

**PhD Synopsis**

**Romantic Relationships in Emerging Adults: Emotional Dependency, Gender Role Beliefs,  
Conflict and Well-Being**

**A thesis to be submitted for the award of the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

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## Abstract

Formation of intimate relationship is an important developmental task and the quality of romantic relationships is a significant source of happiness for emerging adults. Romantic partners are potentially a source of immense happiness and emotional support and hence, there is a possibility to lose oneself in a relationship and exhibit excessive emotional dependence on partner. Maintaining a balance of individuality and dependence could be the key for long-term sustenance of a healthy romantic relationship. Norms of romantic relationships are dictated by cultural settings where regional differences translate into different socio-cultural mentalities. In a patriarchal culture like India, gender-based socialization is firmly entrenched with clear prescriptions regarding appropriate and desirable gender roles and behavior. The study presents a mixed-methods research focused on understanding emotional dependency and the influence of gender, gender role beliefs and culture on well-being. It involved completion of the assessment measures: emotional dependency questionnaire, gender role attitude scale, PERMA profiler, relationship assessment scale and relationship conflict scale by emerging adults involved in a heterosexual relationship in two states, Gujarat (n=190) and Uttarakhand (n=195), followed by qualitative interviews with a select sample (n=40). Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical tests such as t-test, ANOVA, correlation and regression, and thematic analysis was done for the qualitative interview data. The results showed that emotional dependency is significantly higher among men compared to women in the state of Gujarat. As per the mean scores trend, emotional dependency is higher among men than women across the two states. The results showed a negative correlation between emotional dependency and well-being gender role beliefs emerged as a significant predictor of emotional dependency. Qualitative interviews highlight the impact of cultural context on the experiences around well-being, dependency and relationship ideologies. The results of the qualitative analysis revealed that there are differences in the way emotional dependency is understood and manifested by men and women. Women's practice of dependency is guided by the consequential influences of their understanding of self and identity. Men predominantly view romantic relationship as a safe space of expressing their emotions to their partner which they usually hide from the society. The findings on understanding different concepts related to love and relationship, emotional dependency – its experiences and manifestation – and the relationship between dependency and well-being can be used in professional settings to develop healthy romantic relationships.

*Keywords:* Emotional Dependency, Romantic Relationships, Culture, Well-being

## **Introduction and Review of Literature**

Globalization, rising economy, education and better opportunities have faded the practice of caste-based occupations and provided individuals with a chance to explore various vocational options (Nugent, 2006; Verma & Saraswathi, 2002). Boost in the economy provided more professional opportunities, especially for the middle class (Jodhka & Prakash, 2016). This leads to delay in other roles such as parenthood, career and job allowing a bigger window of freedom to explore and try out new ways of living before giving into any long-term commitments (Arnett, 2006). In response to these numerous factors, “emerging adulthood” as development phase proposed by Arnett (2004), has become evident in many urban parts of the Indian society (Kapadia et al., 2007).

Formation of intimate relationship is an important developmental task and also an integral part of identity formation of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2014). Gala and Kapadia (2013) have shown that romantic relationships are important developmental milestones and have significant consequences for self-discovery of individuals engaged in them. Romantic love is conceptualized as a universal emotional phenomenon, existing in various historical eras and across all the world’s culture. It is experienced by majority of people but manifested and expressed in different ways, having various meanings in different cultures, sometimes expressed in multiple forms by people belonging to the same culture. The reason behind this is understood as culture acting as a lens which influences an individual’s idea of love and hence, the associated thoughts, feelings and behavior in a romantic relationship (Karandashev, 2015; Schäfer, 2008).

Indian society is a blend of hierarchical and patriarchal philosophies. Filial bonds are given importance over conjugal ties within an Indian household (Kakar & Kakar, 2009). Decision

of life partner taken by parents based on the caste system therefore parents pressure the children to repress any romantic feelings before marriage (Hamid et al., 2011) so there is pressure, especially on women to see marriage as the ultimate goal of life. Any open talk regarding relationship before marriage, let alone about one's own relationship with family is difficult. Involvement in relationship before marriage is potentially considered as a means to bring a blot to the reputation of family. Generally, children date in secrecy until they are ready to get married and reveal the same to their families (Luo, 2008; Netting, 2006). Indian young adults hide their relationships from their family being apprehensive of the fact that their parents' trust will be betrayed. They also fear that the parents might arrange their marriage somewhere else which they won't be able to refuse owing to the family's pressure and honor (Medora, 2007). Marriage is considered as a holy union in India with well-defined customs and strict cultural penalties for not abiding with those unwritten norms (Netting, 2010). Marriage is viewed as the benchmark of a successful romantic relationship (Madathil & Benschhoff, 2008). Kakar and Kakar (2009) opined that even upper middle-class families valuing the education of daughter, marriage of the daughter remains the treasured goal of the parents wherein education is viewed as the means to find her an educated and economically affluent suitable match. They were also of the view that in such a context, love marriages are frowned upon because they are expected to interfere with the highly valued traditional family values. Love marriages in India have a reputation of generally not working out well. This may be ascribed to the social pressure that marriages are put upon in our culture (Kakar & Kakar, 2009).

However, rapid urbanization, exposure to western media (Hindin & Hindin, 2009), increasing focus on education, migration of youth to urban areas (Verma, 2000) are facilitating formation of romantic relationships. While parents endorse arranged marriages for their children,

young Indians are increasingly interested in romantic autonomy and marriages of choice (Ganth, 2017), witnessing the desire to break away from the arranged marriages ritual and search the life partner on their own. (Medora, 2007). Thus, India seems to be adapting a more flexible attitude towards “love”, specifically in the urban areas (Gala & Kapadia, 2014). Netting (2010) reveals that upper class Indian youth creatively overcome the apparent dichotomy by evaluating the ‘ideoscapes of individualism and romantic love through the lens of their Indian heritage’ (p. 722). The results of a study conducted by Dharnidharka (2014) provides evidence that the romantic partner selection criteria by the Indian urban youth is based on personality characteristics and compatibility rather than criteria held ideal by family members such as family background.

Individuals enter into a relationship looking for a companion, emotional security, love and intimacy till they reach a stage where they might be ready to make long-term commitment like marriage or cohabitation. The quality of romantic relationships is a significant source of happiness (Diener et al., 2000). A new relationship along with feelings of intimacy brings its own set of challenges. One such challenge is to maintain a sense of self-identity and independence from the partner. It requires understanding one’s own as well as partners need so that the relationship grows strong (Connolly & McIsaac, 2009). Dealing with the unavoidable dependence associated with close interpersonal relationships is one of the challenges individuals face as they enter in a romantic relationship (Murray et al., 2006).

Emotional Dependency can be defined as a persistent pattern of unsatisfied emotional needs that the individual tries to fulfill maladaptively through other people (Blasco, 2000), and emanates behavior such as manipulation (Del Castillo et al., 2015), loss of identity (Schaeffer, 2012), low self-esteem (Castello, 2005; Estévez et al., 2017), and sacrifices and a deteriorated

quality of life (Ferreyra et al., 2004) for the sole purpose of not losing the affection of their partner

Several researchers (Bornstein, 1995, 1998; Cross et al., 2000) have distinguished between destructive and healthy dependency. Destructive dependency is characterized by maladaptive, inflexible dependency. On the contrary, healthy dependency is marked by adaptability, flexibility, help and support seeking. Over dependent individuals exhibit insecure clingy behavior that detaches the potential provider and the person is not able to form lasting relationships (Pincus & Gurtman, 1995). On the other side of the coin, individuals with healthy dependency exhibit flexible behavior with the ability to forego short-term indulgences to build better relationships.

Emotional distancing in men is considered as normal and expected by society. Women are expected to show more empathy and closeness in relationships whereas men are envisaged to demonstrate autonomy and independent self-image from early years (Taylor et al., 2000). Dependency plays a considerably important role in close relationships, with high dependency level yielding positive results in certain situations and negative in others (Bornstein, 2012). On the positive side, dependency is associated with increased sensitivity to interpersonal cues (Masling et al., 1982), high commitment and loyalty in romantic relationships (Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). It is also associated with jealousy, possessiveness and insecurity (Bornstein, 2006).

