (~28%) than females (~5%) agreed in both cases (Alexander, Garda, Kanade, Jejeebhoy, & Ganatra, 2007).

However, studies conducted with different samples have found more liberal attitudes among young men and women. In Sahay, Nirmalkar, Sane, Verma, Reddy, and Mehendale's (2013) case-control analysis comparing those who had engaged in premarital sex and those who had not, the authors found that 15% of cases compared with 8.97% of controls felt that premarital sex was moral. Men tend to have more liberal view of premarital sex than women. For example, Joshi (2010) reported that only 45% of males compared to 62% of females agree that sex without marriage is morally wrong. Responses suggest that adolescents are more understanding of premarital sex if the participating parties love each other. Jaya and Hindin (2009) reported that 33% of males and 14% of females agree that premarital sex is okay if the individuals love one another while 57% of males and 74% of females reported that love is essential for sex in Joshi's (2010) study. Sachdev's (1998) study reported the most liberal views in a population of university students between the ages of 19 and 24. In this sample, 47.8% of males and 57.6% of females disagreed that virginity among unmarried girls should be encouraged. Further, roughly 74% of men and women agreed that it would be better if women were free to express their sexual desires (Sachdev, 1998).

Generally, Indian society is more tolerant of male sexual activity before marriage. Men associate sexual activity with manliness. Nearly 30% of adolescent males reported that engaging in sexual behaviors proves their masculinity (Shashikumar, Das, Prabhu, Srivastava, Bhat, Prakash, & Seema, 2012). However, girls are often prohibited from engaging in premarital sexual activity (Jaya & Hindin, 2009; Pradhan & Ram, 2010). A daughter's chastity is connected with family status and prestige. In the words of one married young man,

“involvement in sex before marriage is a sin for a girl; this will bring misfortune for the marital family” (Pradhan & Ram, 2010, p. 546).

Discussions about sexuality are discouraged, even in family settings. Parents believe open discussions about the topic imply an approval of premarital sexual activity (Jaya & Hindin, 2009). The majority of adolescents report that they get information about sex and reproductive health from the media (90%) or their peers (45-74%). Notably, parents were not an important source of information (Jaya & Hindin, 2009; Joshi, 2010; Nair et al., 2013). Eighty-one percent of males and 68% of females in one study indicated that parents are unable to give appropriate information about sex. Unsurprisingly, the majority of adolescents report a need for sex education services (63.1% of males and 57.4% of females) (Nair et al., 2013).

### **4.3      PREMARITAL ROMANTIC PARTNERHIPS AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY             AMONG YOUTH IN INDIA: BEHAVIOR**

While society’s attitude toward premarital sexual activity dictates chastity, studies of behavior among Indian youth suggest that they are behaving otherwise. Estimates of premarital sexual activity vary from 6% to 22% for females and 20% to 50% for males (Abraham & Kumar, 1999; Alexander, Garda, Kanade, Jejeebhoy, & Ganatra, 2006; Alexander et al., 2007; Jaya & Hindin, 2009; Joshi, 2010; Kumar, Raizada, Aggarwal, & Kaur, 2000; Ramadugu, Ryali, Srivastatva, Bhat, & Prakash, 2011; Sachdev, 1998). A higher percentage of rural males (50.4%) and rural females (22.4%) report premarital sexual activity than their urban counterparts (Alexander et al., 2006). The average age of sexual debut for individuals reporting premarital sexual activity is 15.9 years for women and 17.4 years for men; and the large majority of sexual partners are

friends (Ramadugu et al., 2011; Santhya, Acharya, & Jejeebhoy, 2011). Santhya, Acharya, and Jejeebhoy (2011) found that rates of premarital sexual activity varied by caste with men and women in backward castes reporting the highest rates followed by men and women in scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and forward castes. However, studies have found that fewer females engage in premarital sex, even when accounting for the fact that females tend to underreport sexual experiences while men tend to overreport (Jaya & Hindin, 2009).

