

**Norms, Attitude, and Sexual Conduct Among Female  
College Students in Tehran; Implications for  
Reproductive Health Policy and Research**

**Submitted for PhD**

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## **Abstract**

Despite social, cultural and religious prohibitions on premarital sexual relationships in Iran, some evidence suggests that premarital heterosexual relationships and sex among young people may be increasing, but no study has been conducted which gives a comprehensive picture of perceived societal norms, attitudes, sexuality and the nature and process of heterosexual relationships among unmarried young females in Iran.

This study aimed to investigate and compare the views and conduct of young female college students with perceived societal norms. The objectives included; exploring sexual norms and attitudes, assessing the social and individual factors responsible for variation in norms, attitude, and behaviour of female college students and finally exploring the process and circumstances of sexual behaviour.

Complementary qualitative and survey methods were used. The qualitative research includes 4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 30 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs). FGDs explored societal norms on pre-marital sexuality, while IDIs explored more personal attitudes and behaviours in greater depth. The survey was conducted in 2005-6 on a sample of 1743 female undergraduate students in four multidisciplinary universities in Tehran. A self-administered questionnaire was applied.

This study revealed an ambiguity with regard to social acceptability of premarital heterosexual relationships, while sexual contact before marriage was perceived as socially proscribed. Personal attitudes were considerably more tolerant of such premarital relationships and sex than societal norms. These findings suggest that traditional norms on heterosexual relationships are eroding among young people. Within this complex attitudinal context, nearly half of unmarried women reported premarital friendships with men and more than one-fifth reported any type of sex (23%). Low self-efficacy, peers' liberal norms on virginity, older age, parents' liberal attitude and poor family relationships were predictors of ever having sexual contact. Qualitative findings showed that gender double-standards dictate restrictions for women, but permit sexual licence for men and owing to men's preference for a virgin bride, most relationships which involve sex are unlikely to result in marriage. Therefore although young people have adopted some liberal values in their premarital relationships their marriage still follows traditional and cultural values. These results have implications for programmes designed to improve young people's reproductive health in Iran.



## Acknowledgement

My interest in studying Iranian young people's sexual behaviours was triggered when in 2001, I was asked to cooperate with a World Health Organisation (WHO) collaborative study, based in the National Research Centre for Medical Sciences, under the Ministry of Health and Medical Education in Iran. I became actively involved in a study about reproductive knowledge, attitude and behaviour of adolescent boys in Tehran. This study revealed that a significant minority of adolescent males are sexually experienced, while there was very little knowledge about details and circumstances of such relationships. There was no comprehensive study about premarital sexual relationships among other groups of young people, particularly educated women. Consequently, I chose the title of my MSc dissertation at Edinburgh University in 2002 as, "*Promoting young adult sexual and reproductive health, from fact into action*". Based on my MSc thesis, I prepared a research draft about young people's sexuality in Iran that fortunately led to a PhD research project under the supervision of experts at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

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## Glossary

**Norm:** A standard rule or set of instructions that is specific to a group or society and the function of which is to regulate its members' behaviour. In theory there are no norms without social control and the threat of punishment (Campenhoudt, Cohen et al. 1997).

**Attitude & belief:** Attitude is a learned predisposition to respond to an object or class of objects in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way. Attitudes are built upon belief (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). Beliefs are the fundamental building blocks in this conceptual structure.

**Intention:** A behavioural intention refers to a person's subjective probability that he/she will perform certain behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). In this study operational definition of sexual intention refers to a propensity or internal tendency to refrain from pre-marital sexual relationship in a hypothetical opportunity.

**Sex, sexual contact and sexual experience:** Sex in general use in many languages particularly in English is often applied to "sexual activity" and can cover a range of behaviours. Sex in this thesis has been used interchangeably with sexual activity, sexual contact and sexual experience. Other languages and cultures use different terms, with slightly different meanings (WHO 2002). In Farsi, "*Tamase Jeni*" is used for sexual contact or sex. Sexual contact in this thesis consists of all different types of sexual activity including non-penetrative (sex by touching genitalia without any penetration) and penetrative sex (anal intercourse or vaginal intercourse) and also oral sex. Anal sex and vaginal sex are used for anal intercourse and vaginal intercourse, respectively.

**Sexual intercourse** or "*Mogharabeat-e-Jeni*" or "*Nazdike-e Jeni*" in Farsi apply to vaginal intercourse or anal intercourse.

**Penetrative sex:** In this study, vaginal penetrative sex applies to vaginal intercourse and non-vaginal penetrative sex is applied to anal intercourse and oral sex.

**Non-penetrative sex:** In this study, it applies to sex by touch not involving penetration

**Physical intimacy** in this thesis applies to hand holding, kissing, touching and hugging.

**Sexual relationship** applies to various episodes of sexual intercourse involving two or more partners but also all the interactions and acts of communication that lead to, frame, and give meaning to the partners' sexual intercourse (Campenhoudt, Cohen et al. 1997).

**Self-efficacy** is the people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances (Bandura 1986). In this thesis self-efficacy apply to the skill to hesitate premarital sexual contact in different situations.

**Social factors** refers to an objective notion of all factors that can affect a person's behaviour but that are physically external to the person

**Reproductive health** is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes" (WHO 2002).



**Sexual health** is a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled (WHO 2002).

**Sexuality** “is a central aspect of being human throughout life and encompasses sex, gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction. Sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. While sexuality can include all of these dimensions, not all of them are always experienced or expressed. Sexuality is influenced by the interaction of biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors” (WHO 2002)<sup>1</sup>.

**Perceived susceptibility or vulnerability:** Individuals have their own perception of the likelihood of experiencing a condition that would adversely affect their health. Individuals vary widely in their perception of susceptibility to a disease or condition.

**Socialisation:** The process of transmitting and internalising culture, especially social norms

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<sup>1</sup> WHO definitions are not formal.

# **1 The context of the study, Islamic Republic of Iran**

## **Introduction**

This chapter aims to present a multifaceted picture of the context of the study, Iran. Firstly, it gives an overall view of the political system, the economic situation and social circumstances of the country. Secondly, educational and other institutional programmes for improving reproductive health knowledge are described, followed by an outline of the position of women from the perspective of employment. Finally, the situation of the country in relation to age at marriage and then STDs, HIV/AIDS and abortion is outlined.

### ***1.1 Political system, social and economic situation***

After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Islamic principles underlay all cultural, political and economic affairs. Legal changes were introduced to implement Islamic policies and a cultural shift towards Islamic values was reinforced by the mass media, especially television, as well as formal and informal educational programmes. Eight years of war with Iraq, 1981-1988, drained a significant portion of the social and economic resources which otherwise would have been available for infrastructure development and social programmes after the revolution.

Since 1988, a new direction of reform and change has been established in Iran. New policies have been formulated to foster economic development and reconstruction in the wake of this destructive war. The Islamic government has made great efforts to improve living standards and provide basic amenities to the rural communities. A strong programme of basic health care and family planning has been established.

The Supreme Leader is currently Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He appoints the head of the judiciary, six of the members of the powerful Guardian Council, the commanders of all the armed forces, and Friday prayer leaders. He also confirms the President's election.



The Leader is chosen by the clerics who make up the Assembly of Experts. Since the election of ex-President Mohammed Khatami in 1997 a tension between religious rules and the democratic aspirations among most Iranians has existed. The current President, Mr Ahmadi Nejad was elected in 2005 and conservative rules, particularly with women's Islamic dress codes, have not become prominent after his presidency. He disagrees with any enforcement of Islamic dress codes (Frances 2007). Although the highest ranking executive and legislative official of Iran is the President, the Leader has enormous constitutional powers to intervene at almost any level of government. His job is based on the principle of *Valayat-e-faqih* or rule by the Islamic scholar.

Although the inhabitants of Iran are both ethnically and linguistically diverse, they have a common religion as approximately 99 percent are Muslims. There are a limited number of Armenians and Jews in Iran (1996-97 Census). The *hejab* (the modest dress code) became mandatory in 1980 and is required to be worn in all public places regardless of a woman's religion or citizenship. However, reformists and conservatives continue to contest these Islamic restrictions.

Though alcohol and drugs are prohibited under Islamic regulations, 16.8% of adolescent boys aged 15-18 reported ever consumption of alcohol and 2.1% ever used illegal drugs (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006). Satellite television is illegal, but many people have access to satellite illegally. Twenty seven of adolescent boys in 2002 reported that they have access to satellite programs (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006). Pornographic material is also illegal in Iran although is accessible widely. Internet is extensively accessible particularly among young people. A study conducted in 2002 in Tehran revealed that more than one-third of adolescent boys have access to the internet (34%) (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006). Although the main government-

sponsored providers of network in Iran have set up firewalls that prevent access to pornographic materials, some of these materials are privately available and accessible.

Any intimate behaviour among unmarried people with the opposite sex, such as kissing and hugging, is not accepted culturally and even not allowed legally in public places.

However, heterosexual hand-holding is very common and accepted. Morality police, or Revolutionary Guards in Iran, who are a branch of the metropolitan police are empowered to warn citizens about immoral behaviour and failure to wear the Hejab. In terms of friendship and sexual relationships, any behaviour in public which reflects immorality, or encourages unethical and un-Islamic messages to the public view, is forbidden, and those found guilty will be sentenced to some punishment.

After the revolution, some gender-based segregation took place, particularly in schools. Students study in gender-segregated schools up to the end of high school, but most universities are mixed-sex. Despite the Islamic regulations, some mixed gender parties take place occasionally in secure places and alcohol and drugs are also used by young people which, if discovered by the police, would incur punishment.

Prostitution is not permitted in Iran; however, unofficial reports indicate a rising trend in prostitution among teenage girls who are operating informally in the country, particularly in Tehran. Many of them work in the street. An increasing trend for teenagers to run away from their homes for various reasons, such as parent's addiction, domestic violence, abuse and restrictions in the family, is thought to be one factor related to rising prostitution. Unfortunately, these juveniles encounter yet more abuse and exploitation and a high percentage of girls who have run away end up in prostitution. There are inconsistent estimates about the absconding rate among female adolescents in Iran, but evidence is more consistent about its increasing trend (Haghighatdoost 2002; Khoshnamak 2006).



## 1.2 Education and schooling

There is a widespread belief in education and in its power to change and transform individuals and social constructions, both in ancient and modern Iran (Menashri and Shamsavary 1994). Education of children is a major issue for most families in Iran and affluent families make every effort to ensure their children's best education. Both daughters and sons are expected to have the best education available. Educational attainment for women in Iran increased significantly during the post-revolutionary era especially during the period 1986 to 1996 (Table 1.1).

**Table 1. 1 Literacy rate for males and females aged 6 years and older from 1986 to 2000, Iran.**

	Iran				Urban				Rural			
	1986	1991	1996	2000*	1986	1991	1996	2000*	1986	1991	1996	2000*
<b>Males</b>	71.0	81.0	84.7	86.3	80.4	86.7	90.0	90.9	60.0	72.6	76.7	79.4
<b>Females</b>	52.1	67.0	74.2	75.9	65.4	76.8	82.0	81.8	36.0	54.2	62.4	65.4

Source: Iran Statistical Centre, 1997.

\* The source of data for the year 2000 is Iran Demographic Health Survey in 2000 (IDHS 2000).

Even the proportion of women attending universities is much higher than men in current years (60%) and it is increasing by time (SCI 2004). There was also an impressive rise in the level of school enrolment during the 10 years following the 1986 Census. Enrolment for females at elementary and middle school levels approached 100 percent. At high school it increased to about 50 percent of the eligible population. Obtaining a high school diploma before marriage appears to have become the norm, at least in urban areas (Aghajanian 1998).

There is a strong preference for girls to continue their education in preference to marrying early. This indicates a positive valuation of education for girls, despite that

fact that this does not lead to a high rate of employment prior to marriage. Overall, education is valued in Iranian society even among elders who are either illiterate or less educated. This may be considered as a measure of ideational change in the society (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002).