## **Theoretical Framework**

The Cognitive/Interactionist (C/I) Model of Interpersonal Dependency is used as the theoretical framework of the study. The C/I model of Interpersonal Dependency (Figure 1) believes dependency to be comprised of four components:

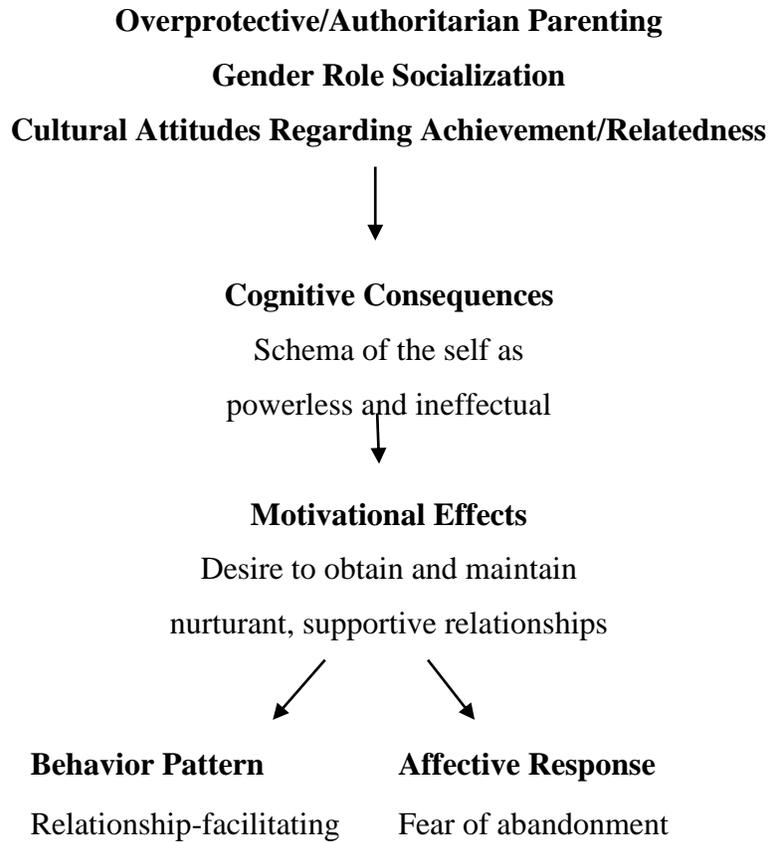
1. Cognitive: The perception of an individual about self as being powerless and ineffectual.
2. Motivation: Wishes to have relationship with protectors and caregivers.
3. Affective: It is the fear of abandonment and negative evaluation by others.
4. Behavioral: Employing such self-presentation strategies that facilitates relationship and hence strengthen ties with others.

Helpless self-concept is the key of the dependent personality orientation and the related dependency related psychological mechanisms. A person with self-perception of being powerless and ineffectual is motivated to have relationship with potential protectors and nurturers. The cognitive component of C/I model paves the way for the motivational component. Such dependency-related motivation leads to dependency related behaviors wherein person employs relationship-facilitating self-presentation strategies and to different affective responses which reflects the self-belief of the person (Bornstein et al., 2005).

The C/I model conceptualizes dependency related behavior and responses as being proactive, goal-driven and motivated by beliefs and expectations of self, other and interaction of self and other. It also focuses on the fact that the behavior of a dependent person may vary in different circumstances but the underlying core beliefs (self-perception as powerless) and motives (desire for relationship with protectors and caregivers) remains constant (Bornstein, 2011).

**Figure 1**

*A Cognitive/Interactionist Model of Interpersonal Dependency (Bornstein, 2011, p.126)*

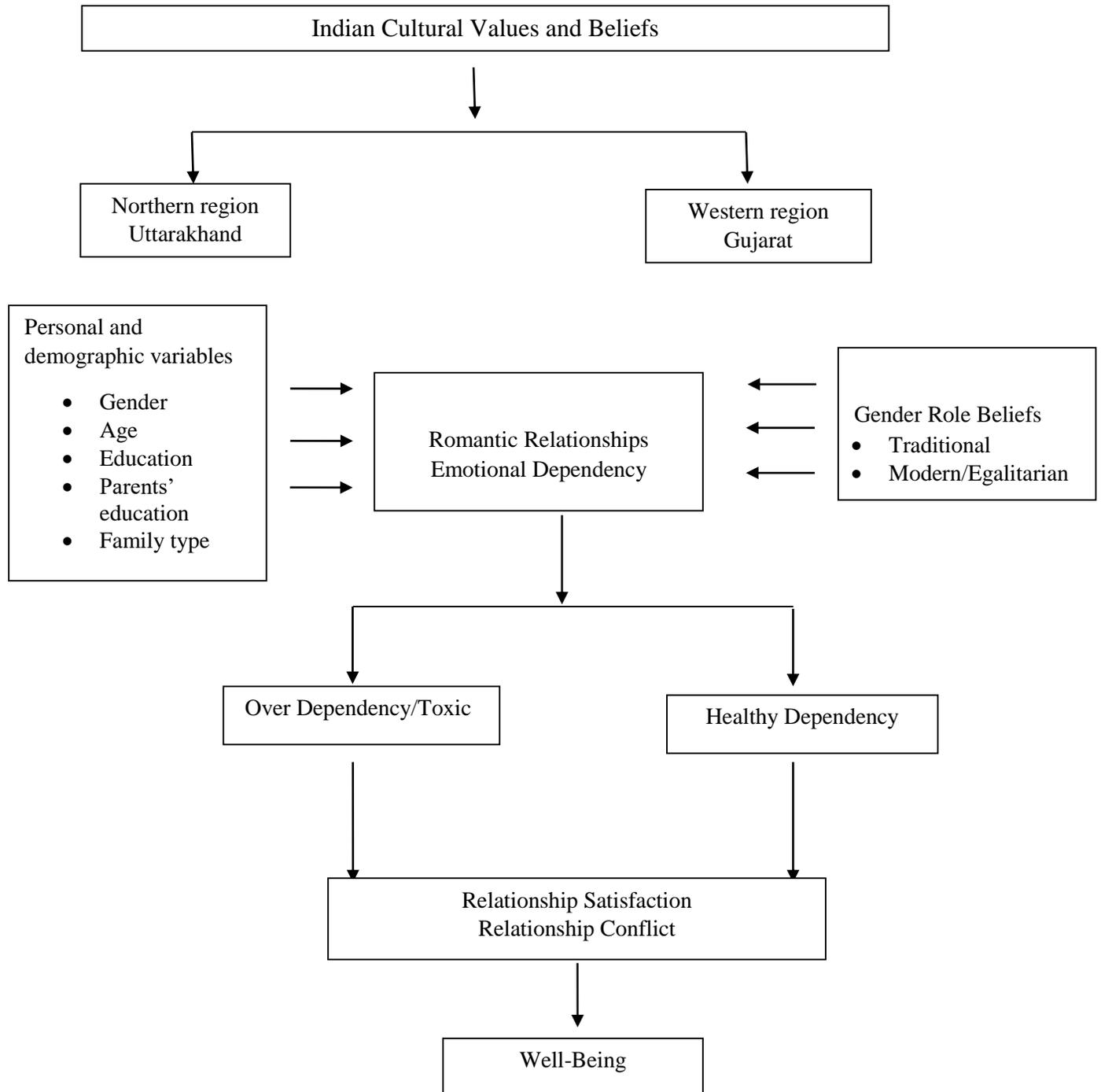


## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study is depicted in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Framework*



The research is conceptualized to be studied in Northern India, a relative traditional region and Western India which is considered to be a relatively modern region of the country. Gender Role Beliefs and Personal and Demographic variables such as gender, age, education, parent's education and family type are the independent variables of the study. Well-being is the dependent variable and the other intervening variables are emotional dependency, relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction. Romantic relationship among emerging adults and emotional dependency are the two central concepts of the research. As derived from the theoretical framework, the effect of gender role beliefs on emotional dependency and the consequent influence of emotional dependency on romantic relationship will be studied. The review of literature predicts two types of emotional dependency i.e., healthy dependency and toxic/over dependency. Either may have an influence on relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction. Literature review have established a very strong association between relationship conflicts, relationship satisfaction and well-being of an individual. Hence, the impact of emotional dependency on satisfaction and conflict and further combinative influence of well-being will be investigated.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Objectives**

The research is designed to address the following research objectives:

#### ***Broad Research Objectives***

To understand the role of emotional dependency in romantic relationships of urban educated emerging adults of Gujarat and Uttarakhand.

#### ***Specific Research Objectives***

1. To understand the influence of select personal and demographic variables (gender, age, education, parent's education, family type) on emotional dependency in individuals currently in romantic relationships.
2. To understand the influence of gender role beliefs on emotional dependency in romantic relationships.
3. To understand the influence of emotional dependency on relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction.
4. To understand the influence of relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction on well-being.
5. To explore the emerging adults' understanding about concepts of emotional dependency, love, relationship conflict, and relationship satisfaction.
6. To understand the regional differences (Gujarat and Uttarakhand) in all of the above.

### **Research Design**

A Mixed-Methods Explanatory Sequential Design was adopted including both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The quantitative phase of the study involved establishing a relationship between emotional dependency in romantic relationships and gender role beliefs, relationship conflict, relationship satisfaction and well-being.

The qualitative phase involved eliciting participants' views and feelings toward their current romantic relationship, satisfactions and dissatisfactions therein, and the experience of emotional dependency.

## **Operational Definitions**

### ***Emotional Dependency***

Emotional Dependency is characterized by separation anxiety, need for constant expressions of affection and attention, modification of plans, fear of loneliness and exhibition of borderline personality behavior (Lemos & Londoño, 2006).

### ***Relationship Satisfaction***

Relationship Satisfaction is defined as the extent to which an individual meet his/her partner's needs and expectations and how is their relationship compared to that of others', love, regrets and problems of the relationship.

### ***Relationship conflict***

A conflict in a relationship is measured in terms of whether it occurs or not, frequency and degree of arguments.

### ***Well-being***

Well-being can be defined as a multidimensional construct encompassing but not restricted to presence of positive emotions, engagement, satisfying social relationships, sense of purpose and accomplishments in life.

## Locale of the study

The study was conducted in urban Gujarat and urban Uttarakhand regions.