While unsupervised interaction with individuals of the opposite sex is often discouraged in India, adolescent males and females are finding opportunities to engage with one another. Sixty-two percent of males and 40% of females report having friends of the opposite sex (Jaya & Hindin, 2009). More males (67%) than females (47%) report liking someone of the opposite sex (Jaya & Hindin, 2009). Estimates of premarital romantic partnership formation range from 17-50% for males and 5-36% for females while estimates for ever making or receiving a proposal range from 26-36% for males and 19-31% for females (Alexander et al., 2006; Alexander et al., 2007; Jaya & Hindin, 2009; Sachdev, 1998). More urban males and females report ever making or receiving a proposal or having a romantic partner compared to rural adolescents (Alexander et al., 2006; Alexander et al., 2007). Many older youth report having had more than one romantic relationship, even though they may have expected to marry a previous partner (Sachdev, 1998).

#### **4.4 VIOLENCE AND YOUTH IN INDIA**

Violence among youth in India has not been studied extensively. Estimates of the prevalence of physical violence range from 11% to 40% (Munni & Malhi, 2006; Nadkarni, Dean, Weiss, & Patel, 2011; Sharma, Grover, & Chaturvedi, 2008). Evidence does suggest that many youth in

India have witnessed violence in their lifetime. In a survey of 1500 students from classes eight through twelve, 1030 adolescents reported witnessing some form of violence in their lifetime (Munni & Malhi, 2006). In a separate study of 369 males and 181 females, 49.1% of males indicated that they had been in a physical fight in the past year compared to 20.4% of females. These males were 3.69 times more likely to engage in a risk behavior related to interpersonal violence than females (Sharma, Grover, & Chaturvedi, 2008).

A few studies in the reviewed literature document experiences of sexual abuse. While it is largely unclear who the perpetrators are, evidence suggests that some of the abuse is occurring between peers. Only 3.8% of those surveyed by Sahay et al. (2013) reported having experienced sexual abuse. However, other studies found higher reported rates of such abuse. In Ramadugu et al.'s (2011) sample, 7.84% of males and 13.53% of females reported sexual abuse. 48.18% of those males who had reported sexually abused indicated that the perpetrator was a friend (Ramadugu et al., 2011).

Risk factors for experiencing violence among youth are similar to the risk factors associated with relationship violence among married adults. In the Munni and Malhi (2006) study, the authors found that the most significant predictors of becoming a victim of violence were female sex (OR=1.19), lower socioeconomic status (OR=1.031), witness of violence (OR=1.406), and perpetrators of violence (OR=1.383). The most significant predictors of becoming a perpetrator of violence were male sex (OR=1.766), lower socioeconomic status (OR=1.185), victim of violence (OR=1.649), and lower maternal educational status (OR=1.439) (Munni & Malhi, 2006). Supporting the Munni and Malhi (2006) findings, Alexander et al. (2007) estimated that a female reporting being beaten by her family was 2.95 times more likely

to have engaged in a romantic partnership and 2.59 times more likely to have experienced physical intimacy.

Evidence on violence that may occur between premarital romantic partners in India is largely nonexistent. However, in a survey conducted by Dalal, Lee, and Gifford (2011), 51% of unmarried, adolescent males between the ages of 15 to 18 reported that wife beating is justifiable, suggesting that violence directed toward a female romantic partner is as well. Another study found that 44% of males and 40% of females agree that sometimes a boy has to force a girl to have sex if he loves her (Jaya & Hindin, 2009). Furthermore, of those women who have had sex, 30.4% reported that they had to be persuaded and 9% report being forced (Alexander et al., 2006). Girls who came from a family of a lower socioeconomic status were at an even higher risk for victimization (Munni & Malhi, 2006).

## **5.0 DISCUSSION**

Despite perceptions to the contrary among parents and other adults, evidence suggests that the youth in India are finding ways to engage in premarital sexual relations and/or premarital romantic partnerships. Young people may be experiencing violence in these relationships, much like the dating violence seen elsewhere in the world.