Despite the restrictions imposed on women after the revolution, their situation in Iran has improved. Data on literacy, education, labour force participation, health, and fertility from the United Nations and World Bank all demonstrate trends favourable to Iranian women. Indeed, in these important areas conditions appear to be better for women than under the previous regime. A quick review of relevant data is useful here. Illiteracy among Iranian women aged 15-24 has declined from over one-third in 1980 to less than one-tenth in 2000 (World Bank 2004). Over the same period, the illiteracy rate for adult women in the whole population has been cut in half, from about 60% to about 30%. The number of women in secondary school as a percentage of the eligible age group more than doubled from about 30% to almost 80%. As of 1999, for every 100 boys in primary school, 96 girls were enrolled, indicating almost equal learning opportunity for boys and girls (United Nation Development Program 2001). In 2000, half of all Iranian university students were women.

Women now make up 27% of the Iranian labour force, up from 20% in 1980 (World Bank 2004). The percentage of all Iranian women who are economically active more than doubled from 6.1% in 1986 to 13.7% in 2000 (Mehryar, Aghajanian et al. 2002). In terms of health, life expectancy went up by eleven years between 1980 and 2000 for both Iranian men and women. Life expectancy for women born in 2000 was 70, for men 68, up from 59.2 and 58.5, respectively, in 1986. With respect to family planning, levels of 5.6 births per woman in 1985 fell to 2.0 in 2000, a drop accomplished by a voluntary, but government –sponsored, birth control programme.



### 1.2.1 Institutional Education Programmes on Reproductive Health

Special types of information about sex and reproductive health are sought by young people from various sources and different individuals in Iran. Sources of such information by subject among young Iranian people are described in Table 1.2.

In recent years, efforts have been made to incorporate population education issues into formal and informal school curricula. Owing to cultural sensitivities and religious considerations, the content of schoolbooks is limited purely to the issue of population and development and no explicit information on reproductive health and family planning is provided.

**Table 1. 2 Sources of information on reproductive health among young people in Iran by subjects**

<b>Reproductive Health Subject</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Religious aspects of sexuality	schools and colleges.
Puberty and menstruation	mothers, older sisters, school teachers, and personal experiences (Family Planning Association 1998)
The process of human reproduction and intercourse	peers, pornographic material, Hollywood movies, satellite programmes, and personal experiences
Contraception	health centres, compulsory university courses(2 credit units) about family planning (Shadpour 1999), compulsory pre-marriage sessions( 2 hour sessions), friends, literature, parents, teachers, and mass media programmes(Family Planning Association 1998)
Risky sexual behaviours, STDs and AIDS, safe sex	sometimes doctors, brochures and posters about AIDS and recent TV shows about AIDS (Nasserzadeh 2002).

However, many non-governmental, as well as government agencies, have taken steps to undertake innovative strategies to introduce reproductive and sexual health messages into their programmes to reach adolescents and young people and influence them in taking responsible decisions regarding their sexual and health behaviours (UNFPA

1999). A number of sensitisation activities have been conducted, targeting members of parliament, policy makers, religious leaders, the media, NGOs, individuals working in health-related fields and volunteers (UNPFA 2004).

One essential element of population policy in Iran is a programme of premarital counselling and training. These programmes are tailored for couples who intend to marry. Both members of the couple are obliged to attend such courses to be able to receive their marriage licence. The premarital training includes a half-day course on sexual and reproductive health issues. Moreover, each couple must undergo medical tests for syphilis infection and drug use. The Ministry of Health and Medical Education administers 500 counselling centres around the country, as well as many mobile teams in rural areas. One of the materials which are used in such training courses is a booklet entitled "The Message of Happiness for Young Couples". This material focus on passion and love, caring and spiritual links in the sexual relationship, and suggests that young men make sure that they initiate sex with their wife's consent and readiness. This booklet explains also physiological responses to sexual arousal, and includes very explicit information about pleasure and enjoyment of each party during sex, sexual health, sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention and some facts associated with HIV infection (Shepard and DeJong 2005).

### ***1.3 Employment status among young women***

The formal participation of women in the labour force and in paid employment has been low. In 1986, the level of paid employment among Iranian women was about 7% . In 1996, it had increased to slightly more than 10% for all women, and about 14 % for women in the age group 20-29 years old. The level is, however, higher in large urban centres such as Tehran (Aghajanian 2000).



According to the DHS of Iran in 2000, 10.5% and 19.5% of females aged 10 and over are employed in urban and rural areas of Iran, respectively. Despite the increasing tendency for females to be in employment in recent times, 54.7% of females in urban and 54% in rural areas are housewives (IDHS 2000). While the current level of paid employment is relatively low, a new attitude is emerging towards women's work outside the home. As education continuation rates rise among the female population, the idea of working outside the home is becoming more and more compelling among females. In a recent study of adolescents in high schools, over 90 percent expressed their intention and desire to work after marriage (Aghajanian, Tashakori et al. 1996).

#### **1.4 Age at marriage**

Along with declining ages at puberty, age at first marriage has increased noticeably particularly during the last two or three decades. The female singulate mean age at marriage for Iran increased from 19.7 years in 1976 to 22.4 years in 1996. The male

**Table 1. 3 Mean age at first marriage in Iran (1956 to 1996)**

Year	Male			Female		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1956	-	-	25.5	-	-	18.6
1966	24.4	25.6	25.0	17.9	19.0	18.4
1976	22.6	24.2	23.4	19.6	20.2	19.7
1986	22.6	24.2	23.6	19.6	20.0	19.9
1996	24.5	26.2	25.6	22.3	22.5	22.4

Source: Country population and housing, National Data, 1976/96

mean age at first marriage increased from 23.4 years in 1976 to 25.6 years in 1996 (Table 1.3).

The proportion of women aged 20-24 who had never married rose from 21.4% in 1976 to 39.5 % in 1996 (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002). In 2000, it increased to 47.1% (IDHS 2000) (Table 1.4).

**Table 1. 4 Percentage of never married women aged 15-34, from 1966 to 2000, Iran**

Age group	1966	1976	1986	1996	2000*
15-19	54.1	65.7	65.7	82.1	83.5
20-24	13.4	21.4	22	39.5	47.1
25-29	3.8	6.8	9.4	14.8	20.8
30-34	1.7	2.7	4.6	6.4	9.3

Sources: Doroudi Ahi N, Marriage and sex imbalance in ages at marriage: Marriage squeezes in Iran, 1966-96, MA Thesis, Department of Demography, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran (2001);

\* Iran Demographic Health Survey, 2000.

It is interesting to note that the Islamic government of Iran has consistently encouraged early marriage since 1979. Owing to the fact that Islam emphasises the family as the basic unit of the society and wishes to prevent promiscuity among unmarried people, young people are offered incentives for marriage such as financial support. The government also encourages college students to marry by running group marriage ceremonies and providing them with some privileges and incentives.

This rise in age of marriage has been attributed to recent economic hardship such as shortages in housing, unemployment and the rise in the cost of living, as well as an increased tendency among young people to pursue higher education, particularly among women (SCI 1996/97).

### **1.5 HIV/AIDS and STDs**

Iran has a low or “concentrated” HIV epidemic because its prevalence is lower than one percent while it is five percent among high risk groups, such as intravenous drug users (UNAIDS 2004). The first case of HIV in Iran was reported in 1986. This was followed



by a rapid increase in the number of cases. In 2003, officially there were 5086 Iranians living with HIV/AIDS, of whom 4838 were male and 248 were female. This figure increased to 12,556 Iranians living with HIV infection in December 2005. Nearly 95% of them are male and 5% are female. Young people aged 25-34 accounted for the greatest number of people living with HIV infection in Iran (3800 cases of HIV infection) (Alavian 2006).

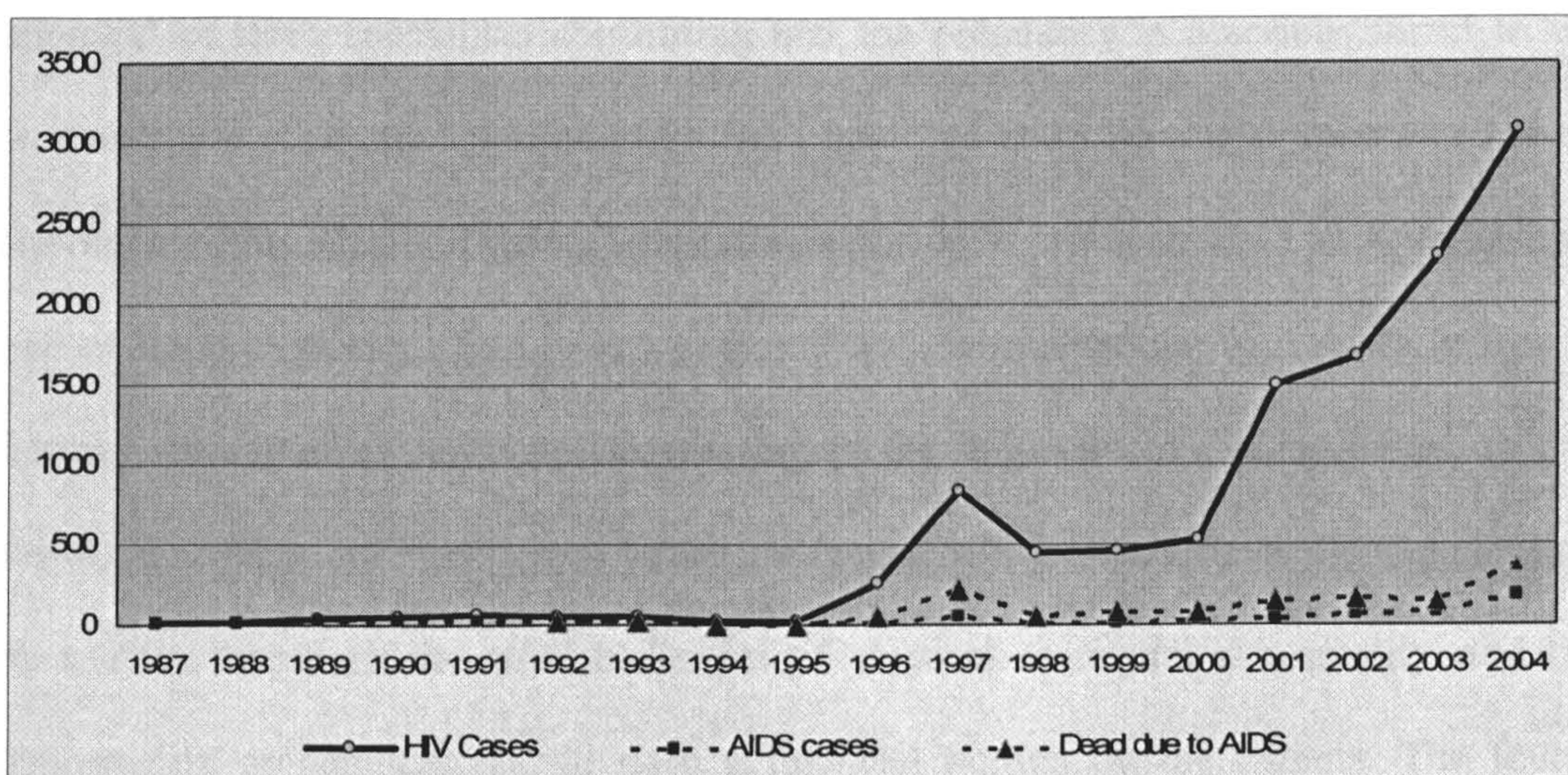
In 2002, it had been estimated that 23% of cases of AIDS were transmitted by sexual intercourse and 9% of them occurred among people younger than 19 years old (Nojoomi 2003). It is feared that the HIV/AIDS situation in Iran may be more serious than these published data indicate (Tavoosi, Zaferani et al. 2004). This prevalence is undoubtedly an underestimation and it is estimated that between 60,000 to 70,000 HIV-infected people are living in Iran (Alavian 2006). Nevertheless, the most important concern about AIDS in Iran is its rapid growing trend in recent years and the fact that the mode of transmission appears to be shifting from sharing needles to sexual contact particularly among young people (Nojoomi, Shojaee et al. 2003; IranMania 2004). The majority of reported HIV-positive cases has been reported since 2002, suggesting the introduction of surveillance and new intervention programmes such as voluntary counselling and testing centers, but it also indicates a recent rise in the HIV epidemic in the country.

