

## Short Communication

## DATING PATTERNS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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## INTRODUCTION

Dating by adolescents and young adults is of recent genesis in India. In Gujarat dating during Navratri is emerging as a convenient event among youngsters, owing to social convenience and relaxation of deadlines for returning home by liberal. Media has highlighted reports of increased condom sales during Navratri and increase in unmarried girls seeking abortions, leading to increasing concerns among parents. This issue assumes gravity owing to implications of unsafe sex, teenage pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted infections and violence among adolescents and young adults coupled with inadequate access to sexuality counselling, family planning services, or STI services.<sup>1</sup> This study aims to explore some such issues pertinent to dating.

## METHODOLOGY

This study reports of interviews of 300 respondents, comprising of 213 males and 87 females aged >18 yrs in Surat. The study sites comprised of residents of Umra, Piplod, Varachha, Bhatar, Udhna, Bhagal Chowk, Katargam, Parle point areas and educational institutions as Surat Municipal Institute of Medical Education and Research, S.P.B College, P.T. Science

College, K.P. Commerce, Sarvajnik College of Education Trust (SCET), Sardar Vallabhbhai National Institute of Technology, Navyug College and also employees of different firms.

## OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

It was observed that a total of 194 (64.6%) respondents have ever been on a date, being significantly higher in males 164 (77%) as compared to females 30 (34.5%). Further 44.7% had dated during Navratri, again being significantly higher in males 55.4% as compared to females 18.4%. Significantly, a far larger number of respondents, 70.4% males and 27.6% females, intended to date during the coming Navratri. 70.4% males and 65.5% females had opined that Navratri is a proper timing for dating, implying that more females might actually date during the coming Navratri without explicitly declaring do. The perception that Navratri is a proper time to date emanated largely from social convenience as opined by 59.7% respondents. 82.3% males and 85.1% females had perceived that it is proper for young people to date again revealing the schism between the fact that though most of the females consider dating proper, they do not date or do not admit to doing so.

Table 1: During Navratri Which Type Person Would You Date?

Category	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)
Friend	85 (39.9%)	26 (29.9%)	111 (37.0%)
Good looking stranger	75 (35.2%)	10 (11.5%)	85 (28.3%)
Net/chat friend	24 (11.3%)	6 (6.9%)	30 (10.0%)
Colleague	10 (4.7%)	18 (20.7%)	28 (9.3%)
Persons living in Neighbourhood	12 (5.6%)	12 (13.8%)	24 (4.7%)
Friend & Person living in Neighbourhood	5 (2.3%)	6 (6.9%)	11 (3.7%)
Friend & Colleague	2 (0.9%)	9 (10.3%)	11 (3.7%)
Total	213(100%)	87(100%)	300(100%)

Table 1 reveals the necessity to ensure that respondents who are not averse to dating good looking strangers and net/chat friends do so safely. Studies reveal that approx. 31% of U.S. adults use online dating service.<sup>2</sup> Navratri is construed as a convenient event for dating mainly due to the opportunity to meet many persons of the opposite gender, more receptiveness of females, social laxity, permissiveness and convenience to dating and consequently 88% males and 12% females had dated during this period. The opposing of Navratri for dating stemmed from religious grounds and the fact that females often perceived this as cheating their parents. Dating multiple partners was commoner in males (85.4%) as opposed to females (14.6%). Morris

in 1959 had reported that men are more flirtatious as compared to females.<sup>3</sup>

Significantly, the majority had not informed their parents about dating, males (65.2%), females (82.8%), as they were apprehensive that their parents will not accept it else they simply did not wish to disclose about their dating patterns. An important finding is that 13.8% males perceived that their parents were unconcerned about their dating behaviour whereas all females perceived that their parents were much concerned about the same, reflecting the gender discrimination attitude in the parents. Wearing Good Dresses (males-56.3%; females- 57.5%) and perfumes (males-9.4%; females-12.6%) were employed by the respondents to improve

their chances of a date and females additionally wore good ornaments were also worn by females (13.8%).

Female respondents kept in regular touch with their date of past Navratri (55.2%) in opposition to mere 2.3% males. More than half (51.8%) females reported of facing a problem with their past dating incident as opposed to 7% males. 89%, 58.7%, 79% respondents were aware of the problem of unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and about HIV associated with unsafe sex. An important observation was that only 72.7% respondents knew what safe sex meant while the remainder had false notions of this concept. 24%, 25.7%, 7.3%, 3%, 3% respondents had rated their overall dating experience as very good, good, average, bad and very bad, whereas 37% had withheld their opinion. The awareness regarding emergency pills was significantly higher in females (55.2%) as compared to males (18.8%). 59.3% males & 40.7% females perceived that Government should

relax the Navratri event timings until early morning for greater fun (58.3%) and dating (28.3%) in context of adolescents and young adults.

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