### **5.1 CULTURE AND GENDER IN INDIA**

Gender, as defined by Landstedt and Gadin (2011), composes the “cultural and social constructions of what it means to be a man or woman in a given society and how these constructions of masculinities and femininities are enacted in social practice” (p. 420). Indian society is a patriarchal system (Boyle, 2009). This system dictates the dominance of men over women and the right of men to control women’s behavior. Society regards the use of violence against women as an extension of the belief in the authority of men over women, and thus, wife beating is regarded as a social norm (Babu & Kar, 2010; Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2011).

Though attitudes are slowly changing, many of the youth still profess to hold traditional views related to gender. We see this in the numerous studies that ask youth about their attitudes toward premarital relationships and sexual activity. Men are consistently afforded more freedom and forgiveness than women while women are expected to adhere to strict social norms that

dictate more conservative behavior. Moreover, there are suggestions within the Indian literature that young men and women support violent, controlling behaviors (Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2011; Jaya & Hindin, 2009). These values and beliefs are likely brought into the premarital relationships in which youth in India are engaging.

## **5.2 PATTERNS OF DATING VIOLENCE**

Although violence among youth in India has not been widely studied, violence among youth has been found to follow certain patterns and trends in other contexts. Many of these trends depend on the gender of those involved. For example, while boys are more likely to be victims of physical violence, girls are more likely to be victims of sexual assault. Landstedt and Gadin (2011) explained the occurrence of sexualized violence as “a consequence of objectifying attitudes towards girls which communicated that girls’ bodies and sexuality are objects for the pleasure of men” (p. 424). While boys are usually victimized by other males, girls tend to be abused by a current or former partner, a parent, or another female (Landstedt & Gadin, 2011). Additionally, male adolescents who engage in one type of violence (for example, peer violence, sexual aggression, or dating violence) are more likely to engage in another type of violence. More specifically, the perpetration of peer violence was found to be positively associated with the perpetration of dating violence (Ozer, Tschann, Pasch, & Flores, 2004). The limited evidence from India suggests that peer violence among youth is a common issue, especially among males, leading one to believe that IPV is also a problem.

Evidence suggests that there is no reason to suspect that violence patterns among youth in India are any different from those found elsewhere, including violence that may occur within

premarital relationships. A cross-national study of youth violence patterns conducted by Smith-Khuri et al. (2004) found that youth in five diverse countries engaged in similar violent behaviors. Additionally, Sharma, Grover, and Chaturvedi (2008) noted that their findings of violence among Indian youth were consistent with findings from studies looking at violent behavior among youth worldwide.

### **5.3 RISK FACTORS FOR IPV AND YOUTH IN INDIA**

Risk factors for perpetrating any form of violence as a youth have been studied in other populations. Commonly cited risk factors include: male gender (Munni & Malhi, 2006), low maternal education (Munni & Malhi, 2006), intra-familial violence (Munni & Malhi, 2006; Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007), belief in traditional gender stereotypes (Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007), and poverty or family disadvantage (Munni & Malhi, 2006; Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007; Spriggs, Halpern, Herring, & Schoenbach, 2009). These risk factors largely coincide with the previously mentioned correlates of IPV among married couples in India. Several of these risk factors are particularly relevant for Indian youth, namely prior exposure to violence, belief in traditional gender stereotypes, belief in control or mistreatment, family disadvantage, and caste. These risk factors would be a good starting point for future research into IPV among youth in India.

Given the high rate of IPV occurring within marriages in India, it is probable that youth are witnessing violence within their family homes. Such experiences may lead to several different phenomena. First, they serve to reinforce the social norms that accept relationship violence as well as traditional gender stereotypes. Children learn from their parents what is and is not acceptable within the context of a relationship (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). In this case,

violence is accepted as an appropriate way to interact with an intimate partner. Youth may take these norms into their own intimate relationships. Second, evidence suggests that youth who have experienced family instability, mistreatment, and social disadvantage tend to enter into romantic relationships earlier (Alexander et al., 2007; Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999). Early involvement in these types of relationships has been suggested as an additional risk factor for dating violence (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999).

As has been discussed, a belief in traditional gender stereotypes and a belief in control or mistreatment are commonplace in Indian culture. Families and communities reinforce the norms that support these beliefs, making it difficult to change the pattern of violence across generations. Several studies, in both married and unmarried populations, have found a relationship between support of traditional gender-roles and control or mistreatment and IPV (Abraham & Kumar, 1999; Dalal, Lee, & Gifford, 2011; Shen, Chiu, & Gao, 2012).