Although the HIV epidemic seems to have been originally stimulated by drug users, because one-fifth of drug users are HIV positive in selected areas, and the transmission mode is reported to be mostly through injection of drugs, but these estimations and interpretations might reflect that most researches focused on drug users rather than on other groups. Due to the fact that heterosexual relationships are rarely explored with regard to HIV risk, and the fact that some evidence suggests a rising trend of



heterosexual transmission in the last few years and a dramatic rise in STDs, caution should be taken in drawing any conclusion about mode of transmission of HIV in Iran (MOHME 2003). According to Figure 1.1, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS in Iran increased sharply since 1987 to 2004. In 2001 only 69 cases of people diagnosed with AIDS were reported while this figure increased to 631 in 2006.

**Figure1. 1 Reported new cases of HIV/AIDS and related deaths in Iran from 1987 to 2004 by year of reporting.**



Source: Centre for Disease Control, Ministry of Health and Medical Education Iran, 2006

Few studies have explored the prevalence of STDs among unmarried young people. However a study of 100 male gonorrhoea patients who attended from 1997 to 2000 in Kermanshah (one of the provinces of Iran) showed street prostitution was the main source of infection (64%) (Zargooshi 2002). The fact that a majority of men infected with STDs had sexual contact with prostitutes should not be ignored, even though prostitution is illegal. Another study was conducted in 2003 among female sex workers, border truck drivers and youth in four different parts of the country with the highest rates of HIV infection. This study revealed that all sex workers have had a history of STIs, nearly two-thirds reported frequent episodes of STDs. However, only about one-third of border truck drivers (32%) and 28 percent of youth reported histories of STDs.



Abnormal genital discharge and genital ulcers were the two most common reported symptoms of STIs among all subjects with previous history of STIs (MOHME 2003).

### **1.6 Abortion**

Induced abortion in Iran is illegal, except to save the life of the pregnant woman (U.N. 2000). Reliable data on the prevalence, causes and consequences of abortion in Iran are scarce. According to current Islamic laws, physicians or anyone who assist in performing an illegal abortion face imprisonment or fines. A legal abortion requires the approval of three specialists confirming that the pregnancy is a serious threat to the woman's life. The strict anti-abortion laws have led to increasing numbers of unsafe abortions (IPPF 2002). During a recent seminar on abortion in 2003 in Kermanshah, one of the provinces of Iran, a key outcome was the declaration of a fatwa (religious decree) submitted by an ayatollah residing in the holy city of Ghom. Based on this fatwa, in 2005 a law was passed in the parliament which would have allowed abortion up to four months if the child had signs of physical or mental abnormality, and the abnormality or handicap would pose a financial burden on the parents. The fourth month of pregnancy is believed to be the stage at which the soul is created. However, the Iranian Guardians Council rejected the law that would have eased abortion restrictions. The Guardian Council claimed that aborting handicapped children who may cause financial burden on the parents after birth is against Sharia or Islamic law.

## **2 Historical, cultural and social aspects of family and woman in Iran**

### **Introduction**

Variations exist in attitudes towards sex and regulation of sexual behaviour across cultures. One aspect of sexuality which is extremely variable across societies is premarital sexual behaviour. Societies range from having permissive endorsement of premarital sex to harsh condemnation of any heterosexual intimacy between unmarried people. There are also variations in acceptance and tolerance of premarital relationships in between these two extremes (Broude 1975). To examine the societal norms and attitudes in every society with regard to premarital sexual behaviour, understanding the underlying historical, cultural and social circumstances is required.

In this chapter the normative context within which young women in Iran have, or do not have, relationships with the opposite sex is analysed. Firstly, the trend of political and social events in Iran and their influences on cultural setting and social rules and regulations is described. Secondly, family structure and changes in Iran are briefly discussed. Thirdly, issues related to patriarchy and parental controls are highlighted. Fourthly, relationships with the opposite sex, sexuality, and code of behaviour among Iranian people are explained. Hejab and sex segregation as two new issues after the 1979 revolution are explicated. The marriage system and related issues are described and are followed by gender beliefs in the post-revolution period and at the present.

### **2.1 Historical background**

Iran is an Islamic country in the Middle East. The majority of Iranians practice Shia't sect of Islam, which is different in some details with Suni sect, practiced in most Arab countries of the Middle East. From the pre-Islamic period, Iran inherited the Persian culture and language. The pre-Islamic religion in Iran was Zoroastrian. Pars was the



former name of Iran which was characterised as a strong and rich civilization. The Iranian socio-cultural system grew through the interaction of Islam and the pre-Islamic Iranian civilization. During the spread of Islamic domain, Iranian society made great contributions to eastern culture, literature, philosophy and science. However, due to invasions and destruction by Mongols and Timurids, Iran moved into the 20th Century with a weak economy and government, and strong internal invasion from the European colonial powers. The initial impact of Western culture started in Iran in the first half of the 19th century and developed to a full-scale westernisation in the Iranian society in the 1970s. The first half of the 20th century saw a persistent effort of modernisation and westernisation by the government. Economic development and modernisation was accompanied with growth of a strong modern army, secular educational system, and strong nationalistic ideology (Lerner 1987).

During 1955-1979, Iran was characterised by rapid economic growth and modernisation, enhancement of women's social status and social participation and economical involvement outside the household. These changes included granting women the right to vote and political participation, and placing women in high positions within the government bureaucracy. A new set of family laws was passed to improve the legal status of women within marriage and family. The legal and symbolic changes were made not only toward promoting the status of women but also toward affecting patterns of family formation and levels of fertility and family growth.

Although a relative enhancement was achieved in the wellbeing of the urban population and especially those in certain regions, the process of modernisation in Iran generated widening regional and ethnic division. Hence this led to a growing ethnic, regional, and class inequality in the 1970s. Beside the modernisation efforts, the strong penetration of Western culture, which was opposed to Iranian Islamic traditions, created a dividing line

among the population. Hence, cultural, religious, economic, and social dissatisfaction accumulated over the years and led to the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The pre-Islamic civilisation, the ancient Islamic prescriptions, the 1960s and 1970s modernisation efforts, the Islamic Revolution in 1979, eight years of destructive war between 1981 and 1988 and the recent efforts toward economic development all together shed light on the current institution of the family in Iran.

## ***2.2 Family and family change in Iran***

Family is the most important social institution for Iranian and children are the centre of this institution. Families are expected to be the priority for all members. Gender roles are well defined and expectations in the family are clear. To understand family foundation and changes, it is desirable to describe the past situation of family in Iran.

Major historical events in Iran established current cultural and social characteristics for the current family. The traditional family was based on family network and patriarchy. Cultural and social institutions of Iranian society developed with the expansion of Islam and its interaction with strong and rich pre-Islamic Iranian civilisation.

Until the early twentieth century, the norm and common pattern of the family in Iran was traditional in which the power was based on gender, age and experience. Marriage occurred mainly at very young ages and was arranged. Since marriage connected two relative networks rather than two individuals, other relatives and family members tended to participate actively in selection of the marriage partner. Mostly marriage took place within the family network and polygyny was a sign of wealth. High fertility among families was due to high infant mortality, a wish for security during old ages, fear of loneliness, the role of children in production and the prestige of pregnancy. Woman in the family could gain status by fertility. Sons were preferred to daughters due



to the role of boys in maintaining the generation and the role of production (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002; Afkhami 2004) .

In the first half of the twentieth century, Iranian society became influenced by modernisation, leading to gradual but constant change in personal and familial relationships. Events such as industrialisation, civilisation, promotion of education, immigration, income generation and expansion of mass media, and introducing new ideas in the social environment of Iran took place. Specified reforms were conducted in social programmes such as improvement of women's social status. Women obtained the right to political participation and to vote. In 1967, the Family Protection law was approved which indirectly influenced the family and fertility (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002).

One of the results of such changes in families was the size and construction of families. Families became more nuclear with a weaker relationship between family members. Autonomy of couples and lower fertility rate and freedom in choosing marital partner were other results of these changes. Despite these changes, the relationship between family members and social interaction between parents and children, are still under some influences of traditional values (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002). Most unmarried young people in Iran are still living with their parents. Seventy three percent of young people co-reside with their parents or other family members, 23.2% with their husband or wife and children and only 2.5% live independently of their parents in a separate home (Ebadi 2005).

Some aspects of Iranian families have changed in response to societal pressures for modification. But the family has remained intact and continues to play a major role in the society and in the lives of individuals. Despite the strong position of the family as an institution, the family appears to be under some tension during recent decades, at least among some classes of the population. The increase in the number of dual-earner

families, generational gaps in ideology among family members and gender, eight years of war with Iraq, and the unstable economy are among those recent stressors of the family in Iran.

Marriage and motherhood were primarily the women's role in Iran. Women have been exclusively concerned with family activities and economic contributions within households and men have remained the main source of income. Since the 1970s, a deviation from this pattern of the division of labour has started and married women increasingly have participated in formal salary-earning. About 500,000 families have been affected by this new pattern of dual-earning (Aghajanian 2001). Previous studies suggest that religious scripts, values and related symbols in the pre-revolutionary period were replaced with secular values and western cultural elements. Secular propensity among families and the severe economical crisis have influenced the family network and the nature of relationships between family members (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002). Marriage ceremonies, its details and family relations in local areas and ethnic groups were always influenced by the ethnic diversity of Iran (Aghajanian 2001).

### ***2.3 Patriarchy and parental control in Iran***

Traditionally Iranian culture has been patriarchal with the man (father or the husband) as the principal of the family/household. However, the modernisation processes in the 20th century till the Islamic Revolution changed the situation among the more modern and educated classes. Most families and the more traditional classes remained more or less the same. Patriarchy has been a major feature in Iran since ancient times which stems from religious, legal and cultural practices. After the revolution, patriarchy was promoted and strengthened by converting to ancient Islamic codes and with enforced patriarchal practices such as controlling women's appearance and mobility.



Patriarchy has experienced enormous change over the last century and, among the modern classes, there is a more equal balance in power but that is mostly voluntary and there is no legal support that guarantees a balance of power between a couple and their children. A greater legal status is given to man by the legal system of Iran than to his wife and children. However, owing to the fact that Iranian culture is class-based, different attitudes and cultural practices are recognised for different classes. While modern classes are striving to overcome patriarchy and gender inequalities, the more traditional classes may be defending such cultural ideas (Lerner 1987).

Generally, similar to other patriarchal cultures, financial support of the family is seen as mostly appropriate for men, while child rearing has been the domain of women. This rule has changed dramatically in recent decades and the extraordinary number of educated women, in addition to the post-revolutionary economic crisis, has pushed many women from all different classes to seek employment outside the house.

Children are raised to be dependent on their families and to follow family traditions and rules. The adult-oriented nature of Iranian culture encouraged Iranian parents to be involved in making major decisions for their children, such as choosing their marital partner (Nasehi-Behnam 1985) and their profession. Family traditionally comes before the individual and young people are brought up and expected to understand and respect such ideas. Families, which were traditionally headed by males, have changed. In modern sectors, wives and grown up children participate in decision-makings extensively.

Marriages used to be arranged by the family and still they involve both parental supervision and involvement. Due to the current high costs of weddings and dowry, the couple will have to rely on parental financial support in most cases; hence their dependency on parents and parental control will continue. Although many modern and

educated Iranians have reduced their interference in their children's affairs and their choice of spouse, many are still followers of tradition.

Most families apply double-standards to their daughters and sons. Normally girls face more restrictive rules for dating. Modern Iranians are very liberal with respect to their daughter's fashion styles; however, traditional families are very concerned about such issues and expect their daughters to dress and act modestly and dating for their daughters is unacceptable.

Virginity is still a major issue for many Iranian families and pre-marital sex is prohibited for girls, while for many families there are no taboos with respect to boys' dating and having sex. Drinking and smoking by youth is not normally acceptable and, if it is done, it is done behind parents' backs. Many families have strict rules with respect to such matters and more traditional groups might have retribution in place as well. In the case of very religious families dating is not acceptable for boys either; however, such families may choose the practice of temporary marriage and pay to have concubines according to Shiite religious prescriptions (Nashat 2004).

Although parental control exists among Iranian families, the warmth and immense love between parents and children eases the tensions and most Iranian children willingly feel obliged to comply with their parents' guidance and advice. However, if such affections and trust are missing, conflict between generations or deviant behaviour by children, such as drug addiction and use of violence by parents, could be expected.