## Participants

The total sample of the study was 385 emerging adults age 18-29 years. Participant characteristics:

1. Individuals enrolled in college or completed education.
2. Individuals involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship (at least for a year)

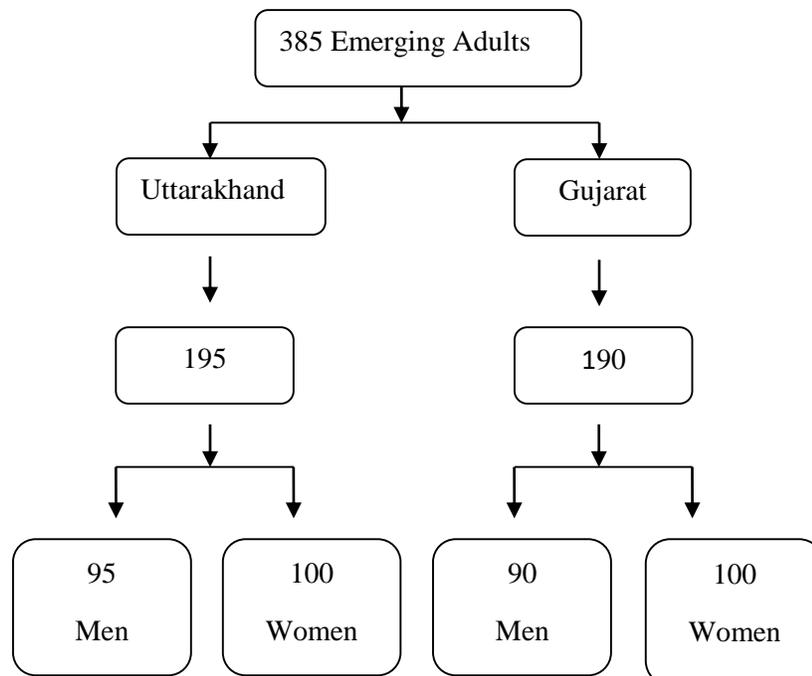
## Sampling Technique

Purposive Snowball technique was used to find the prospective participants.

Figure 3 gives visual representation of the sample distribution for the quantitative phase of the study.

**Figure 3**

*Sample distribution (Quantitative Phase)*

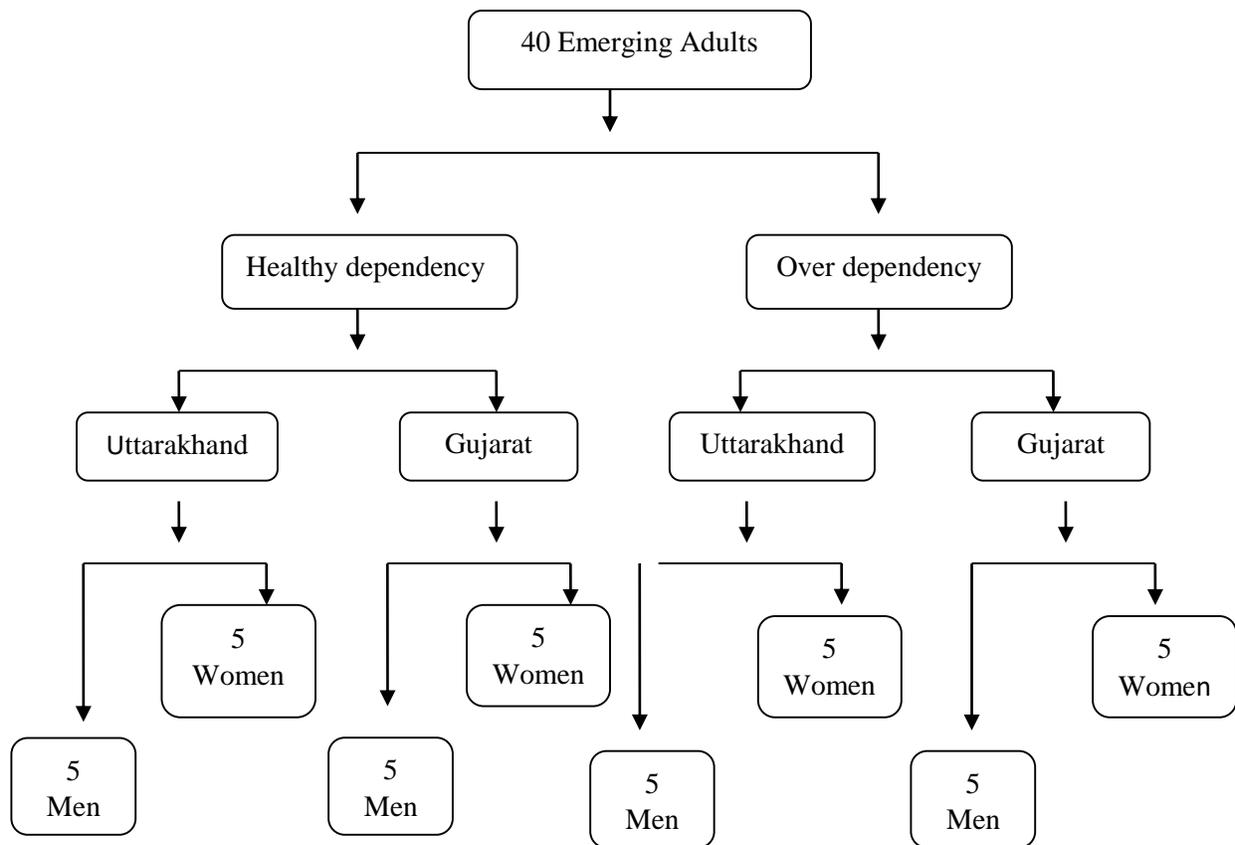


From this sample, 40 men and women, equally distributed by gender, were selected, including those who manifested healthy and over emotional dependency, presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 presents the sampling distribution for the qualitative phase of the study.

**Figure 4**

*Sample distribution (Qualitative Phase)*



## **Assessment Measures**

Description of the assessment measures used for data collection is given in the following section.

### ***Background Information Form***

A background information form was prepared to get the general information/personal particulars of selected sample with regard to their name, age, family type, total family income, address of respondents, educational qualification, their age and sex etc.

### ***Emotional Dependency Questionnaire***

Emotional Dependency Questionnaire (EDQ) was designed and validated by Lemos and Londoño (2006). It comprises 23 items, has a high degree of reliability (Cronbach Alpha of 0.927) and a variance explanation of 64.7%. The instrument evaluates six factors of emotional dependency (separation anxiety, affective expression of the partner, modification of plans, fear of loneliness, borderline expression, seeking of attention), with Cronbach Alpha's between 0.62 and 0.87.

### ***Gender Role Attitude Scale (GRAS)***

The scale was developed by Zeyneloğlu and Terzioğlu (2011) to determine one's attitude towards gender roles. The Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) contains 38 items and five dimensions (egalitarian gender roles, female gender roles, marriage gender roles, traditional gender roles and male gender roles). The scale's reliability was measured with Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. The scale's Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for 38 items was found to be 0.92. A Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.80 was found for the 'female gender roles' subscale in the analyses of the subscales for internal consistency. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.78 was found for the 'marriage gender roles' and

'traditional gender roles' subscales. Moreover, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for the 'male gender roles' subscale was found to be 0.72. These results showed that the internal consistency of the scale's items with each other is high indicating that the scale has a high reliability. The total score mean from all items on the scale was 152.48 (ranging from 38-190) and the standard deviation was 20.89. The instrument is a 5-point Likert type scale. The egalitarian attitude sentences regarding gender roles were scored as 5 points for 'completely agree,' 4 points for 'agree,' 3 points for 'undecided,' 2 points for 'disagree,' and 1 point for 'absolutely disagree.' The traditional attitude sentences regarding gender roles were scored opposite to the positive sentences: 1 point for 'completely agree,' 2 points for 'agree,' 3 points for 'undecided,' 4 points for 'disagree', and 5 points for 'absolutely disagree.' The highest possible score from the scale was 190 and the lowest was 38 according to this scoring scale. The higher scores indicated more egalitarian attitude towards gender roles and the lower scores shows more traditional attitude towards gender roles.

### ***Conflict Scale***

The tool was developed by Gordon and Chen (2016) to understand the influence of conflicts in relationship-on-relationship satisfaction. The measure constitutes 6 items to be rated on a 7-point scale. The items exhibit strong reliability i.e.,  $\alpha = 0.83$ .

### ***The Relationship Assessment Scale***

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) developed by Hendrick (1988) is a brief measure of global relationship satisfaction. It consists of seven items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale. It is suitable for use with any individuals who are in an intimate relationship, such as married couples, cohabiting couples, engaged couples, or dating couples. The brevity of the scale increases its utility in clinical settings and for online administration. It assesses the extent to

which an individual meets his/her partner's needs and expectation, how is their relationship compared to that of others', love, regrets and problems of the relationship. It is a unifactorial measure of assessment with mean inter-item correlation of 0.49 and an alpha of 0.86. The RAS reported test-retest was 0.85 (65 university graduates at a south western university in the USA). The RAS showed high correlations with Dyadic Adjustment Scale (0.80 in one study and 0.88 in the other) and Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (0.64 for men and 0.74 for women).

### ***PERMA Profiler***

PERMA-Profiler is a brief measure of PERMA developed by Butler & Kern (2016). It is a 23-item measure consisting of 15 items across 5 domains, that is, Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning and Accomplishment. The additional 8 items are included in one item assessing overall well-being, three negative emotions items assessing sadness, anger and anxiety; one item assessing loneliness; and three items assessing self-perceived physical health. Domain scores are created by taking the average of the three items (for each PERMA domain, negative emotion, and health; range = 0 to 10). Overall well-being is the average of the main 15 PERMA items and the overall happiness item. Loneliness is a single item. This is 11-point Likert scale, scores ranging from 0 to 10. The measure demonstrates acceptable reliability, cross-time stability, and evidence for convergent and divergent validity.