Family disadvantage and low socioeconomic status have been linked to dating violence as well (Rivera-Rivera et al., 2007). Spriggs et al.'s (2009) evidence suggests that lower socioeconomic status and disadvantage may be more difficult for male adolescents to accept than females because they feel it threatens their masculinity. Threats to masculinity in a patriarchal culture may encourage adolescent males to seek reinforcement of their masculine identity in other ways, namely in their interactions with their female counterparts.

The relationship between caste and IPV among India's youth may prove more complex than the relationship between caste and IPV in marriages. Marriages in India typically stay within castes. There are exceptions to this rule and mixed-caste marriages do exist. However, the great majority of marriages are not mixed. As a result, studies of IPV among married couples report on the caste of the couple and whether violence is occurring. As far as the author

knows, there has been no comparison of rates of IPV among mixed-caste marriages versus same-caste marriages. Furthermore, there is an expectation that India's youth will also marry within their caste. Premarital romantic partnerships may serve as an opportunity for youth to engage with individuals outside of their caste. It remains to be seen whether youth are engaging in mixed-caste relationships and whether those that are face different rates of IPV.

#### **5.4 GAPS IN KNOWLEDGE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The issue of IPV in India is a widely recognized phenomenon. However, the focus until this point has been on IPV that occurs within marriages. Based on evidence of the occurrence of premarital romantic partnerships and sexual activity in India as well as patterns of behavior among youth worldwide, common sense suggests that IPV in this population needs to be given more attention and study in the future.

Though India passed the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in 2005, it is unclear the extent to which this law has made an impact on IPV. This should be explored in future work. Researchers should ask question such as is the law enforced, who is prosecuted, and how often is IPV reported.

Researchers should focus on developing a standard definition of what constitutes IPV among youth in India. Studies among married individuals are plagued by differences in violence definition and measurement. These differences make comparison of results difficult, if not impossible. In order to avoid a similar situation in which comparison across studies of adolescents is difficult, standard definitions of violence and other relevant variables such as risk

factors will be needed. Places to look for guidance include such international bodies as the WHO and UN.

The current literature from India comments more on adolescent and youth attitudes towards premarital relationships rather than their behavior within these relationships, perhaps reflecting the sensitivity of the topic and the culture. While attitudes are important predictors of behavior, they are only part of the picture. Better evidence of behavioral patterns will help to establish an understanding of the magnitude of the potential problem and which adolescents are most at risk for violence in their intimate relationships. This information can further be used in the development of interventions that address the issue.

Current studies focusing on premarital romantic partnerships and sexual activity among youth are limited in generalizability. Much of the work is focused on a very specific subset of the youth population. This can be mitigated through the use of better sampling techniques that will help to capture a sample that better reflects the youth population in India.

Future studies must begin to explore the occurrence of violence within adolescent romantic partnerships and the risk factors that may be correlated with IPV in this population. Until an understanding of the problem is developed, little can be done to address it if a problem does indeed exist. Researchers in India should look to studies on adolescent dating violence in other settings for guidance. Future work can build on the risk factors for IPV that have been cited in previous literature from both married Indian populations and other adolescent populations. Furthermore, current work is largely focused on individual and interpersonal factors that influence the rate of IPV. Future studies should make an effort to assess other factors within the community, society, and policy that impact IPV.

The caste system introduces a level of complexity that is unique to India. While current work has assessed differences in rates of IPV among married couples between the four caste groupings (general caste, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, and other backward caste), this is not enough. Stories within the popular media suggest that caste can be a trigger point for violence, especially in regards to inter-caste relationships and marriages. Future efforts must delve into the relationship between caste and IPV by asking questions that assess differences in IPV rates between mixed caste and same caste relationships and in IPV rates between specific castes within each caste grouping. Local individuals and communities who have a deeper understanding of caste dynamics should be engaged with any research on the relationship between IPV and caste or other programs designed to address IPV among adolescents.