In ancient Iran, honor killings were permitted in some areas and the husband and his male relatives could kill the offenders themselves. In most cases the guilty parties were taken to the judge. All regulations prescribe punishment for both the wife and her lover. All law codes distinguish between a wife who seeks a sexual encounter with men other than her husband and women who are raped. The rapists of virgin girls were usually put



to death since they have destroyed their father's property, and if the girls could prove that they resisted the rapist, they would not face any punishment. All codes related to rape integrated the principle that the father or husband is the offended party instead of the woman herself.

In Islamic Sharia, sons and daughters do not inherit equally. Under Islamic rules, women can keep their inheritance and property rights once they married and such rights were and are still guaranteed. In Islamic code, a daughter is entitled to half a man's share (Lerner 1987).

#### ***2.4 Class, culture and codes of behaviours***

Iranian culture is based on class, tradition and patriarchy. Tradition for most is originated from religion, and class and patriarchy have been features of Iranian society since very old times. Class is mainly based on income and financial status or family pedigree; however, class can be distinguished by modernity and traditionalism. Generally, the lower and uneducated classes may regard females as inferior or different and are entitled to a lesser position in the society. On the other hand, the equality of sexes and elimination of gender discrimination are usually supported by modern classes. Tradition is mostly based on Islam and its prescribed codes of behaviour; however, it contains elements that are much older. For the traditional Muslim, the only approved relationship between men and women is through marriage (permanent or temporary). The two types of marriage are the only forms legitimised by Shiite Islam. For such families there is no question of males and females openly dating or socialising with such intentions before they are legally bounded through the prescribed unions (e.g. arranged marriages).

On the other hand, westernisation and modernisation have created modern and ultra-modern factions. Behaviours, life style and the extent of interaction with the opposite

sex normally reflect the degree of modernity. More traditional people dress conservatively (females do not expose their body parts and may cover their hair), they will not drink alcohol, and feel more comfortable with the company of their own sex. They might not dance at mixed gatherings and observe religious holy days and mourning ceremonies. Very conservative Muslims may avoid shaking hands or kissing unrelated individuals from the opposite sex. At the same time, it is well accepted for the individuals from the same sex to kiss on both cheeks, hold, embrace and hug each other whether they are related or not.

Gender discrimination and sex segregation have created distinct roles and codes of behaviour for both sexes for centuries and many of these roles are still practiced today. Virgin brides are still in demand by many Iranian males and their families, while there is little stigma attached to males having girl friends and sexual relationships while single.

However, such practices are eroding. It is only recently that wives have started participating in decision-making processes in families. The priority for females is marriage and rearing children but owing to economic necessity and increasing numbers of highly educated Iranian women such culturally accepted norms are changing (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002).

A widespread practice for many women is to sign a premarital agreement with their husbands before or at the time of marriage. Such documents are integrated in Aghed Nameh or marriage document which contain various articles such as guaranteeing women/children's right of travel without the husband's permission, the right to initiate divorce and custody and property rights at time of divorce.



## **2.5 Relationships and sexuality**

Sex is seen as a natural need by Islam, however the urgency of its gratification is recognised within a marital union. Parents are considered as responsible for ensuring their daughter's marriage as soon as they reach the proper age which is defined as the age of puberty (Mehryar and Tashakkori 1978). One dimension of male/female socialisation is friendships which are dealt hardly by Iranian and their media. The close relationship between men and women is originated from modernisation processes that initiated after the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, such relationships were controlled mostly by religion and tradition and there was no question of open dating of females and males. Veiling caused women to become totally inaccessible to other males in the society. Sexuality was carefully limited to the home and was male oriented. For women it was only a matter of reproduction (Mehryar and Tashakkori 1978; Lerner 1987).

Due to verbal morality, there were many limitations in any open discussions of women's desire and public discussions of sexuality confined in certain religious prescriptions. Suggested motivations for sex according to Islamic codes of behaviour were the most basic; reproduction and instinct. Women were considered as their husband's property and honour. Hejab and their isolation from outside home were believed to be the only solution. On the other hand, male sexual desire was considered as natural and God-given (Mir-Hosseini 2004), and were promoted and praised such as polygyny and temporary marriage. Owing to such beliefs and practices, a masculine culture has developed in which men are perceived to be the superior gender. Females on the other hand became isolated, unconfident and they were forced to accept their inferior position as part of natural creation. Being passive, shy, and agreeable to the husband's every wish was desirable for women (Mehryar and Tashakkori 1978).

Religious literatures are full of recommendations about such matters and condemn any deviations. Sexuality of women was identified to be the same as 'public morals' and severe punishments were applied to women violating the expected behavior with honor killings, and stoning to death, the prescribed Islamic punishment for adultery.

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century, some changes were started due to familiarisation of many educated people and merchants with modern world. Educated and academic people were reform-oriented. They demanded liberation, education, monogamy and gender equality. Although they were progressive, with respect to family and male/female relationships they remained traditionalist. These liberal people supported female schools and increasing job opportunities for women, but traditional values of the family and the conventional courting system between men and women remained unchanged. Premarital sexual relationships between the two sexes were also out of question. Women were not supposed to be sexual. Those women who sought sexual pleasure outside the union were labeled as immoral or loose women. The image presents a division between the good, the ethical and the mother figure as opposed to the temptress and the loose woman who uses her sexuality to seduce and misguide men. Such women are considered to be a threat to morality in society. The young men faced dilemmas regarding their marriage. Particularly educated men who have been witness to liberalisation and gender equity, at the same time have grown up with their notion of the moral and virgin wife.

In 1960s, normalisation of relationships between the sexes began. For the first time public spaces were created for leisure activities, such as cafes, clubs, theatres, cinemas, where the two sexes could freely socialize. Heterosexual relationships and affairs took place. Abortions for the first time, safely and legally, became available. Virgin brides were still in demand by most men including the intellectuals and the 'double standard'



ideology remained. The majority still remained traditionalist and number of honor killings and physical abuse of women by their lovers and boyfriends increased. Rape has been a serious problem and most rapes were committed by men known to the victims (e.g. boyfriends). Owing to gender inequality, any girl who went out with unrelated men was assumed to be "asking for it". Rape still is a taboo and in majority of cases it will not be reported. In most cases it is the woman who will be punished (by family members) rather than the rapist.

Since the 1979 revolution, the Islamic authorities have attempted to reverse the changes by strict religious codes, segregation and imprisoning males and females for the 'crime' of having relationships outside the prescribed Islamic codes. Abortion was made illegal, marriage age was drastically reduced, concubinage was promoted and polygyny has become accepted. The very high cost of living has made marriage difficult for many and has altered marriage practices including the traditional 'arranged marriages', 'dowry' and 'bride price'. Government-sponsored mass weddings for thousands of young couples through simple and cheap ceremonies have been an attempt to eliminate some of these problems. It appears that most couples at these mass weddings have chosen their own mate, which means somehow they are socialising or dating with the opposite sex. This is a first for the traditional classes. This independence is partly achieved by eliminating customary dowry expenses. Such practices ensured parents' authority and control over their children since most young couples were not able to afford the expenses and parents were responsible for the payments (Lerner 1987).

A strong socio-cultural and religious belief system has restrained Iranian sexuality, in which sexual intercourse is confined within marriage and any sex before or out of marriage is considered taboo for both sexes. Sex out of marriage, adultery, is considered one of the great sins and is penalised strongly. Adultery became punishable by stoning

to death for both the man and the woman involved; however, four witnesses are required (Lerner 1987). The most severe cases of adultery which are punishable by stoning are: (1) Adultery by a married man who has a permanent wife with whom he has had intercourse and may have intercourse when he so desires; (2) Adultery of a married woman with an adult man provided the woman is permanently married and has had intercourse with her husband and is able to do so again (Aghajanian 2001). According to article 83 of Islamic punishment law passed in 1991 and 1996, the punishment for adultery will be more harsh in cases in which an adult man or woman has intercourse with an immature boy or girl. Even a sensual kiss invokes punishment by lashes. Despite very severe punishment for adultery, the rules and regulations for proving it are also very tight and require trusted witnesses. According to article 212, of the Islamic punishment law, the stated punishment of all adultery cases in which a married person is involved in sex with another unrelated person, will be implemented only if the victim's wife or victim's husband complains (Saeednia 2006).

According to article 207 of the Islamic punishment law, if a man forces a woman to have sexual intercourse, he will be convicted to three to ten years imprisonment. Under specified circumstances, the maximum punishment will be applied. These circumstances are as follows. When the victim is younger than 18 years, is a married woman, is a virgin girl, has mental or physical disability. If the perpetrator is a relative or guardian of the victim, the punishment will be life sentence. If a man forces a young woman aged 15 to 17 years, he will be sentenced to three to seven years of imprisonment. If a man has sex with a young woman in the same age band with her consent and with promises of marriage, he will be sentenced to jail from three months to one year. If the girl is younger than 15, the punishment is more severe. If the victim is satisfied to marry the man, the man will not be convicted (Saeednia 2006).



The virginity of a woman must be kept and proven until marriage. The dignity and reputation of a girl and her family are at very high risk from loss of virginity before marriage. Within this context, the age of marriage and age of first sexual intercourse are highly correlated.

## **2.6 Hejab and sex segregation**

Practically hejab means female Islamic dress. After the revolution, hejab was considered a key element in the struggle to eliminate the western forces that had supported the previous regime. In 1983, appearing without hejab was made a penal offence and subjected the guilty woman to physical punishment. Both the punishment and scrutiny in streets for women who do not conform to hejab properly is far less routine now and indeed evokes protest and public comment when it occurs.

Hejab has not created an obstacle for women's modernity in their lives, whether they wear hejab willingly or unwillingly. It also did not exclude women from social and political participation. Where patriarchal families previously resisted women's education and employment because they took place within a "corrupt" public space, the Islamic Republic's commitment to hejab and Islamic morality redefined public space as morally "safe" for women. Even many traditional families felt safe to send their girls to school and universities and it became much more acceptable. Therefore, many believe that educational achievement and economical autonomy of many Iranian women immediately after the revolution is due to compulsory hejab.

A recent change has happened in the authorities' tolerance of variations in hejab in government buildings and elsewhere. These changes suggest a growing relaxation of rules on hejab. There is a wide variety of hejab in Tehran, the capital of Iran. There is also a continuing class-based difference between the often minimal hejab worn in

wealthy north Tehran and the more complete hejab worn in less wealthy areas of the city (Halper 2005).

Hejab and sex segregation are both fundamental principles in Islam and have been forcefully applied and implemented in Muslim countries for centuries. Only since 20th century, such practices faced major changes. Both reinforce each other and recently have become subject of debate amongst some Muslims. Most people do not practice segregation of sexes in its most rigid form, which involves no contact between unrelated males and females.

Sex segregation is enforced after puberty; however, it is encouraged from early ages before puberty. Single-sex education is preferable and the sexes must be segregated in any activity where the body is not fully covered such as swimming. Same sexes might cluster together at parties and weddings but on the whole they do not observe very strict segregation codes (Lerner 1987).

## **2.7 Marriage system**

The family is “the fundamental unit of Islamic society”. Marriage is required of everyone physically and financially suited to it. Owing to the emphasis on the family, marriage largely defines the social status of Muslim women. Unmarried or divorced women find themselves at a distinct disadvantage. Marriage as a religious responsibility is a private and voluntary contract, in which the woman offers her sexual and reproductive capacity and her obedience and companionship, in return for the man’s support. Marriage is a contract requiring *ijab*, offer; *Kabul*, acceptance; and *mahr*, a marital gift. The suggestion is made by the woman, and the man accepts which reflects his guarantee to support the woman except if he dies or divorces her. The husband as the head of the household entirely is responsible to support and maintain his wife and children. The husband had the right to all property of marriage under Shari’a but this



right has been modified; an Iranian wife may now be entitled to up to one half of the income of the marriage upon divorce. She has the duty of obedience, *tamkin*, and if she fulfils, this right to be maintained, alimony or *nafaaqa* (Mir-Hosseini 2004). She has no duty to contribute funds to the marriage or to provide housework or child care. If she does work outside the home, her husband must approve of her choice of occupation. Her right to her own possessions are not affected by the contract, except that it gives her right to the *mahr*, the consideration he gave for her performance of the marriage contract. Although the woman owes the *mahr*, it is not often paid at the initiation of the marriage. It can be demanded by the woman if the marriage ends because of the husband's death, his exercise of his right of divorce without cause, or her initiation of divorce for alimony or support when the marriage ends, though the husband continues to have the responsibility to support his children since he remains their guardian even if she has physical custody. He is entitled to physical custody of the children, boys at two, girls at seven, though she may retain custody if the children's health or morals are endangered by putting or leaving them in his custody. A husband has the right to have three other such marriage contracts simultaneously, and so can be a polygynous spouse; he also has the power to divorce his wife (Afkhami 2004).