### ***In-depth Interview***

An open-ended interview guideline was developed to conduct in-depth interviews to elicit participants' interpretations regarding different elements of their relationship such as emotional dependency, conflict and satisfaction.

## **Data Collection**

The participants were recruited from different colleges and social places using social media, notices, flyers, and word of mouth. The study was conducted in two phases. The first phase of the study involved data collection through the medium of Google forms. There were a few validation questions like “please choose option 3 as the answer” to check the attention of the participants and hence, easy screening of the responses. The second phase of the study, that is, in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview schedule. Each interview lasted about 30 – 90 minutes and was audio-taped after due permission. Data collection was mostly done through zoom calls as in the aftermath of Covid-19 most participants were not comfortable with in-person meetings.

## **Data Analysis**

The quantitative data was entered into the Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) software and was foremost checked for the normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Subsequently, based on the test results, and observations of QQ plots and histogram, decisions were made regarding further statistical analysis. When significant results suggested a deviation from normality, non-parametric statistics like Spearman's rho were used. Parametric statistics like Student's t-test, Pearson's correlation and regression were used when the data followed a normal distribution.

Each interview was the unit of analysis for qualitative content analysis that involved a search for meanings (Graneheim et al., 2017; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004). Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis where the interviews were coded and categorized, followed by eliciting salient themes.

## **Ethical Considerations**

A full informed consent was obtained from all the participants for both the phases of the study. The participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage of the study, if they wished to do so. The study was presented and approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee for Human Research (IECHR), Faculty of Family and Community Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (Ethical Approval # IECHR/FCSc/PhD/2021/1).

## Results

This chapter presents a detailed analysis of the research results through descriptive, inferential analysis and thematic analysis. Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP), was used to analyze descriptive and inferential statistics. The main findings of the study are organized in sub-sections below:

### Demographic Profile

Table 1 to 4 provides the demographic information of the participants of the study

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N= 385)*

		Gujarat (n =190)		Uttarakhand (n = 195)	
		f	%	f	%
Male	18-24 years	46	24.21	59	30.25
	25-29 years	44	23.15	36	18.46
Female	18-24 years	74	38.94	46	23.58
	25-29 years	26	13.68	54	27.69

**Table 2**

*Educational Qualification of Participants (N= 385 )*

	Gujarat				Uttarakhand			
	Men (n = 90)		Women (n = 100)		Men (n = 95)		Women (n = 100)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Senior Secondary	8	8.88	11	11	12	12.63	13	13
Under Graduation	44	48.88	47	47	47	49.47	41	41
Post-Graduation	36	40	38	38	33	34.73	40	40
Doctorate	2	2.22	4	4	3	3.15	6	6

**Table 3***Educational Qualification of Parents (N= 385)*

	Mother's Education				Father's Education			
	Gujarat (n=190)		Uttarakhand (n=195)		Gujarat (n = 190)		Uttarakhand (n=195)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
High School	55	28.94	51	26.15	23	12.1	31	15.89
Senior Secondary	35	18.42	32	16.41	39	20.52	23	11.79
Under Graduation	63	33.15	62	31.79	74	38.94	65	33.33
Post Graduation	33	17.36	42	21.53	46	24.21	66	33.84
Doctorate	1	0.52	5	2.56	7	3.68	8	4.1
Not Educated	3	1.57	3	1.53	1	0.52	2	1.02

**Table 4***Demographic Profile: Family Type*

	Gujarat (n=190)		Uttarakhand (n=195)	
	f	%	f	%
Nuclear	142	74.73	136	69.74
Joint	48	25.26	59	30.25

The next section discusses the results of the quantitative analysis as per the research questions.

## Section I: Quantitative Results

The quantitative results are presented according to the research questions.

### *Research Question 1*

What is the influence of select personal and demographic variables (gender, age, education, parent’s education, family type) on emotional dependency in individuals currently in romantic relationships?

The tables 5 to 8 presents the results related to emotional dependency.

**Table 5**

#### *Descriptive Distribution of Emotional Dependency*

<b>Sex</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Age category</b>	<b>Family Structure</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Coefficient of variation</b>
Men	Gujarat	18-24	Nuclear	30	74.000	22.022	4.021	0.298
			Joint	16	89.438	20.043	5.011	0.224
		25-29	Nuclear	35	74.857	19.752	3.339	0.264
			Joint	9	77.444	18.304	6.101	0.236
	Uttarakhand	18-24	Nuclear	37	78.189	21.214	3.488	0.271
			Joint	22	66.727	21.948	4.679	0.329
		25-29	Nuclear	27	66.667	15.046	2.896	0.226
			Joint	9	67.222	14.856	4.952	0.221
women	Gujarat	18-24	Nuclear	60	72.383	23.484	3.032	0.324
			Joint	14	74.643	20.406	5.454	0.273
		25-29	Nuclear	17	67.471	20.292	4.922	0.301
			Joint	9	66.556	25.051	8.350	0.376
	Uttarakhand	18-24	Nuclear	36	74.361	21.301	3.550	0.286
			Joint	10	76.600	27.529	8.705	0.359
		25-29	Nuclear	36	68.778	22.228	3.705	0.323
			Joint	18	66.111	17.156	4.044	0.260

ANOVA was performed to analyze the effect of sex, state, age category, and family structure on emotional dependency (Table 6). Independent ANOVA was also conducted on mother's education and father's education but the results showed no significant influence on emotional dependency. The following section discusses the significant results and main highlights.

**Table 6**

*ANOVA Summary for Emotional Dependency*

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Gender	825.783	1	825.783	1.852	0.174
State	1116.116	1	1116.116	2.503	0.115
<b>Age category</b>	<b>2837.070</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2837.070</b>	<b>6.362</b>	<b>0.012</b>
<b>Gender * State</b>	<b>1882.130</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1882.130</b>	<b>4.220</b>	<b>0.041</b>
Gender * Age category	51.585	1	51.585	0.116	0.734
State * Age category	9.494	1	9.494	0.021	0.884
Gender * State * Age category	10.932	1	10.932	0.025	0.876
Family Structure	69.777	1	69.777	0.156	0.693
Gender * Family Structure	41.567	1	41.567	0.093	0.760
State * Family Structure	1018.820	1	1018.820	2.285	0.132
Age category * Family Structure	85.853	1	85.853	0.193	0.661
Gender * State * Family Structure	797.164	1	797.164	1.788	0.182
Gender * Age category * Family Structure	56.766	1	56.766	0.127	0.721
State * Age category * Family Structure	578.529	1	578.529	1.297	0.255

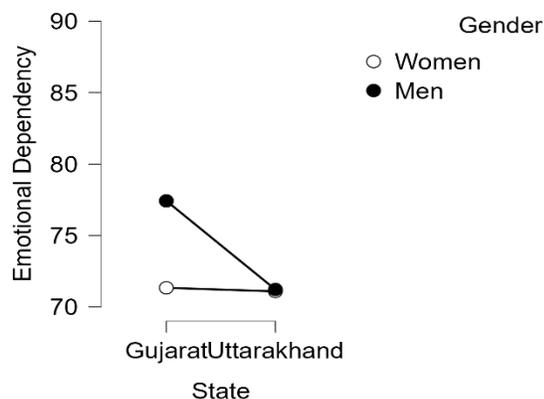
**Age and Emotional Dependency.** There were significant main effects for age category ( $F(1, 369) = 6.362, p = 0.012$ ) (Table 5). Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics which suggest that emotional dependency is higher in the younger age group (18-24 years) compared to the older age group (25-26 years).

**Gender and Emotional Dependency.** Simple main effects analysis showed that gender of a person did not have statistically significant effect on emotional dependency. However, the mean scores suggest that the emotional dependency of men (Mean = 74.23, SD = 20.53) is higher than the emotional dependency of women (Mean = 71.21, SD = 22.02).

**State and Emotional Dependency.** Simple main effects analysis showed that the State a person belongs to does not have a statistically significant influence on emotional dependency. Further, gender differences in emotional dependency were assessed separately in the state of Gujarat and Uttarakhand, respectively. A t-test was performed to compare the emotional dependence between men and women. There was a significant gender difference in emotional dependency in the state of Gujarat with men ( $M = 77.42$ ,  $SD = 20.91$ ) scoring high on the emotional dependency than women ( $M = 71.34$ ,  $SD = 22.52$ );  $t = -1.92$ ,  $p = 0.05$ . However, there was no significant difference in emotional dependency between men and women in Uttarakhand.