It will be imperative that efforts to address IPV in India take a holistic approach. While it is important to address the individual and interpersonal risk factors related to IPV, a successful intervention will also target institutional, societal, and legal factors related to the issue. The Musasa Project in Zimbabwe designed to address intimate partner violence provides a good example of a multi-level intervention (Stewart, 1995).

## **6.0 LIMITATIONS**

While this is the first known attempt to piece together information linking the experience of violence among youth in India with their premarital romantic partnerships, it has limitations. Though every effort was made to be systematic about the location and selection of relevant articles, some articles were not able to be included in the review process due to lack of access rights, incorrect hyperlinks, or inadvertent exclusion. Several of the reviewed studies utilized secondary data to answer their research questions. While this helped to ensure larger sample sizes as well as reduce costs, it has also left gaps in knowledge that may have been mitigated had primary data been collected. Future studies should aim to collect primary data so that methods may be developed that best reflect the goals of the research. Definitions of violence and other variables were not always standard across studies. Samples tend to be focused on a specific set of India's population, thus leaving the results unable to be generalized to experience of other adolescents in India.

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS

This review has focused on the risk factors of domestic violence cited within the Indian literature and the dating behavior of India's youth. India's youth are entering into premarital romantic partnerships, despite the perceptions of their parents to the contrary. The rate of occurrence of these partnerships can be expected to grow as youth are exposed to more liberal ideas not currently commonplace in Indian society. As premarital romantic partnerships among India's youth are still understudied, future studies should focus on developing a better understanding of these relationships. Further efforts should focus on improvements in study design and sampling.

Furthermore, the current literature does not assess the magnitude or occurrence of violence within adolescent, premarital romantic partnerships in India. The prevalence of violence and the factors associated with the experience of violence within these relationships must be addressed in future work. Risk factors for adolescent dating violence, though similar to those cited as factors related to violence occurring within marriages, may impact youth differently than their adult counterparts. Studies can start by assessing the cited correlates for IPV found among married couples in the context of adolescent relationships. In the future, recognizing the magnitude of the issue and understanding the risk factors that youth in India face will help to inform the development of interventions designed to better meet their needs and encourage the formation of healthy relationships.

## APPENDIX A

### CORRELATES TABLE

**Table 1: Factors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence in India**

Factors	Yoshikawa et al., 2012	Mahapatro, Gupta, & Gupta, 2012	Babu & Kar, 2010	Dalal & Lindqvist, 2010	Boyle et al., 2009	Kimuna et al., 2012
<b>Standard of Living</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Education</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Age</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Residence</b>	✓	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Family Type/Size</b>	N/A	✓	✓	N/A	✓	✓
<b>Religion</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	✓
<b>Marriage Type/Length</b>	N/A	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓
<b>Caste</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	N/A
<b>Prior Exposure to Violence</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	N/A	✓
<b>Alcohol Use</b>	N/A	✓	✓	N/A	N/A	✓
<b>Attitude Toward Control/ Mistreatment</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓

## APPENDIX B

### LITERATURE TABLE

**Table 2: Youth and Premarital Romantic Partnerships and/or Sexual Activity**

Source	Sample	Study Design	Focus	Relevant Findings
<b>Nair et al., 2013</b>	1,904 males and 2,316 females; 10-24 years of age (sexuality questions reserved for 15-24 yrs of age); residing in three districts in Kerala	Cross-sectional community survey	Attitudes toward premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	11.0% of males and 0.3% of females reported sex before marriage is okay if an opportunity arises; 83.3% of males and 96.4% of girls reported sex is only okay after marriage; 22.5% of males and 11.5% of females preferred a love marriage
<b>Pradhan &amp; Ram, 2010</b>	Young women aged 15-24 years and young men aged 15-29 years; married;	Focus group discussions (N=8), in-depth interviews (N=42), and free listing (N=50)	Attitudes toward premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	Individuals expected to adhere to characteristics that make a "real woman" or "real man"; young men expect a "real woman" to be a virgin until marriage; female's chastity associated with family prestige in the community; society more tolerant of premarital sexual activity among young men