Some important characteristics of traditional marriage in Iran are marriage with relatives, early marriage, and arranged marriage. Proper behaviour for women traditionally is based on religious rules, perceived women's capacity and the necessity of preserving women's chastity with little attention to young people's preference. Therefore young girls had little chance to resist against their parents' chosen partner for marriage (Mehryar and Tashakkori 1978). Generally, it is expected that, along with declining early marriage, arranged marriage decreases and the choice of husband and

wife by young change affects power and decision making of women in the family (Halper 2005)

The result of a case study indicates that old generations in Iran did not experience any intimate romantic relationship until their marriage ceremony. Marriages were completely arranged. The reason was severe social sex-segregation from age 6 or 7 years old and impossibility of communication between young women and men until marriage ceremony. A change in norms and values surrounding choice of spouse is now occurring in Iran. Indeed the role of parents as final decision makers in marriage has changed dramatically (Mehryar and Tashakkori 1978); however, the general tendency is to obtain the agreement of parents to marriage. In a survey, 95% of illiterate people agreed to parents' approval for marriage and 88% of university educated people hold to this belief (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002). Interestingly, in spite of some adaptation of young people's attitudes with modernisation in Iran, the level of consanguineous marriage (marriage with relatives) has remained relatively stable and constant at about 42% during the last decades (Abbasi Shavazi and Torabi 2007).

In addition, increasing age at marriage among women coincided with decreasing marriage within family networks and arranged marriage for both women and men. The proportion marrying under 18 years old for women decreased from 77% for the cohort of 1941-1950 to only 16% for the cohort of 1991-2000. Young women and men increasingly choose their marriage partner. Marriages in which women and men themselves chose their partner increased from 17% and 2% in the cohort of 1941 to 36% and 27% in the cohort of 1991. Similarly, changes have occurred over the few past decades with regard to interactions between couples from their first acquaintance and offer of marriage till registration or marriage ceremony. For example, those couples that used to meet their partner unrestrictedly before the marriage ceremony increased from



4% in the marriage cohort of 1941-1960 to one-third in the marriage cohort of 1991-2000. More flexibility is now shown among parents and families towards these alterations in traditional and religious norms and values in Iranian families (Abbasi-Shavazi 2002).

According to the Civil Code, a marriage contract before puberty is invalid and the minimum legal age of marriage for girls and boys is the age of puberty, 9 and 15 years, respectively (Saeednia 2006). Marriage of a virgin girl (even after puberty) requires permission from the father or paternal grandfather.

Marriage age in women has increased markedly. According to the report of National Youth Institute in 2005, the average age at marriage for men is 26.7 and for women are 22.4. In fact age at marriage for women increases on average 6 months annually (Ebadi 2005).

After the revolution, the law of marriage and divorce was reinstated by the new government. Soon after the revolution, the 1967 Family Protection Law (FPL), which governed marriage, divorce, and child custody, was cancelled. It was subsequently announced that Shari'a (divine law) would be reinstated in the area, in courts presided over by religious judges. The FPL had made divorce easier for women to obtain, given them the possibility of getting custody of children upon divorce, and made family courts civil rather than religious. The consequences of cancellation of FPL was loss of restrictions on men's almost unlimited right to divorce and to enter into up to four marriages concurrently, as well as women's relatively easy access to divorce (Hoodfar 1999). Rejection of FPL created a moral problem for many women when they realised that they could be divorced by their husband without cause and without entitlement to further support or the custody of their children. Finally women's unhappiness with the new law, and their complaints and resistance, led to modification of the law. This

modification in practice led to a relatively rapid return to the FPL. For example, if the wife does not consent to the divorce, the state takes control of the proceedings, limiting the husband's unilateral power for divorce based on Shari'a law. The parliament also added another condition to the marriage contract that the divorced wife is entitled to claim half of the wealth acquired during marriage if the divorce is not her fault. These legislative modifications created a law and legal practice very similar to FPL. In 1992, divorce was revised from its post-revolutionary measures in a way that all divorces required court approval, rather than allowing private divorce by consent with no formal process. Therefore the possibility for coercion of the wife has decreased. In addition in 1995 a new right was added to compensation for the divorced wife, in the form of wages for the housework she undertook during the marriage.

According to new standard of marriage, the wife is allowed to initiate divorce proceedings if her husband did not support her or took a second wife non-consensually, or if he was sick, in prison for over five years, an addict, or held some non-respectable job. Under the revision of Shari'a law, in the case of the husband's impotence before the marriage, insanity, or causing difficulty and hardship the wife is entitled to ask for divorce.

The demand for bride price or *mahr* gives the wife some protection against the inequities of the contract she has entered and to some extent it will balance the situation in case of divorce. If the husband wants a unilateral divorce and the wife is not at fault, she is entitled to the *Mahr*; this can dissuade him from the divorce or push him to make arrangement for her post-divorce support.

Virginity has to be proven on the marriage night particularly in traditional families. A study in Kermanshah, one of the provinces of Iran, showed that intense social pressure to accomplish hasty coitus with an unfamiliar woman and the presence of relatives



waiting nearby for evidence of the bride's virginity are the main factors associated with an unconsummated marriage (Zargooshi 2002). Of course there is some variation in the importance given to this matter; some families just ask for evidence of bleeding from the hymen and some leave it entirely to the couple and do not interfere at all.

Temporary marriage was apparently a form of marriage practiced in pre-Islamic Arabia. Temporary marriage has been legally permitted and religiously sanctioned in the Twelver Shia't, most of whom live in Iran (Haeri 1994). Temporary marriage is a very controversial matter in the Islamic world. In its present form, temporary marriage is a form of contract in which a man (married or unmarried) and an unmarried woman (virgin, divorced, or widowed) agree, often privately and verbally, to marry each other for a limited period of time, varying anywhere from one hour to 99 years. The couple also agrees on a specific amount of bride price, to be given to the woman. At the end of the mutually agreed period, the couple separate without a divorce ceremony. After the agreed period, irrespective of its duration, the temporary wife must abstain from sex for a period of time in order to prevent problems in identifying a potential child's legitimate father.

The invisibility of temporary marriage differentiates it from permanent marriage and it is not recorded and it does not require any witnesses. Most surveys and censuses in Iran do not ask questions regarding temporary marriage. Hence, there is no clear idea about the extent of practicing temporary marriage in the past and the present time and any speculation would be misleading. Shahla Haeri who has conducted an ethnographic study on temporary marriage in Iran suggests that *"the institution of temporary marriage is alive and well among lower socioeconomic strata in the society. Women who contract temporary marriages are likely to be primarily young divorced women*

*from lower-class background, however middle-class women occasionally do so as well*"(Haeri 1994).

The Islamic Revolution tried to revive temporary marriage as a way of responding to young people's desire for relationships with the opposite sex (Shepard and DeJong 2005). Any man, single or married, can have as many temporary marriages as he wishes. Temporary marriage is differentiated from prostitution because it happens in a moral and religious framework. The women who are in a temporary marriage can not be involved in another relationship for a certain period of time after termination of the temporary marriage and children are considered legitimate (Karamporian and Amini 2005). One of the most modern Islamist authorities, Ali Shari'ati, praised Islam for its pragmatism in maintenance of temporary marriage on the grounds that *"if it (Islam) didn't accept it, it would happen anyway, but out of reach and control. Now having accepted it as a natural and inescapable fact, it makes it a legal and religious fact...and frees the conscience of men and women from a feeling of sin"* (Nashat 2004). Temporary marriage represent a new response of young people to the economic and social impediments to conventional marriage (Shepard and DeJong 2005).

## **2.8 Gender beliefs in Iran**

Iranian women's efforts and effectiveness in bringing about positive changes in women's situation since the revolution do not mean that women's situation in unproblematic. The patriarchal framework of Iranian society is still present. There are various forms of gender discrimination in the country, including differential valuation of the lives of men and women in criminal cases, different weights attributed to the witness of men and women, different punishments for sexual crimes, different inheritance rights, and different rights within marriage and at the termination of marriage. Despite these challenges, Iranian women often bring these problems to public



debate and successfully mobilise for change. These forms of sex discrimination are often justified as stemming from Shari'a; Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian Human rights lawyer who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003, stressed that there is no opposition between Islam and human rights. She emphasised that a modern interpretation of Islamic law is consistent with democracy and women's advancement, and a popular movement can achieve it (Ebadi 2005).

A new reform movement came to prominence with the election of President Khatami in 1997. One of the most common messages by this movement is support for equal rights for women and opposition to patriarchy (Paidar 2001). The first female vice-president was appointed, and female college students increased from 51% in 2001 to 62% in 2003. Shirin Ebadi, lawyer and former judge, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for promoting women's and children's rights in Iran. In recent years, Shari'a law in Iran has been negotiated, modified, procedurally adapted, and, in respect to women, government changed (Halper 2005).

Because of the importance of gender issue owing to its role in both Islamic government and before the revolution, the issue of women was on the agenda immediately after the revolution. However, there was no coherent programme for women. Instead, they emerged through debates, fatwa (or religious opinion binding on followers) of influential clerics, Friday Prayer words, and personal interventions of Shi'i leaders and state officials (Mir-Hosseini 2004). Most changes immediately after the revolution were unfavourable to women. In the year before the revolution, the universities were shut down; they reopened afterwards under Islamic rules but, certain careers and educational subjects in technical and experimental fields were closed to women, while others were limited by restricting from 20% to 50%, the proportion of women who would be admitted to such courses. Women were banned from serving as judges, discouraged

from practicing as lawyers. The Family Protection Act of 1967 and 1973 which had restricted polygyny, raised the age of marriage for girls, and allowed women the right to divorce, was repealed. Contraception was banned. The consequences of these restrictions came to light when the results of the 1986 national census was analysed. These included increasing fertility rate and population growth rate, decreasing female labour force participation, particularly in the industrial sector, lack of progress in literacy and educational attainment. These created a disadvantaged position for women and reinforced gender inequality. In the 1990s, however, most policies with regard to women, family and gender relations were reversed. These changes occurred during the presidency of Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, and in the context of economic liberalization, and integration into global economy (Moghadam 2002). Women were urged by the government to get involved actively in politics. They were asked to vote. Shari'a gave women the right to initiate divorce. It was granted women the right to serve society as a scholars, inventors, philosophers, teachers, physicians, or even active politicians. Women were included among candidates for the parliament (Majles), as well as for local councils.

The war between Iran and Iraq, from 1980 to 1988, reduced the population of men, husbands, and fathers. In 1990, 7% of children between 0-14 years of age were fatherless, amounting to nearly two million children who are now young adults (Shepard and DeJong 2005). After the war, because of the constant support of women for the war, the government consequently implemented more favourable policies for women. This led to a substantial influence on women's' participations in paid work. Labour practices encouraging working mothers, such as part-time jobs with full-time benefits, and requirements that workplaces provide day-care, made motherhood and work compatible. In addition, because of gender segregation, the demand for female



teachers, doctors, and social workers was enhanced. Women were allowed to study in different subjects with lower restrictions and increased access to higher education. While university admission became significant for urban women, a campaign to improve rural life by bringing health care and literacy to isolated areas was also implemented. After the war, because of economic liberalisation of the country and access of Iran to global marketing and increasing the demand for labour, both the opportunity and necessity for women's work outside the home increased (Moghadam 2002).