**Figure 5**

*Interaction Effect of Gender and State on Emotional Dependency*



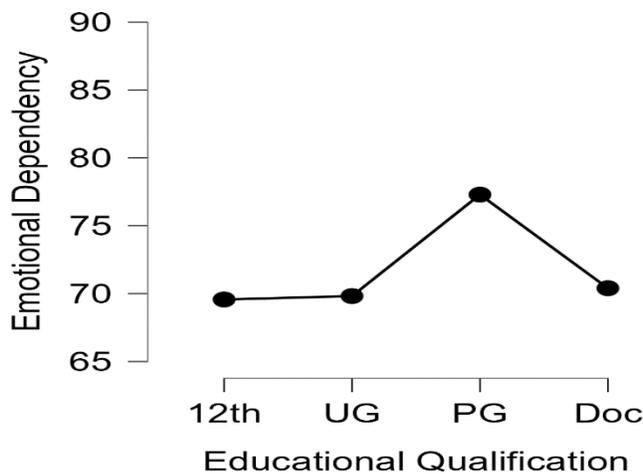
**Interaction Effect of Sex and State.** There was a statistically significant interaction between the effects of gender and State on emotional dependency ( $F(1, 369) = 4.220$ ,  $p = 0.041$ ). This suggests that the differences in emotional dependency between genders is affected by the state to which a person belongs. The descriptive statistics and plot suggests that the emotional dependency is higher when the individual is a man living in Gujarat (Figure 5)

**Educational Qualification and Emotional Dependency.** Independent ANOVA was conducted to see the influence of the level of educational qualification on emotional dependency among the participants. It showed a significant effect of the level of educational qualification on

emotional dependency ( $F(3, 381) = 3.307, p = 0.012$ ) Post hoc testing using Tukey's correction revealed that Post Graduation resulted in significantly greater emotional dependency than under graduation ( $p = 0.009$ ) – post graduation (Mean = 77.283, SD = 20.856) and under graduation (Mean = 69.821, SD = 69.821). Figure 6 gives a visual representation of the influence of educational qualification on emotional dependency.

**Figure 6**

*Influence of Educational Qualification on Emotional Dependency*



**Parent's Education and Emotional Dependency.** Independent ANOVA was conducted to see the influence of mother's education and father's education on emotional dependency respectively. The results did not show any significant influence of mother's and father's education on emotional dependency.

**Research Question 2: What is the influence of gender role beliefs on emotional dependency?**

Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to check for bivariate normality and significant results suggested a deviation from normality, therefore Spearman's Correlational analysis was used to assess the relationship between gender role beliefs and emotional dependency. The following

Table 7 presents the Spearman's Correlation values between gender role beliefs and emotional dependency.

**Table 7**

*Spearman's Correlations between Subscales of Gender Role Beliefs and Emotional Dependency*

Variable		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotional Dependency	$r_s$	-						
	$p$	-						
2. Gender Role Beliefs	$r_s$	-.151**	-					
	$p$	.003	-					
3. Egalitarian Gender Roles	$r_s$	.023	.531***	-				
	$p$	.653	<.001	-				
4. Marriage Gender Roles	$r_s$	-.136**	.780***	.367***	-			
	$p$	.007	<.001	<.001	-			
5. Female Gender Roles	$r_s$	-.168***	.786***	.271***	.527***	-		
	$p$	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-		
6. Traditional Gender Roles	$r_s$	-.113*	.850***	.355***	.552***	.541***	-	
	$p$	.026	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-	
7. Male Gender Roles	$r_s$	-.118*	.807***	.389***	.605***	.549***	.678***	-
	$p$	.021	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	<.001	-

\*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ,  $p = 0.05$

$r_s$  = Spearman's Correlation

The results indicated a negative relationship between overall gender role beliefs and emotional dependency. Further, Spearman's correlation was also used to assess the relationship between overall emotional dependency and subscales of gender role attitude scales. A negative correlation was observed between female gender roles and emotional dependency,  $r_s(385) = -.168$ ,  $p < .001$ ; a significant negative correlation between male gender roles and emotional dependency  $r_s(385) = -.118$   $p = .021$ , a significant negative correlation between traditional gender roles and emotional dependency  $r_s(385) = -.113$ ,  $p = .026$ , and a significant negative correlation between marriage gender roles and emotional dependency  $r_s(385) = -.136$ ,  $p = .007$ .

**Table 8***Regression Coefficients of Gender Role Beliefs on Emotional Dependency*

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
1	(Intercept)	105.761	10.593		9.984	< .001	0.025	9.862	0.002
	Total GRB <sup>O</sup>	-0.199	0.063	-0.158	-3.14	0.002			
2	(Intercept)	104.971	14.359		7.311	< .001	0.024	4.642	0.032
	Total GRB <sup>G</sup>	-0.192	0.089	-0.155	-2.155	0.032			
3	(Intercept)	103.887	18.454		5.629	< .001	0.016	3.167	0.077
	Total GRB <sup>U</sup>	-0.19	0.107	-0.127	-1.779	0.077			
4	(Intercept)	94.404	14.893		6.339	< .001	0.012	2.451	0.119
	Total GRB <sup>W</sup>	-0.14	0.089	-0.111	-1.566	0.119			
5	(Intercept)	119.461	14.982		7.974	< .001	0.048	9.201	0.003
	Total GRB <sup>M</sup>	-0.272	0.09	-0.219	-3.033	0.003			
6	(Intercept)	134.46	20.949		6.418	< .001	0.078	7.49	0.008
	Total GRB <sup>M-G</sup>	-0.355	0.13	-0.28	-2.737	0.008			
7	(Intercept)	85.407	19.363		4.411	< .001	0.005	0.535	0.466
	Total GRB <sup>W-G</sup>	-0.088	0.121	-0.074	-0.731	0.466			
8	(Intercept)	87.005	24.064		3.616	< .001	0.005	0.433	0.512
	Total GRB <sup>M-U</sup>	-0.092	0.14	-0.068	-0.658	0.512			
9	(Intercept)	124.282	28.471		4.365	< .001	0.035	3.51	0.064
	Total GRB <sup>W-U</sup>	-0.308	0.164	-0.186	-1.874	0.064			

Note.

O = Overall Sample

G = Gujarat

U = Uttarakhand

W = Women

M = Men

M-G = Men – Gujarat

W-G = Women – Gujarat

M-U = Men – Uttarakhand

W-U = Women – Uttarakhand

Table 8 presents the regression coefficients of overall gender role beliefs on emotional dependency across different group. The details of the groups are presented as note in Table 8. The table also gives information about the respective F and R<sup>2</sup> values. Linear regression showed that 2.5% of the variance in emotional dependency across the overall sample can be accounted for by gender role beliefs,  $F(1, 383) = 9.862$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $R^2 = 0.025$  and gender role beliefs are a significant predictor of emotional dependency.

Linear regression also showed that overall gender role beliefs are a significant predictor of emotional dependency in the state of Gujarat, men and men living in the state of Gujarat

***Research Question 3: How does emotional dependency influence relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction?***

**Relationship of Emotional Dependency and Relationship Satisfaction.** Correlational and Regression analysis was conducted to see the influence of emotional dependency on relationship satisfaction. Spearman's correlation was used after checking the bivariate normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. The correlation analysis did not show a significant influence of emotional dependency on relationship satisfaction.

**Relationship of Emotional Dependency and Relationship Conflict.** Correlational and Regression analysis was conducted to see the influence of emotional dependency on relationship conflict. Spearman's and Pearson's correlation were used after checking the bivariate normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. There was a positive relationship between emotional dependency and relationship conflict across the overall sample ( $r = .295, p < .001$ ), among men ( $r_s = .253, p < .001$ ), among women ( $r_s = .297, p < .001$ ), in Gujarat ( $r_s = .299, p < .001$ ), among women in Uttarakhand ( $r_s = .228, p = .022$ ) and among women in the state of Gujarat ( $r = .378, p < .001$ ).

**Table 9***Regression Coefficients of Emotional Dependency (ED) on Relationship Conflict across Different Groups*

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	R2	F	p
1	(Intercept)	14.532	1.065		13.641	<.001	0.087	36.572	<.001
	ED <sup>O</sup>	0.085	0.014	0.295	6.047	<.001			
2	(Intercept)	15.029	1.677		8.964	<.001	0.064	12.538	<.001
	ED <sup>M</sup>	0.077	0.022	0.253	3.541	<.001			
3	(Intercept)	14.125	1.377		10.261	<.001	0.111	24.835	<.001
	ED <sup>W</sup>	0.092	0.018	0.334	4.983	<.001			
4	(Intercept)	15.28	1.398		10.932	<.001	0.085	17.473	<.001
	ED <sup>G</sup>	0.076	0.018	0.292	4.18	<.001			
5	(Intercept)	14.303	2.121		6.743	<.001	0.087	9.288	0.003
	ED <sup>W-U</sup>	0.087	0.029	0.294	3.048	0.003			
6	(Intercept)	13.979	1.787		7.821	<.001	0.143	16.33	<.001
	ED <sup>W-G</sup>	0.097	0.024	0.378	4.041	<.001			

Note.

O = Overall Sample

M = Men

W = Women

G = Gujarat

W-U = Women – Uttarakhand

W-G = Women - Gujarat

Linear regression showed that 8.7% of the variance in relationship conflict across the overall sample can be accounted for by Emotional Dependency,  $F(1, 383) = 36.572$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.087$  and emotional dependency is a significant predictor of relationship conflict across the overall sample ( $t = 13.641$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Linear Regression also showed that emotional dependency is a significant predictor of relationship conflict among men, women, in the state of Gujarat, women living in the state of Uttarakhand and women living in the state of Gujarat (Table 9)

***Research Question 4: How do Relationship Conflict and Relationship Satisfaction influence Well-being?***

Correlations and multiple regression analysis was conducted to understand the influence of relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction on Well-being. Spearman's correlation was used after checking the bivariate normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Correlation analysis revealed that a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being whereas a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being across all the groups. There was a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .307$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.249$ ,  $p < .001$ ) across the overall sample; a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .323$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.256$ ,  $p < .001$ ) among women; a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .296$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.249$ ,  $p < .001$ ) among men; a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .370$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.329$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in Gujarat; a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .263$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.173$ ,  $p = .016$ ) In Uttarakhand; a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .460$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.369$ ,  $p < .001$ ) among men in Gujarat; a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction and well-being ( $r_s = .285$ ,  $p = .004$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.256$ ,  $p < .001$ ) among women in Gujarat, and a positive relationship between relationship satisfaction

and well-being ( $r_s = .369$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a negative relationship between relationship conflict and well-being ( $r_s = -.213$ ,  $p = .03$ ) among women in Uttarakhand.