**Table 2 (cont'd): Youth and Premarital Romantic Partnerships and/or Sexual Activity**

Source	Sample	Study Design	Focus	Relevant Findings
<b>Ramadugu et al., 2011</b>	357 males and 229 females; students in classes 9 through 12; two co-educational schools in Pune	Self-report survey	Engagement in premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	30.08% of males and 17.18% of females reported sexual contact; 6.31% of males and 1.31% of females reported sexual intercourse; 78.37% of males and 100% of females reported their sexual partners were friends; 48.46% of males and 24.33% of females reported difficulty communicating with the opposite gender; 7.84% of males and 13.53% of females reported sexual abuse; 48.18% of sexually abused males reported that their abuser was a friend
<b>Santhya, Acharya, &amp; Jejeebhoy, 2011</b>	1,587 males and 821 females; 15-24 years of age; married or unmarried; residing in 6 diverse states in India	Survey and in-depth interviews (N=271)	Engagement in premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	Overall - 12% of males and 3% of females reported having premarital sex; Those Who Reported Premarital Sex - 43.4% of males and 67.3% of females only had premarital sex with romantic partners; 14.4% of males and 21.2% of females in a scheduled tribe had premarital sex; 27.0% of males and 29.5% of females in a scheduled caste had premarital sex; 40.9% of males and 36.2% of females in an other backward caste had premarital sex; 17.7% of males and 13.3% of females in a general caste had premarital sex
<b>Alexander et al., 2006</b>	2,702 males and 5,869 females; 15-24 years of age; residing in rural or urban slum setting in Pune District, India	Survey and in-depth interviews	Engagement in premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	16.9% of rural males, 25.0% of urban males, 5.4% of rural females, and 8.2% of urban females reported ever having a romantic partner; 25.9% of rural males, 36.1% of urban males, 18.8% of rural females, and 22.9% of urban females reported ever making or receiving a proposal; 50.4% of rural males, 38.5% of urban males, 22.4% of rural females, and 11.9% of urban females who have had a romantic partner reported premarital sex
<b>Abraham, 2002</b>	75 students in 10 focus groups and 87 students in in-depth interviews; students enrolled in two colleges in Mumbai; 16-22 years of age; unmarried; low-income	Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews	Engagement in premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	Three types of heterosexual relationships among peers: 1) Bhai-behan, or "brother-sister" relationships which are platonic friendships, once established interaction between two is easier and free of suspicion, no physical intimacy; 2) "time pass" relationships are temporary and of a shorter duration, partners seek sexual experience without commitment; 3) "true love" relationships are long-term with the goal of marriage, includes emotional commitment and sexual intimacy is often postponed until marriage; perception that girls with self-respect do not get involved in "time pass" relationships; "time pass" relationships enhance males self-image and masculine identity; boys are free to engage in multiple relationships at once while girls may only enter one "time pass" or "true love" relationship at a time; boundaries between relationship types are fluid

**Table 2 (cont'd): Youth and Premarital Romantic Partnerships and/or Sexual Activity**

Source	Sample	Study Design	Focus	Relevant Findings
<b>Kumar et al., 2000</b>	285 males and 358 females; 15-19 years of age; residing in rural areas of Sirmaur, Himachal Pradesh, India	Cross-sectional household survey	Engagement in premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	6% of males indicated that they had experience using contraceptives
<b>Sahay et al., 2013</b>	483 males and 427 females; 12-19 years of age; students in one of five schools or one junior college in Pune, Maharashtra, India;	Self-administered, bilingual structured questionnaire; subset of 130 males and 75 females (Cases N=41, Controls N=164) used for case-control analysis comparing those who reported sexual initiation with those who had not	Attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	Overall - 3.8% of students reported sexual abuse; 4.5% of students reported having sex; Case-Control Analysis - 10.8% of cases reported sexual abuse compared to 2.2% of controls; 15% of cases compared with 8.97% of controls felt that pre-marital sex was OK/moral
<b>Joshi, 2010</b>	93 males and 90 females; students enrolled in Mumbai colleges; 17-21 years of age	Self-report survey	Attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	7% reported receiving information regarding sex from their parents compared to 30% reporting peers/friends and 24% reporting media; 81% of males and 68% of females agreed that parents are unable to give appropriate information about sex; 57% of males and 74% of females agreed that love is essential for sex; 45% of males and 62% of females agreed that sex without marriage is morally wrong; 11% of males and 1% of females reported engaging in sexual intercourse; 36% of males and 7% of females reported other sexual activities
<b>Jaya &amp; Hindin, 2009</b>	583 males and 475 females; 15-19 years of age; unmarried; residing in 1 of 4 economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Delhi, India	Structured interviews with closed-ended questions	Attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	62% of males and 40% of females reported having friends of opposite sex; 33% of males and 14% of females agreed that premarital sex is okay if the individuals love one another; 67% of males and 47% of females reported liking someone of the opposite sex; 32% of males and 6% of females reported premarital sex