Religious women indeed overcame their secular counterparts, who argued for gender equality regardless of the tradition of Shari'a, promoting a version of different feminism that emphasised that the Islam has given dissimilar rights and responsibilities to men and women as different creations of God. Although they acknowledged that the primary and the most important role of women is in the family, they also supported women who desire and require to work outside the home. Islamist women believe that it is possible for women to achieve their potential in an Islamic society that encourages equality of opportunity for men and women to develop their talents and capabilities and to participate in all aspects of social life, with acknowledgement of women's maternal instinct and their essential role within the family (Mir-Hosseini 2004).

## **Conclusion**

Strong attachment to tradition and religion from ancient time for most Iranians, modernization efforts before the revolution, the Islamic revolution in 1979, the eight years war between Iran and Iraq and globalisation are factors which influenced the society of Iran. Iranians have been fighting against successive contradictions between tradition and modernity for more than a century. Some people attempt to view the modern world through the eyes of their ancestors. This group tries to confront today's

world problems and challenges from the perspective of ancient values. But many others, while respecting their historical and cultural norms, scripts, religion and faith, attempt to progress with world developments. How behaviours, particularly sexual behaviors, are influenced by this developmental process is important in such a conservative society. Young people are also in constant conflict between what is appropriate for their culture (norms) and what modernisation has brought for them. All behaviours, including dating and sexual behaviour, are under the influence of this continuous challenge. Penetration of modern codes of behaviour over a people with high awareness about their rights, using traditional, patriarchal and paternalistic methods has created a complex picture in conservative societies such as Iran.

Earlier ethnographic studies among cultures suggested restrictive sexual norms with regard to premarital sex in societies with patriarchy culture compared to matriarchy. Societies in which virginity is valued and bride price is considered for marriage are more restrictive in premarital sex (Broude 1975). Through diminishing patriarchy in a society by going through modernisation process and improvement of women's status, it is predicted that sexual norms will become less restrictive with time.



### **3 A review of literature**

#### **Introduction**

The determinants of sexual behaviours among young people are reviewed with specific reference to studies conducted in Asia and developing countries. This review is confined to studies that are relevant to this study. The situation of young people with regard to their sexual and reproductive health in Iran is described. Finally, the chapter highlights the domains of knowledge that need to be studied and the gaps in the literature that need to be addressed. Electronic searches were done using Pub-med, Pop-line, and Cochrane library. In addition, some relevant websites such as WHO, UN, UNFPA, Reproductive Health Gateway, Population Council were also searched. Because of the lack of reliable evidence for Asia, some evidence from developing countries outside of Asia is reviewed. Since Iranian published literature in English was very scarce, electronic search of published Persian articles was conducted using Iranian scientific websites such as Iranian Medical Index ([www.Iranmedex.com](http://www.Iranmedex.com)). Other important studies were assessed by searching some libraries in Iran such as Women's Affairs Centre and National Youth Organisation. Some studies about sexual knowledge, attitude or behaviours of adolescents and young people presented in a recent congress about family and sexual problems by Shahed University in 2005 and also the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> conference on family pathology by Shahid Beheshti University in 2004 and 2006 were obtained.

#### ***3.1 Determinants of sexual behaviour among young people***

A summary of characteristics and results of relevant studies conducted in Asia are presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Selection of studies was based on their focus on adolescents or young people's sexual experience before marriage and also being conducted in Asia within the previous 10 years. Thereafter, the findings of studies

related to some determinants of sexual behaviour relevant to this study are described. Factors associated with sexual initiation, number of partners, contraceptive and condom use among young people have been studied in developing countries. These factors are categorised here into two main domains: social factors and individual factors.

### **3.1.1 Social factors**

#### **Society**

The dominant influence on the sexual expression of young people is perhaps at the societal level. Within Asia, huge differences are apparent in the degree to which pre-marital conduct is tolerated for men and women. A recent systematic review of 268 qualitative studies of young people's sexual behaviours published between 1990 and 2004, showed how social and cultural forces shape young people's sexual behaviour around the world. Interestingly this review suggested remarkable similarities in factors that are associated with young people's sexual behaviour worldwide; however, the extent to which each theme is present varies between different societies. In this study seven themes emerged, a) the assessment of the risk of sexual partners based on being clean or unclean, b) the significant influence of sexual partners in young people's sexual behaviours, c) condom use are accompanied with stigmatization, d) social expectations of sexual behaviours are determined by gender double-standards, e) wider society provides penalty or reward for sex, f) the importance of social presentations of sexual activity or inactivity, g) poor communication about sex due to social expectations. Social expectations about the behaviours of men and women and sexual partners have a strong influence on sexual behaviour. Moreover, risk perception of young people and perception of disgrace and also social pressure all together hamper communication about sex with partners and consequently diminish the discussion about prevention and contraceptive and condom use (Marston and King 2006).



**Table 3. 1 Description of selected Asian studies on protective and risk factors of sexual initiation among young people**

Country	Author/year	Study population	Dependent variable	Results	
				Protective factor	Risk factors
Nepal	(Puri and Cleland 2004)	Migrant factory workers aged 14-19 in Katmandu valley, Nepal	Risky sexual behaviour and perceived risk	Being married	Being unmarried Higher literacy Exposure to pornographic movies
India	(Selvan, Ross et al. 2001)	Teenage higher secondary school in India	Ever had sex	Highly educated parents	Alcohol use Drug use Perceived norms Perceived peers group norms of sexual behaviour
India	(Abraham and Kumar 1999)	Low-income college students in Mumbai	1) ever had any sexual experience	Knowledge about sexuality	Older ages Liberal attitude towards sex Erotic exposure High social interaction High family income Less restrictive family Family environment semi – comfortable
			2) sexual intercourse (males only)	Knowledge about sexuality	Older age Work/employment High personal income Liberal attitude towards pre-marital sex High erotic exposure
India	(Mathai, Ross et al. 1997)	College students in Mumbai	Ever had sex	Having conservative attitudes towards sex Having the attitude that condoms should be used all the time	Male gender Liberal attitude towards sex
Malaysia	(Zulkifli and Low 2000)	Unmarried adolescents	Sexual experience		Male gender Employed Liberal attitude towards sex
Hong Kong	(Lam, Stewart et al. 2001)	Hong Kong Chinese adolescents	Ever had sex	Female gender High family involvement	Older age Male gender High social support
Thailand	(Isarabhakdi 1999)	Never married rural Thai youth	Pre-marital sexual experience (only among men)		Older ages Coming from the Northern region Migration Having a friend who has had sex

**Table 3. 2 Description of selected Asian studies on norms and attitude towards sexuality and sexual behaviours among young people**

Country	Author/year	Study population	Dependent variable	Results
China	(Higgins and Sun 2007)	1100 university students	- Attitudes towards marriage and sexual behaviours	Females viewed superior men in terms of age, education and height Less open attitudes towards sexual behaviours compared to West Living in metropolitan area and having educated and professional parents was connected with liberal attitudes
China	(Zhang, Gao et al. 2002)	2050 university students	Knowledge, attitude and sexual behaviours	12% had engaged in sexual intercourse 19% were involved in masturbation 28% had kissed their partner personal attitude towards premarital sexual activities was significantly more liberal than perceived social norms suggesting a change in norms
Mauritius	(Nishimura 2007)	1200 young people aged 15-24	Sexual behaviour Non-condom use	30.9% of males and 9.7% of females reported history of sexual intercourse. 51% of men and 71% of women did not use condoms at last sex. Correlates of sexual experience among men: work experience and marijuana use, among women was being out of school and drinking experience Correlates of non-condom use at last sex : not using condom at first sex, lack of exposure to NGOs dealing with HIV/AIDS
Philippines	(Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997)	1355 urban university students	Knowledge , attitudes about sex and HIV/AIDS and sexual behaviour	83% were sexually abstinent 60-88% reported good knowledge about contraception 90% had conservative attitudes towards premarital sex and recreational sex only 7% of females reported sexual intercourse, while 30% of male reported sexual intercourse religiosity and conservative attitudes were connected with abstinence having a sister with who had experienced an adolescent pregnancy was connected to experience of sexual behaviour
Thailand	(Thianthai 2004)	12 FGDs and 15 IDIs among young people aged 15-19 year old	Perceptions about sexuality, Knowledge Risk-perception	Potential sexual partners as “good boys or girls” were identified as potential HIV- free partner, sexuality is defined in terms of love/sexual relationship, premarital sex, promiscuity, virginity knowledge about HIV was different by class , but all classes did not have an in-depth knowledge about transmission of AIDS. Low risk perception Family , peers and media were reported as the most influential institutions shaping young people’s sexual attitudes



## **Family**

Four factors at the family level have been recognised in different studies in developing countries as significant determinants of young people's sexual behaviour: place of residence, parents' type of marriage, family structure and stability, and living away from home (Mmari and Blum 2004). Living with both parents was shown as a protective factor for engaging in premarital sex (Zelaya, Marin et al. 1997; Anteghini, Fonseca et al. 2001; Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). Among females the presence of father at home during childhood and adolescence was independently associated with a later sexual debut (Zelaya, Marin et al. 1997; Murray and Zabin 1998) .

Living away from home also has been examined in some studies in developing countries and was found to be related to greater likelihood of being sexually experienced (Mmari and Blum 2004). A study in India revealed an association between high family income, liberal family and poor family atmosphere with more experience of premarital sex among college students (Abraham and Kumar 1999). A recent study in China showed that young people with better educated parents hold greater liberal attitudes towards sexuality (Higgins and Sun 2007). A study in Thailand identified parents as one of the most influential social institutions which shape young people's sexual behaviour (Thianthai 2004). Socio-economic status, connectedness and communication with parents, parents' restrictiveness, and behaviours and attitudes of other family members have also been examined in several studies in developing countries; however, their effect on young people's sexual behaviour is inconclusive.

## **Peers**

A positive relationship has been found between adolescents' perception of their peer's sexual behaviour and their sexual experience (Murray and Zabin 1998; Magnani, Seiber et al. 2001; Magnani, Karim et al. 2002; Park, Sneed et al. 2002). However, these results

should be interpreted with some caution, because it is not known whether adolescents are projecting either own behaviour onto their peers or whether, once they initiated sexual activity, they tend to associate with others whom they perceive to be sexually active (Mmari and Blum 2004). It is also suggested that people prefer to interact with similar others in order to reinforce their own self-identity, and to validate their own behaviours and attitudes. Those adolescents who communicated with a close friend about reproductive health issues have also been shown to be over three times more likely to have ever had sex compared with those who had not had such conversations in a study in Zambia (Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). However, in cross sectional studies it is difficult to make causal inferences.

### **Partner**

Studies in developing countries showed that partner characteristics are much more influential for actual condom use among adolescents than were any peer characteristics. Some evidence shows that those young people in a stable sexual relationship with one person are more likely to use condoms than those who are not in such a relationship (Lugoe, Klepp et al. 1996; Olayinka and Osho 1997), while other evidence suggests the opposite. For instance a study among young people in South Africa revealed that teen women perceived condom use as unnecessary in formal relationships with a serious boyfriend because such use challenges mutual trust (Harrison 2003). Partners' expectations and interactions in heterosexual relations are diverse based on the type of the relationship. As an example, in romantic relationships, partners value the relationship so highly that they disregard social disapproval and outcomes. Even taking risks may be valued and condom use may become very difficult, while in the matrimonial relationships which are based on long term plan for family formation, condom use is interpreted as unfaithfulness rather than birth control. Finally, in



European studies it was shown that partners in hedonistic relationships tend to use contraception and condoms to prevent pregnancy and STD and HIV infection (Campenhoudt, Cohen et al. 1997).

Higher educational level of partner, partner having a professional job, discussion of family planning with partner, and partner approval of family planning are factors that are suggested to be significantly related to contraception use. Moreover, communication with partner about issues related to sexuality, AIDS, or pregnancy, was linked to more condom use (Reddy, Meyer-Weitz et al. 2000; Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). Power in a relationship also can be an important factor in sexual behaviour decision making (Stone and Ingham 2002; Muna 2003).