**Table 10**

*Regression coefficients of Relationship Satisfaction (RS) and Relationship Conflict (RC) on Well-being*

Model		Unstandardized	Standard Error	Standardized	t	p	R2	F	p
1	(Intercept)	97.999	6.575		14.906	< .001	0.136	30.054	< .001
	RS <sup>O</sup>	1.399	0.223	0.298	6.261	< .001			
	RC <sup>O</sup>	-0.701	0.153	-0.219	-4.596	< .001			
2	(Intercept)	87.201	10.632		8.201	< .001	0.167	19.698	< .001
	RS <sup>W</sup>	1.854	0.36	0.336	5.144	< .001			
	RC <sup>W</sup>	-0.681	0.218	-0.204	-3.128	0.002			
3	(Intercept)	103.574	8.338		12.422	< .001	0.114	11.766	< .001
	RS <sup>M</sup>	1.113	0.284	0.274	3.916	< .001			
	RC <sup>M</sup>	-0.678	0.214	-0.221	-3.162	0.002			
4	(Intercept)	101.779	9.678		10.517	< .001	0.208	24.557	< .001
	RS <sup>G</sup>	1.545	0.316	0.32	4.887	< .001			
	RC <sup>G</sup>	-0.949	0.214	-0.29	-4.43	< .001			
5	(Intercept)	94.985	8.988		10.568	< .001	0.099	10.49	< .001
	RS <sup>U</sup>	1.288	0.315	0.281	4.087	< .001			
	RC <sup>U</sup>	-0.524	0.216	-0.167	-2.428	0.016			
6	(Intercept)	97.042	12.533		7.743	< .001	0.304	19.035	< .001
	RS <sup>M-G</sup>	1.877	0.411	0.409	4.563	< .001			
	RC <sup>M-G</sup>	-1.198	0.308	-0.348	-3.888	< .001			
7	(Intercept)	112.589	15.098		7.457	< .001	0.124	6.862	0.002
	RS <sup>W-G</sup>	1.041	0.492	0.205	2.118	0.037			
	RC <sup>W-G</sup>	-0.775	0.297	-0.253	-2.615	0.01			
8	(Intercept)	70.946	14.763		4.806	< .001	0.217	13.464	< .001
	RS <sup>W-U</sup>	2.406	0.518	0.418	4.647	< .001			
	RC <sup>W-U</sup>	-0.692	0.312	-0.199	-2.219	0.029			

Note.

O = Overall Sample

W = Women

M = Men

G = Gujarat

U = Uttarakhand

M-G = Men – Gujarat

W-G = Women – Gujarat

W-U = Women – Uttarakhand

Multiple regression showed that 13.6% of the variance in well-being across the overall sample can be accounted for by Relationship Satisfaction (RS) and relationship conflict (RC),  $F(2, 382) = 30.054, p < .001, R^2 = 0.136$  and relationship satisfaction ( $t = 6.261, p < .001$ ) and relationship conflict ( $t = -4.596, p < .001$ ) are significant predictors of well-being across the overall sample.

Multiple Regression also showed that relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction are significant predictors of well-being among men and women, in the state of Gujarat and Uttarakhand, men and women living in the state of Gujarat and women living in the state of Uttarakhand (Table 10).

Correlation and Regression Analysis were also conducted for different subscales of well-being and the study variables. The highlights of the results are as follows:

1. No variables other than relationship conflict and relationship satisfaction influence overall well-being of men.
2. Gender Role beliefs are predominantly not a predictor of well-being or different aspects of well-being.
3. Affective expression is a recurring aspect of emotional dependency influencing different aspects of well-being among women in the state of Uttarakhand.
4. Men's perception of accomplishment are not highly influenced by emotional dependency, relationship satisfaction and relationship conflict, when compared to women.
5. Well-being and its different aspects are not significantly predicted among men in the state of Uttarakhand.
6. Positive correlation between emotional dependency and loneliness is higher for women (overall and within state) compared to men.

7. Negative correlation between emotional dependency and relationship (sub-scale of PERMA Profiler) is higher for women, overall and within state, as compared to men.

## Section II. Qualitative Findings

The following section presents the qualitative findings. Frequencies of responses are given in parenthesis with each theme. The themes that emerged within each main concept love, relationship satisfaction, relationship conflict, emotional dependency and relationship of dependency and well-being are described.

### *Understanding of Love*

The following themes emerged when participants were asked about their understanding of love which are presented in Table 11.

**Table 11**

### *Themes of Love*

<b>Love is Self-identity</b> (n = 32).	“Whoever you are with, you can't forget yourself you need to have an identity of your own... your relationship should not affect your normal life. (Woman, 22 years, Gujarat)”
<b>Love is Resilience</b> (n = 12)	The feeling of not staying without that person around...I think for me love is a person who you can't ever get bored of... even in the toughest of times... even in the weirdest of times you want that person around (Man, 19 years, Gujarat)
<b>Love is Transcendent</b> (n=14)	I have never felt this kind of feeling with any other person yet...It heals all your pain and it gives you power to face all the situations in this life...the biggest power in this world is power of love... The true feeling without any hidden motive and without any greed....so for me that is the meaning of love (Man, 25 years, Uttarakhand)
<b>Love is consistent efforts</b> (n = 23)	Love is basically a continuous labor which you have to do every day. It's not a burdening labor, it comes from you very effortlessly though it demands a serious discipline. Effortlessly doesn't mean you are not putting any discipline into it but it is

	not burdening. So, love is basically a labor for me and in a very consistent way (Woman, 27 years, Uttarakhand)
<b>Love is Empowering (n = 18)</b>	Love is something which makes you delightful...which enhances your motivation...which brings the best version of you to present in this world...which encourages you to become a better human...a better person...trying to grow with that person...something like that!. (Man, 28 years, Gujarat)
<b>Love overpowers gender (n = 10)</b>	At the end of the day, everyone wants to feel loved...feel that he or she is being loved or respected more than anything so that's a basic idea of human emotion or expectation, I think it's regardless of the gender (Woman, 23 years, Uttarakhand)

***Relationship Conflict***

The understanding of conflicts in a relationship were demonstrated in reference to the “causative factors” and the “consequences”.

Future relationship expectations, communication barrier, dependency, boundaries, and trust issues are a few factors materialized as reason of conflicts in between the romantic partner.

**Future Expectations from Relationship.** The verbatim in the following section highlights how dissimilar future expectations can lead to recurring arguments in a relationship.

***Cultural Expectations and Commitment (n = 12)***

Mostly woman feel that they are ready but men take good time because I have, being a man there is also this good responsibility on their shoulders... They have that cultural word, so when things like marriage pops up.... men start thinking that their lives will start revolving around a single thing and the women is not trying to hold the person back but she just wants to take that next step and make the relationship deeper. The women start feeling insecure and the partner is not ready to get married, the disagreements revolve around that she will find someone else to get married to (Woman, 23 years, Uttarakhand)

***Boundaries and Commitment (n = 19)***

Arguments are somewhat along the lines of maybe thinking about the future sometimes... our ideas of the future do not match and we work through it.. that is one of our main reasons for disagreements...when I get into a relationship and there are a particular kind of feeling for that certain someone and if I spend some time understanding that particular person, opening up to that person, letting that person into my boundaries, whatever my boundaries are then I am looking for that particular relationship to go a little farther... a lot farther (Man, 24 years, Gujarat)

**Dependency – Driven Conflicts.** Dependency emerged as one of the common causes of arguments in a romantic relationship. It is further categorized as follows:

***Other relationships (n = 8)***

For me I am not dependent on him totally... personally sometimes I want my mum's support, sometimes I want my dad's support, sometimes i want to talk to my brother and like...I am dependent on many people for different things but for him... it's like he consider me as his everything...but at a time I am...I don't understand what actually he seeks from me... so due to this miscommunication sometimes there are fights (Woman, 24 years, Gujarat)

***Subjective Dependency (n = 16)***

I think in this particular situation Eva is the depender and does not understand the boundaries and the concept of space...she needs to understand that people work in a certain way and have life out of the relationship... if she gives the other person the space, I think Dev and Eva wouldn't be having this many arguments (Man, 23 years, Gujarat)

Eva is a normal personality as in a relationship we want support... Even in little things so she is acting like a normal girl.. Actually the whole thing is that Eva is being very expressive about what she is doing in the day throughout and she wants her partner to be a very active part of it...She also wants that kind of a validation.... So the presence of a partner just validates the security for her.... For me she is having a normal personality which I also have really... She is not very dependent to be honest (Woman, 24 years, Gujarat)

**Accepting Changes (n = 10).** This basically is accepting the inevitable changes in the partner that'll come with time.