**Table 2 (cont'd): Youth and Premarital Romantic Partnerships and/or Sexual Activity**

Source	Sample	Study Design	Focus	Relevant Findings
<b>Alexander et al., 2007</b>	1,687 males and 3,583 females; 15-24 years of age; residing in a rural or urban district in Pune District of Maharashtra State, India	Survey and in-depth interviews	Attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	Overall - 24% of urban males, 8% of urban females, 17% of rural males, and 5% of rural females reported ever having a romantic partner; 18% of urban males, 1% of urban females, 16% of rural males, 2% of rural females reported sexual intercourse; 36.0% of urban males, 30.8% of urban females, 26.4% of rural males, and 25.9% of rural females reported ever making or receiving a proposal; 24.2% of urban males, 8.0% of urban females, 17.0% of rural males, and 4.7% of rural females reported ever having a romantic partner; 26.4% of urban males, 5.6% of urban females, 20.2% of rural males, and 4.3% of rural females reported engaging in any physical intimacy; 29.0% of urban males, 5.1% of urban females, 27.5% of rural males, and 4.0% of rural females agreed that it is all right for young men and women to kiss, hug and touch each other; females reporting acceptance of premarital sex were 5.16 times more likely to report a romantic partnership; females who reported being beaten by her family were 2.95 times more likely to have had a romantic partnership and 2.59 times more likely to have experienced physical intimacy; Reporting Romantic Relationships - 85.4% of urban males, 63.4% of urban females, 84.5% of rural males, 57.6% of rural females reported ever engaging in any physical intimacy; 37.4% of urban males, 6.3% of urban females, 49.3% of rural males, and 12.9% of rural females reported ever having sex
<b>Abraham &amp; Kumar, 1999</b>	625 males and 341 females; students enrolled in two colleges in Mumbai; low-income; 15-22 years of age	Structured, self-administered survey offered in two languages	Attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital relationships and/or sexual activity	38.3% of males and 65.9% of females reported having a traditional attitude toward premarital sex; 47% of males and 13% of females had sexual experience; 26% of males and 3% of females reported sexual intercourse

**Table 2 (cont'd): Youth and Premarital Romantic Partnerships and/or Sexual Activity**

Source	Sample	Study Design	Focus	Relevant Findings
<b>Sachdev, 1998</b>	206 males and 681 females; students from two universities in Delhi, India; 19-24 years of age	87 item self-administered questionnaire	Attitudes and behaviors regarding premarital relationships and sexual activity	47.8% of males and 57.6% of females disagreed that virginity among unmarried girls should be encouraged compared to 36.8% of males and 32.1% of females who agreed; 33.3% of males and 38.6% of females agreed that males should only have premarital sex in an intimate relationship; 37.3% of males and 39.9% of female agreed that women should only have premarital sex in an intimate relationship; 20.8% of males and 21.4% of females agreed that men should not have premarital sex; 37.2% of males and 42.1% of females agreed that women should not have premarital sex; 73.3% of men and 72.4% of women agreed that it would be better if women were free to express their sexual desires; 49.5% of males and 36.1% of females reported a steady dating partner; 30.2% of males and 23.2% of females reported having had more than one dating partner; 39.3% of males and 20.4% of females reported premarital sex

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