### **3.1.2 Individual factors**

#### **Religion and religiosity**

Some studies in developing countries did not find any significant relationship between religious affiliation or religiosity with sexual initiation (Lugoe, Klepp et al. 1996; Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997; Wyatt, Durvasula et al. 1999; Ben-Zur 2000; Chirinos, Salazar et al. 2000; Gupta 2000; Zulkifli and Low 2000; Mensch, Clark et al. 2001; Slap, Lot et al. 2003) A few studies found that religious affiliation is significantly related to sexual debut among adolescents (Meekers 1994; Lugoe, Klepp et al. 1996). Meekers showed that the Muslim women in Ghana, Liberia and Togo are much less likely to have had pre-marital sex than women of other religions (Meekers 1994). A negative relationship was also found between religiosity and sexual activity in Kenya (Kiragu 1993). In Brazil those with moderate and low religious conviction were more likely to have initiated intercourse than those professing strong beliefs (Gupta, 2000). A study among urban university students in Philippine also showed a positive association between religiosity and abstinence (Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997).

### **Mass Media**

In today's world, television and radio and other media such as internet and satellite have become powerful agents of socialisation. Regular television watching is not as strong an influence as regular movie watching and watching X-rated materials for adolescents' sexual behaviours. For instance, those adolescents, particularly males, who watch regularly movies/videos, were more likely to have had premarital sex (Mmari and Blum 2004). This relationship was the same for watching pornography (Abraham and Kumar 1999; Puri and Cleland 2004).

### **Employment and Future aspiration**

In some studies employment has not emerged as an important influence on age at first sex (Wyatt, Durvasula et al. 1999). However, a study among unmarried youth in Malaysia showed that employment was a significant predictor of sexual experience (Zulkifli and Low 2000). It was also shown that those who worked for pay were significantly more likely to have multiple sexual partners in the last three months (Magnani, Seiber et al. 2001; Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). This relationship in part could be explained by the fact that those who are working are most likely not in school, which is protective for some high risk sexual health outcomes. Future aspirations also have been found to be associated with non-participation in pre-marital sexual intercourse in a study among teenagers in Oklahoma city (Vesely, Wyatt et al. 2004).

### **Sexual and reproductive knowledge, and attitude**

The relationship between knowledge about AIDS and sex has been examined in different studies in developing countries, but only Magnani's study in Zambia found a significant protective effect for awareness of AIDS (Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997; Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). With regard to knowledge of STDs and sex, the results are inconclusive. Abraham and Kumar (1999) showed that knowledge about sexuality is one of the significant predictors of sexual behaviours among male adolescents in a



study in Mumbai, India (Abraham and Kumar 1999) while Huerta-Franco et al. (1999) found no effect in Mexico. Furthermore, two studies showed that knowledge about contraceptive and condoms was positively correlated with the risk of sex among adolescents (Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). However, causal directions of these associations are unknown.

Attitudes to and perceptions of sex are obviously important correlates for young people's sexuality. Holding more liberal attitudes towards sex was strongly linked to the risk of sexual experience among young people in almost every study (Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997; Murray and Zabin 1998; Huerta-Franco and Malacara 1999). For example, it was shown that those who disapproved of premarital sex are only half as likely to be sexually experienced as those who approved of premarital sex in a study in Kenya (Kiragu 1993). Similarly, in Malaysia, adolescents with less conservative sexual attitudes were five times more likely to be sexually experienced, compared with those with conservative attitudes (Zulkifli and Low 2000).

However, these results should be interpreted with caution, because sexual behaviour has a circular relationship with knowledge and attitude. In cross-sectional studies it is difficult to assess the causal effect of these variables. Involvement in sex might have caused young people to seek more information on sex and to develop more liberal attitudes.

#### **Risk perception or Vulnerability**

Significant associations have often been found between the perceived chances of getting HIV/AIDS and intended or actual sexual behaviour. A study among Indian teenage students showed a significant negative association between perceived chances of getting HIV/AIDS and intended sexual behaviour (Selvan, Ross et al. 2001). Conversely, a study conducted in Tanzania showed that those adolescents who consider themselves at

risk of HIV/AIDS were more likely to have multiple partners (Maswanya, Moji et al. 1999). However, other studies conducted in the US found a negative link between perceived susceptibility towards AIDS and reporting of multiple partners (Ku, Sonenstein et al. 1992). One explanation for the diversity of results is that all these studies are cross sectional and it is not possible to determine causal direction.

### **Self-efficacy**

In the early 1990s, the WHO defined life skills as the “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. Studies assessing risk and protective factors associated with young people’s sexual behaviours indicated mixed results with regard to the association between self-efficacy and premarital sexual initiation (Mmari and Blum 2004). A negative association between self-efficacy or ability to remain abstinent and premarital sexual initiation was shown in a study in Namibia (Stanton, Fitzgerald et al. 1999). Positive associations were found between higher self-efficacy and having had sex before marriage in a study in Ghana (Karim, Magnani et al. 2003) and with intention to have sex within next three months in another study in Tanzania (Klepp, Ndeki et al. 1996).

### **Non-sexual risky behaviours**

As elements of a lifestyle, risky behaviours often accompany each other. Studies conducted in developing countries have determined four non-sexual risky behaviours to be associated with sexual initiation among young people: weapon carrying, attending discos/clubs, smoking cigarettes, and using drugs and alcohol (Kiragu 1993; Stanton, Fitzgerald et al. 1999; Anteghini, Fonseca et al. 2001). Alcohol use for females and Marijuana use for men were identified as correlates of sexual behaviours in a study in Mauritius (Nishimura 2007).



### **3.2 What is known about young people and their sexual experiences in Iran**

The literature on sexual experiences and even attitudes, particularly among young people and females, is scarce in Iran. No estimates of abortion and unwanted pregnancy among unmarried young females exist but, according to some recent studies which show the existence of premarital sexual relationships among unmarried people (Jafari, Poorzarrabi et al. 2005; Mirmolae, Rahimikia et al. 2005; Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006), the incidence may not be trivial.

Recorded increases of other stigmatised risky behaviours among young people in recent years, such as smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use (Masjedi 2002; Mirmolae, Rahimikia et al. 2005; Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006) lead to the expectation that sexual activity is also rising among young people in Iran. A study in Tehran in 2002 showed that 16.3% of college students reported smoking and, most importantly, the prevalence of smoking in final year students (20.1%) was significantly more than in first year students (12.3%). Moreover, more female students smoke than the level estimated for the entire Iranian adult female population (Masjedi 2002). A study among males aged 15-18 in Tehran showed that 12.8%, 26.8% and 1.2% of respondents reported smoking, alcohol consumption and drug use, respectively (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006). Another study among 1192 female students of high schools in Tehran revealed one-third (33.1%) of respondents had ever smoked, 18% had ever used alcohol and 2.8% had ever used drugs (Mirmolae, Rahimikia et al. 2005). In view of the fact that alcohol in Iran is illegal, this level of alcohol consumption is surprising. Alcohol use diminishes both inhibitions and rational decision making, thereby increasing the likelihood of unprotected sex and also other risky behaviours that may

reflect a general inclination to take risks and an environment that supports such behaviours (Kirby 2001).

The country is now facing a very recent problem of increased absconding from home among adolescent females. A study among 30 individuals who had run away from home showed that the majority were females (63%). Their mean age was 17.5 and most of them had limited education. 40% had separated parents and 50% were addicted to at least one illicit drug. The majority smoked cigarettes and 50% were involved in sex out of marriage. 63% reported financial motives for their involvement in sex (Fani-Saberi, Delshad et al. 2005). Although the underlying factors associated with this social problem are extremely complex and not well understood, the implication for sexual health may be grave. When there is no family supervision, and no monetary support, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

In terms of the influence of western culture on the perceived norms and values among young people, it should be noted that a large percentage of young people in Iran have access to global mass media such as internet and satellite (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006), and pornography. A study among 287 internet users of five coffee-net shops in Shiraz (one of the provinces of Iran) revealed that 24% of users were females with age range of 18-32 years, 82% were unmarried and 65% were college students. 41% of men and 24% of women had visited pornographic websites while using the internet. Women were mainly interested in chat rooms with sexual content while men were mainly attracted to watch pornographic pictures and films (Honarparvaran 2005). Young people may be affected by more permissive attitudes towards pre-marriage sexual relationships that are portrayed in these media.



### **3.2.1 Knowledge of unmarried young people about sexual and reproductive health**

Sexual and reproductive knowledge of young people has been shown in different studies to be moderate to poor. Research among college students in Qazvin University (a province near Tehran) showed a moderate level of knowledge on different aspects of reproductive health (Simbar 2003). Another study among 757 adolescent boys (15-19 years) in 1998 in Tehran revealed that adolescent males were poorly informed about the changes that accompany puberty; over 69% reported that puberty implies feelings of shame, and mental and physical pre-occupation. Over half of all respondents (54%) were unfamiliar with contraceptive methods, yet the majority (85%) felt the need to have more such information. Disturbingly, awareness of sexually transmitted infection and HIV/AIDS was also poor: over 75% of the boys were not aware of STIs and their modes of transmission (FPA-Iran 1998).

Female students of junior and high schools in Iran in 2002 showed better knowledge than male students about sexual and reproductive health issues, including consequence of early marriage, the need for family planning, preventing and treatment of HIV/AIDS. However, a majority (83%) of adolescents aged 10-19 did not have appropriate information about prevention and treatment of STDs (Mosleh-uddin, Mirmotahari et al. 2002). Awareness of adolescent boys aged 15-18 in Tehran was explored in a study conducted in 2002. On the reproductive physiology index (ranging from 0 to +3), respondents recorded a mean of 0.97 (SD=0.92) suggesting poor to moderate levels of awareness. Of a total of 10 methods of contraception, respondents were aware, on average, of 3.14 (SD=2.36)(Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006). Although almost three in four respondents were aware of condoms, far fewer had in-depth knowledge of this method. In an index ranging from 0 to +3, the average score was 1.50 (SD=1.20)

**Table 3. 3 Description of selected studies in Iran on reproductive health knowledge among adolescents and young people**

Province/city	Author/year	Study population	Study subject	Results
Esfahan	(Homaee, Sobhani-Nejad et al. 2005)	490 college students in government and private universities of Esfahan, 2004-2005	Sources of sexual information	Media(movies, satellite and journals), internet and peers were the most important sources of knowledge about sex
Kashan	(Sooki and Sharifi 2005)	335 male college students in government and private universities in Kashan	Knowledge about STDs	43% were aware of symptoms of STDs. Only 40% recognized condoms as prevention method against STDs 35% and 59% were poorly and moderately aware of STDs , respectively.
Karaj	(Rezaee-Abhari, Yaghoobi et al. 2005)	Female students of selected high schools in Karaj in 2005	Knowledge about puberty and sex and its sources	Only 37% received information about puberty & sex from their parents. 75% asked their queries about sex from their mother 60% have access to movies with sexual content 90% considered it important to receive knowledge on sexual issues before marriage 100% believed that parents should inform their youth about sexual issues
Shahrekord	(Motamedi 2005)	252 young couples	Knowledge on sexual matters and its sources	Levels of knowledge were different by type of information, they knew most about religious aspects of sexuality, they little knew about abortion, STDs and right time of sex according to religious rules Sources were mainly books and magazines, peers and counselors and teachers. Family and parents had little role in imparting sexual information to youth. Family only focus on hejab and religious limitations for dealing with unrelated men
Tehran	(Rahnama 2005)	425 female and male students of third year of the secondary schools in Tehran	Knowledge about sex and sources	Males: Current sources were peers(60%), internet(21%), satellite(7%) and other sources(27%) preferred sources: peers, teachers, relatives, others  Females: current sources were peers(57%), internet(22%), satellite(12%), others(10%) Preferred sources: peers and classmates, teachers and school counselor, mother and older sister, others
Hamedan, Malayer and Toyserkan	(Habibipoor and Amirkhani 2005)	1000 female college students of private universities in hamedan, Malayer and Toyserkan	Knowledge about HIV/AIDS	More than 70% of college students had a good knowledge , 15-20 % had a moderate knowledge and 10-15% had a poor knowledge about HIV/AIDS Main sources of knowledge were media, educational centers and clerics

with only 54.8% reporting that a condom cannot be used more than once, 53% agreeing that condom use can prevent pregnancy and only 42.4% agreeing that condom use can



prevent STDs. Awareness of STDs and HIV/AIDS was also moderate. On an index ranging from 0 to +9, respondents scored an average of 3.86 (SD=2.13). In total, their awareness of the signs and symptoms of STDs was poor (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006). Another study, among high school students in 2002 in Tehran, showed that the knowledge of respondents about AIDS was low (Tavoosi, Zaferani et al. 2004).