Like we are changing and to acknowledge that we are changing and now... Like we were talking for a good amount of time and we were able to cater each other's talking time but eventually we are not in that same teenager mode right? We are becoming adults... So one's needs will also change as we become adults (Woman, 28 years, Uttarakhand)

**'Recurring arguments and stagnation' dynamic (n = 25).** This theme addresses the pattern of regular arguments and not moving anywhere forward in the relationship and how that continuous loop of regular arguments could lead to personality and health related harm in the individuals involved. One such verbatim is:

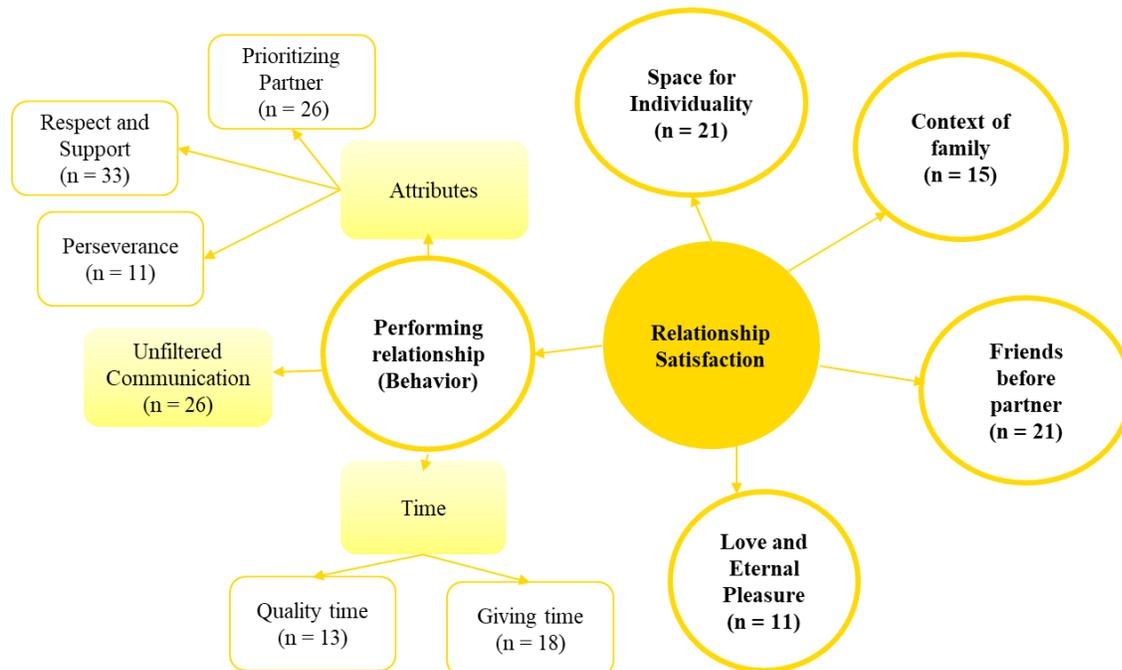
If you are in a relationship you definitely give an important place for that person.. right? And if that itself is every time accusing you of something and that person itself is claiming that you are something wrong or you are something of that type and it happens continuously... it would definitely harm your individual personality, your confidence, your trait or something that you are good at.. It could all narrow down... again it would be toxic relationship (Man, 25 years, Gujarat)

## ***Relationship Satisfaction***

Figure 7 gives a visual representation of themes and sub-themes that emerged as a result of various responses when asked about the participants' understanding of relationship satisfaction.

**Figure 7**

### ***Thematic Representation of Relationship Satisfaction***



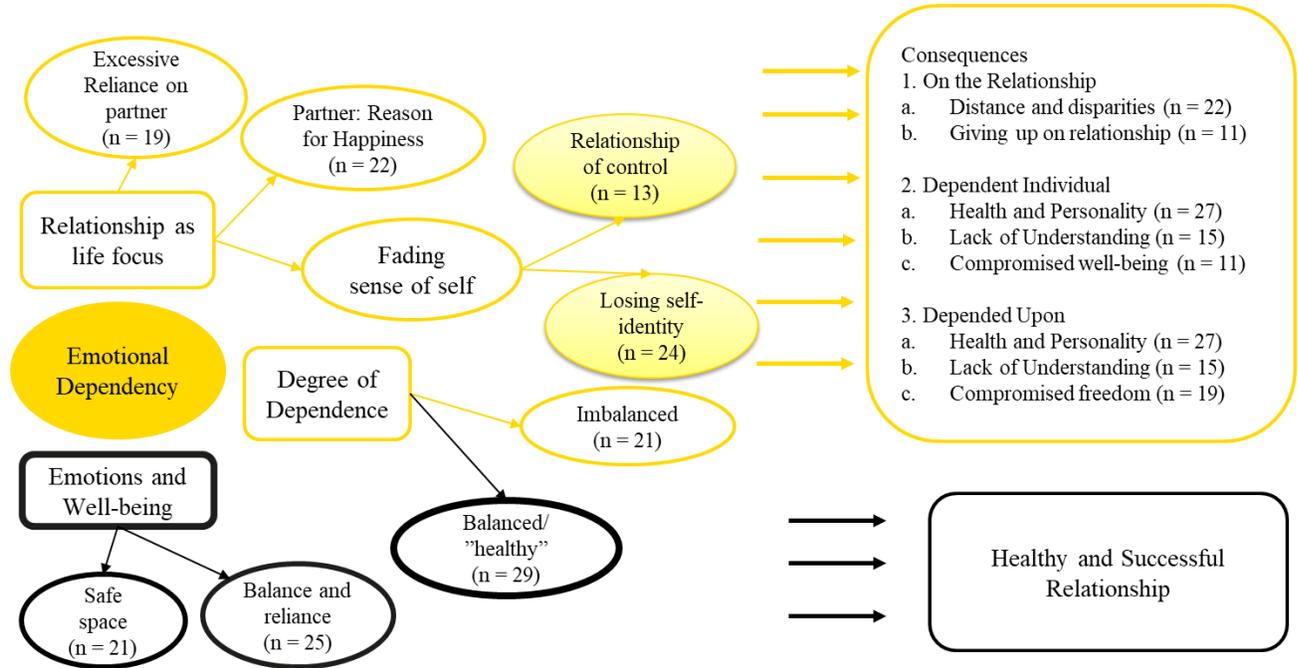
Relationship satisfaction was accounted for in terms of Performing relationship (behavior), Space for individuality, Context of family, Friends before Partner, and Love and Eternal Pleasure.

**Emotional Dependency**

Emotional Dependency as a concept was discussed with regard to its “desirability”, “meaning”, and the “consequences” which is represented in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Thematic Representation of Emotional Dependency*



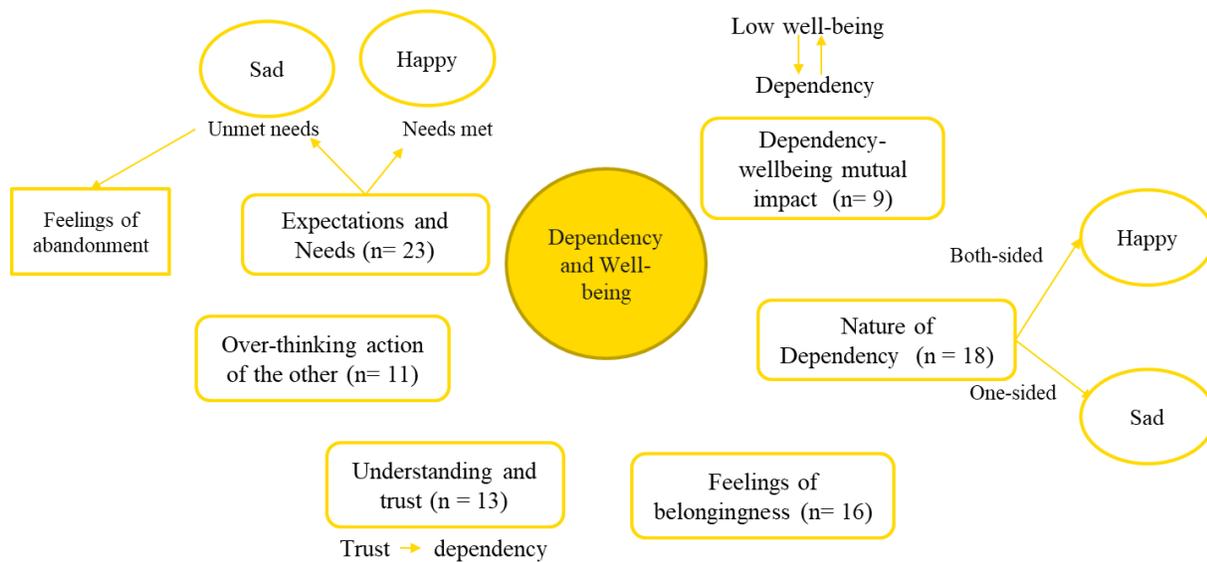
The desirability of the dependency was decided according to the meaning people associated with the idea of emotional dependency and the consequences attached to it. The desired traits are in the black color boxes and the undesired ones are in the yellow color boxes.

## *Emotional Dependency and Well-being*

Figure 9 gives a thematic representation of the influence of emotional dependency on well-being.

**Figure 9**

*Thematic Representation of Relationship between Dependency and Well-being*



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The following themes emerged from the qualitative interviews:

**Expectations and Needs.** This deals with the expectations and needs of the dependent individual from the partner and the relationship. Majority of the participants were of the view that if the needs and expectations of the dependent individual in the relationship are met, the relationship will be healthy and aid to the well-being. It is interesting to note that the onus of well-being of the dependent individual lies on the reaction and responses of the other partner.

**Dependency – Well-being Mutual Impact.** This outlines the mutual impact of emotional dependency and well-being on each other. It represents a cyclic pattern of low well-

being leading to dependency propensities which in turn again contributes to low sense of well-being.

**Nature of Dependency.** This category discusses the one-sided and both-sided nature of dependency on the partner. If emotional dependency is one-sided, it would negatively influence the well-being of the partner compared to when it is both-sided. It was a consensus that both-sided dependency could positively influence the well-being.

**Feelings of Belongingness.** This talks about the need of people to dependent on each other as the basic nature of human being is to feel belonged.

**Understanding and Trust.** This reflect the manner in which understanding and trust between partners holds more power than the dependencies within the relationships, which is viewed as being degrading to the well-being by many individuals interviewed. The thoughtfulness and consideration of each other's emotions were thought to stimulate emotional dependency between the partners which subsequently adds to the well-being. it also indicates that because you have trust in someone, you are choosing to depend on that person for your needs.

**Over-thinking Partner's Action.** Few interviewees also pointed out how dependent individuals can overthink every little action of their partner which could potentially harm their sense of self-concept and confidence. Participants were also of the opinion that the tendency of the dependent individual to revolve their life around their partner renders the dependent individual to overthink every little action of their partner.

## **Summary of Results**

1. Higher is the age, lower is the level of emotional dependency on the partner.
2. Emotional Dependency is higher among men compared to men (trends as per the mean values)
3. No overall significant gender difference in emotional dependency, but it is significantly higher among men in Gujarat compared to women in Gujarat.
4. Emotional Dependency is higher in Gujarat compared to Uttarakhand (trends as per the mean values).
5. No overall state differences in emotional dependency, but it is significantly higher among men in Gujarat than men in Uttarakhand.
6. Gender Role Beliefs are a significant predictor of Emotional Dependency with a negative correlation between them.
7. Emotional Dependency is a significant predictor of Relationship Conflict across different groups
8. Relationship Conflict and Relationship Satisfaction are significant predictors of well-being across all the groups

## **Discussion**

The quantitative results of the study did not find overall statistically significant gender differences, but on conducting further analysis, gender differences were found in the state of Gujarat with men more emotionally dependent on women. There is a dearth of Indian literature on emotional dependency but few Latin American studies investigating gender influences on dependency also found that men are more emotionally dependent on women (Estévez et al., 2018; Urbiola & Estévez, 2015).

As per the results of the study, gender role beliefs are a significant predictor of emotional dependency. This is consistent with the findings of Rowell (2011) who found that gender role ideology has a considerable impact on the preferences of emotional dependency. Bejanyan et al. (2014) in their study compared the romantic ideals of young adults in India and The United States and stated that the boundaries of masculinity and femininity are becoming very fluid which in turn has allowed men and women more spaces to be less gender definite. The results of the study suggested that higher is the emotional dependency on the partner, higher are the conflicts in a relationship. This is in agreement with Cupach and Canary (2000) who established that high dependence of partners on each other in close intimate relationships makes romantic relationships very much liable to conflicts.

The following themes emerged as the result of qualitative analysis and are discussed below:

### **Balance – Imbalance Paradigm**

Desirability of emotional dependency in romantic relationship is mainly viewed in terms of degree of dependence. The meaning people associated with dependency varied according to the balance and imbalance of the dependence. Dependency in a relationship ranges on a continuum of balance and imbalance where healthy relationship lies towards the balanced side. Imbalance of emotions often leads to feelings of frustration, space invasion, and feelings of control, lack of boundaries and low sense of well-being in the relationship. This is in agreement to the finding of Birtchnell (1988) who explained that extreme dependency can threaten individual's well-being and harm close relationships (cited in Ulusoy & Durmus, 2013).

### **Self-identity and Relationship (Women)**

A woman's sense of self is linked to their relationships (Bhattacharya et al., 2019) and as evident in the present study, women are often torn between a need to focus on their own goals as well as focus on the relationship. Women's understanding of themselves in context of emotional

dependency is highly intertwined with their sense of self and self-identity. The desire of dependence in a woman is related to loneliness, feelings of abandonment, feeling less loved and cared for which leads to women controlling their emotions and exhibiting less dependence to avoid such feelings. In contrast, men feel safer to emote with their partners. This can be interpreted as men being given more spaces to share their emotions and also reflects the accommodating nature of women.

### **Varying and Nuanced Understanding of Dependency**

The conception of dependency is inherently subjective, so what one perceives as dependency could be normal for the other. Therefore, there is a very fine distinction of expectations in terms of dependence and independence, and the way it is perceived and experienced by individuals. When asked about the understanding of dependency, men specifically discussed financial and functional (daily life decisions) aspects of dependency. Women mostly shared about the emotional aspects of dependency without the need for any probes. Women's ideas of dependency revolved around emotions, self-identity, and sustenance of relationship.

### **Age as an Influencing Factor**

Age could act as influencing factors of emotional dependency. When an individual is younger with less experiences and less maturity, one may have more expectations from the partner, which may not be as prominent when the person grows older with more relationship and life experiences and maturity. There is likely to be more sense of security attached with the relationship and one's self-concept is relatively stronger.

## **Interdependency Encouraged and Reinforced within Indian Cultural Context**

Although there were many negative sides to emotional dependency, it still emerged as one of the more important reasons of entering into a relationship. Although, the need for emotional reliance is a pan-cultural phenomenon. This is a reflection of the way interdependency is encouraged and reinforced within the Indian cultural context (Chaddha & Deb, 2013). The Indian culture typically follows the interdependent pathway of development which is reinforced across relationships.

### **Differences in Cultural Context**

The quantitative data did not reveal any statistically significant overall state difference but the qualitative interviews presented certain trends in the state of Gujarat and Uttarakhand. One on one conversations and probes pointed out the differences in Uttarakhand men's idea of emotional dependency and expectations from women which largely aligned with the conventional gendered notions of code and conduct. Gujarati participants were more willing to share and discuss their romantic experiences however considerable probing was required for respondents in Uttarakhand, and yet the answers were restricted. Women from both the states were expressive with their responses.

### **Relationship Dynamics**

The kind of relationship dynamics, that is, what works between two people could be more powerful than different definitions and understanding of healthy and unhealthy dependency by different people. The kind of relationship a couple has could be viewed as toxic or unhealthy by others, yet it is possible that their understanding and need for each other could make the relationship work. Essentially, the uniqueness of different relationship dynamics cannot be ignored.

## **Socialization of men**

Indian men are mostly socialized to be expressive with their mothers, but not with fathers or other male relatives. When entering into a relationship, there is an expectation of transference of those needs from mothers to partner. Kakar and Kakar (2009) describe this as the “conscious idealization of mother as a paragon of unconditional love” (p. 99). “Friends before partners” was one of the themes aiding high relationship satisfaction. So, this could mean a shift from a relationship of equality (friendship) to a relationship of nurturer and nurturant – which might not work for some people.

## **Conclusion**

Unlike the predominant social and cultural assumptions of women being more emotionally dependent on men (González-Jiménez & Del Mar Hernández-Romera, 2014; Benlloch et al., 2008), the study showed that men are more emotionally dependent than women. This reflects men’s need for emotional dependency. They may not be very articulate about it but the need is present. The present study provides insights into the emerging adult’s emotional dependency tendencies that are guided by the interaction of state and gender. The study revealed that women in Uttarakhand and men in Gujarat had higher egalitarian beliefs. Cultural traditions are more strongly enforced in Uttarakhand, particularly rural Uttarakhand which is marked by patriarchal dominance (Moller, 2003; Rangan & Jewitt, 2001). The population in the urban areas of Uttarakhand is in part contributed by the migration from the hills and mountains (Mamgain & Reddy, 2015). Therefore, many women migrate from the rural parts of Uttarakhand for better educational and career opportunities and women in mountains are very self-sufficient - particularly physically and emotionally. Therefore, coming from scarcity and

moving to more resources and opportunities could lead to acculturation and feelings of empowerment.

On the other hand Gujarat is recognized as an economically and infrastructurally developed (Khanna et al., 2022), fastest – growing state in the Indian economy with the highest level of women’s empowerment (Bhatt & Shastri, 2018). Being a fairly modernized state, it has equality of resources and opportunities for men and women, particularly in the urban parts of the state. Men in urban Gujarat have been mostly socialized to expect equality for men and women. A recent study conducted with urban educated men in Vadodara, Gujarat revealed the shift from traditional to more progressive views in the gender domain (Kapadia, Thakkar, & K. Subair, unpublished manuscript). The study also indicated a desire to break free from the traditional definitions of masculinity and how stereotypes of masculinity harm men as they are not able to express their feelings and emotions and are in fact expected to suppress the same. Hence, urban educated men may be more inclined toward greater gender sensitive.

### **Implications**

The study has implications for educational interventions for developing healthy relationships, particularly strategies for couples’ communication. The results can be used in professional settings to offer spaces to communicate and clarify misunderstood emotions and ways of expression.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

1. Couples’ interviews to understand the interdependency on each other and how the balance of dependency and autonomy is navigated in such a dynamic.
2. Studies involving family: what familial context could predict emotional dependency tendencies and what trajectory would it take? What constitutes healthy and unhealthy dependency within the larger context of Indian families? How do relationships that are

hidden from family or in knowledge of the family influence emotional dependency, relationship satisfaction and well-being?

3. How does emotional dependency play out in the context of marriage? How is dependence and autonomy understood in such an interdependent institution?
4. Studies using personality traits and attachment tendencies as the potential predictors of emotional dependency.

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