A few other small scale studies have recently been conducted to assess sexual knowledge of adolescents and young people in different provinces. Table 3.3 describes selected studies which have been focused on knowledge about STDs and HIV/AIDS, and sexual relationship and sexual health, and their sources, conducted in different provinces of Iran.

### **3.2.2 The perception of young unmarried people towards sexual matters**

Only a few studies in Iran have explored the attitudes of young people towards puberty and its physical and psychological changes, marriage age, gender equity and pre-marital sexual relationships.

One study conducted among 18,000 Iranian college students in 1992 revealed that only a minority of respondents held a liberal attitude towards pre-marital relationships between boys and girls; 17.3% of boys and 6.4% of girls believed that such relationships were acceptable without the permission of parents (Mohammad 1996). In addition, 56.6 % of adolescent boys aged 15-18 in Tehran in 2002-3 held a conservative attitude towards pre- marital relationships and sex. Those who reported themselves to be highly religious displayed more traditional attitudes than others. These results suggest that traditional and conservative values and norms regarding premarital sexual relationships—but not gender double standards -- are clearly becoming eroded among youth and call for more focused research to explore the youth norms and attitudes regarding sexual partnerships. This study indicated a gender- based double standard in

attitude toward relationship with opposite sex; only 41% of boys disapproved of premarital sex for boys compared with 56% for girls (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006) .

A study among 1117 college students in Qhazvin University showed that the majority of college students have a positive attitude towards sex education and service provision. The majority of them believed that youth's ability to practice safer sex behaviour is limited by inappropriateness of services, and lack of relevant knowledge. Liberal attitudes were also more common among men than women, older than younger students, and those from better educated, wealthy families than other types of family (Simbar 2003).

Although a favourable attitude towards gender equality was shown among adolescents in selected areas of Iran in 2002, these attitudes were mainly focused on issues such as education, partner selection and responsibility for pregnancy prevention not premarital sexual relationships. Approximately 90% of students believe that women and men have equal educational rights. 94% thought that men and women have an equal right to choose their partner, and to decide the number and spacing children. Approximately 88% of respondents believed that avoiding pregnancy is a joint responsibility of men and women, while only 9% considered it as only women's responsibility (Moslehuddin, Mirmotahari et al. 2002). The majority of college students in a study reported vulnerability towards AIDS (Simbar 2003). Regarding stigmatisation of HIV positive patients, a study among 4641 high school students in Tehran revealed that 46% of respondents believed HIV positive students should not attend the ordinary schools (Tavoosi, Zaferani et al. 2004). Some, mostly small scale, studies have been recently conducted in Iran which explored sexual attitudes among adolescents and young people in different provinces. Some of them are shown in the Table 3.4.



### **3.2.3 Sexual experience of unmarried young people in Iran**

Due to the sensitivity of the issue, studies of sexual conduct and initiation among unmarried young people are very rare in Iran. In a cross sectional study among college students, 54 out of 664 non-medical students who answered the sexual behaviour questions, reported pre-marital sexual intercourse (8%). Fifty-two percent of them were males and only two females reported premarital sexual intercourse. Sixty one percent of the sexually experienced reported contraceptive use, mostly condoms (48%). Four cases of unwanted pregnancy, six cases of STDs and three cases of induced abortion were reported (Simbar 2003).

A study among 1385 adolescent boys aged 15-18 in Tehran in 2002 showed that 27.7% of the respondents were sexually experienced. About 19% of sexually experienced adolescents stated that they did not consistently use any contraceptive method in their sex contacts.

Only 28.3% of them reported one sexual partner in their history, while 71.7% reported more than one sexual partner from the time of their sexual debut, and 12.2% reported both multiple sexual partner and never- use of condoms (Mohammadi, Mohammad et al. 2006; Mohammad, Khalaj Abadi Farahani et al. 2007). However, because of limitations of this study (no detailed information about type of sexual contact), these findings must be considered suggestive but not conclusive, and indicative of, at least, higher levels of sexual experience among young boys than previously assumed. A study among 1192 female students of selected high schools in Tehran showed that 12.8% of respondents (aged 15-18) have had sexual intercourse. However, type of sex and circumstances were not elicited. Nearly one- third had ever smoked and 18% had ever

**Table 3. 4 Description of selected studies in Iran on attitudes on premarital relationships and sex and also marriage among adolescents and young people**

Province/ city	Author/year	Study population/method	Study subject	Results
Tehran	(National Youth Organisation in Iran 2004)	25 in-depth interviews with unmarried women aged 15-30 using snowball sampling , qualitative study	Gender identity	<p>Motherhood role was considered as the most important aspect of being a woman and it was valued</p> <p>The majority believed that higher education is desired for women but as far as it does not jeopardize their marital prospects and marital life. They preferred family life rather than higher education.</p> <p>Preferred age at marriage was mentioned to be 25 at least with no limitation for maximum age for marriage</p> <p>The majority of women were supportive of female financial independence but they rather preferred living with their family as far as they are unmarried.</p> <p>The majority believed that men possess more social privilege and reported limitations for women in dealing with the opposite sex(gender double-standards)</p> <p>Education appears to influence effectively on women's perception of their gender roles and educated women are more likely to believe on gender equality.</p>
Tehran	(National Youth Organisation in Iran 2001)	34 In-depth interviews with young females and males (age range 15-25), qualitative study	Behavioural and attitudinal conflicts among adolescents and young people	<p>20 different areas were identified to be the main subjects of paradox in young people, some relevant areas were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Inappropriate dealing with young people by families and society</li> <li>○ Gender-based discrimination</li> <li>○ Hejab for women</li> <li>○ Barriers to specified social and cultural activities among young people particularly females</li> <li>○ Poor attention to characteristics of young ages</li> <li>○ Restrictions on social interactions and communication between opposite sexes</li> <li>○ Cultural and religious norms and values</li> <li>○ Dealing with peers</li> </ul>
Shiraz	(Abbasi Shavazi and Moghadas 2006)	398 college students of Shiraz universities(medical and non-medical)-quantitative study	Attitudes towards premarital heterosexual relationships and socialisation	<p>Correlates: family's attitude, family social class, mother's education, parent's job, being materialistic or non-materialistic.</p> <p>Parents are more conservative than young people which suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a changes in values in the society with regard to heterosexual relationship before marriage</li> <li>- A generational gap about values related to premarital sex</li> </ul>



Province/ city	Author/year	Study population/method	Study subject	Results
Birjand	(Khorshidzadeh and Zangoee 2006)	300 female and male college students of universities in Birjand, private universities and Payamenoor), quantitative study	Attitude towards heterosexual relationship before marriage	Majority of college students approved premarital relationships for knowing the opposite sex but under the supervision and awareness of families.  They were against relationships through internet. Direct and face to face relationships were preferred.  They believed the fiancé period can enable them to know their future husband. Females and males suggested 6 months and more than 12 months as the best duration for fiancé period, respectively.
Tehran	(Sohrabi 2004)	60 female and males students in third year of high schools of Tehran(region 9), quantitative study	Parent-adolescents consistency in value and norm system	There is significant difference between adolescents and their parents' value system and regulations which suggest a change of attitudes among adolescents towards values related to visional, beauty, economic and religious
Tehran	(Saadeghi 2006)	6100 unmarried youth in Iran, quantitative study	Attitudes and ideals about marriage	The tendency among youth for early marriage and marriage with a member of family has been diminished.  Unemployment for men was recognized as the most important reason for problems in marriage as a social problem  Temporary marriage as an answer for youth's problems in permanent marriage, is not socially accepted by young people.
Maazandaran	(Saalemeh, Yaghoobi et al. 2006)	40 female and male college students of universities in Maazandaran, quantitative study	Attitudes towards barriers for marriage	The majority (76% ) of male college students ever thought of marriage, 45% of females showed willingness to marry. The most important barrier for marriage was reported to be unemployment by male college students.

consumed alcohol and 2.8% ever used drugs (Mirmolae, Rahimikia et al. 2005). A recent study was conducted among 177 male college students in Tehran revealed that 58% of the respondents have had girlfriend and more than two-thirds (68%) of these reported having had sex with their girlfriends (Jafari, Poorzarrabi et al. 2005). Specified relevant studies conducted in different provinces in Iran are described in Table 3.5. Most researches are small scale and quantitative. Most of them used a sample which is not likely to be representative of their study population. None of them used a comprehensive conceptual framework and mixed methods.

**Table 3. 5 Description of selected studies in Iran on heterosexual relationships and sexual behaviours among adolescents and young people**

Province/city	Author/year	Study population	Study subject	Results
Tehran	(Seyedan and Abbasloo 2005)	20 in-depth interviews with sexually experienced young girls	Social identity and reasons and motivations of promiscuity among young girls	Girls perceived sex as a tool for better intimacy and privacy. More than half of these girls had sex to attract their partner and better intimacy. Half of girls sought pleasure in their relationships with having sex Traditions and religiosity are not regulating anymore sexual behaviours, they are two different domains in life because 94% of these girls considered themselves to be religious (partly or completely) 81% of those girls who were promiscuous , consumed alcoholic drink and half of them used drugs
Ghoochan	(Saboor-parsa and Tabatabaee 2005)	150 female and male college students of private universities in Ghoochan	Sexual attitudes and behaviours	81% held positive attitudes towards premarital heterosexual friendships 30% held positive attitudes towards premarital sex 25% believed sex is fine if the intention is marriage 54.5% reported premarital friendship with the opposite sex 12% reported premarital sex Correlates of attitudes and behaviours: gender, social class, mother's education, mother-youth communication, dependency to family, academic discipline, living with both parents Religiosity was significantly associated with sexual behaviour
Tehran	(Jafari, Poorzarrabi et al. 2005)	177 male college students of both medical and non-medical universities of Shahed (mean age 23.5 years)	Sexual behaviours and problems and associated factors	38% reported that they always pray (are religious) 58% reported having girlfriend 68% of those who had girlfriend, reported have had sex with their girlfriend The majority of those who reported masturbation, had a feel of guilt and sin afterward Praying (being religious) was significantly associated having girlfriend, and premarital sex Academic discipline was associated with having girlfriend
Tehran	(Mirmolaee, Rahimikia et al. 2005)	1192 female students of selected high schools in Tehran	Sexual behaviours and associated factors	33.1% ever smoked, 18.1% ever consumed alcoholic drink, 2.8% ever used drugs. 12.8% have had premarital sex. Only 42% received information about HIV/AIDS and STDs Sex , using alcohol, smoking and using drugs were significantly associated and cluster together . Correlates of sex was : lack of parental control, Negative view toward self, peer pressure , age and subject of study.
Yazd	(Bokaee, Anjazab et al. 2005)	104 female college students in Yazd medical universities	Sexual physical or verbal abuse	41% of respondents were abused verbally by men, 38.5% were witness of sexual scenes in public, 67% were abused physically by men(different parts of body were touched by men)



Province/city	Author/year	Study population	Study subject	Results
Tehran	(Rahnama 2005)	425 female and male students of secondary schools in Tehran	Sexual attitudes and behaviours	81% of male students reported having had girlfriend 79% of female students reported having had boyfriend

### ***3.3. Gaps in Current Literature in Iran***

Recent review of studies on sexual behaviours among Iranian adolescents and young people shows that the majority of these studies have limitations and their findings cannot be generalised. They are mainly based on very small samples or convenience samples. None of the existing relevant studies have used both quantitative and qualitative methods. While there is a huge gap in knowledge about the process and circumstances of Iranian young women's involvement in heterosexual relationships before marriage, what norms they follow in terms of sexual relationship between young people, virginity, and gender roles. Only a small amount is known about the social and individual factors that influence sexual beliefs and perceived values and behaviours. The motivations and perceived risks of infection and pregnancy among the sexually active remain unknown.

## **4 Conceptual Framework, Aims and Objectives**

### **Introduction**

This short chapter outlines the main concepts presumed to underlie premarital sexual conduct among young female students in Tehran. Since this study is exploratory, no particular theoretical framework is used and no particular hypothesis is tested. The concepts and their hypothesized associations with each other and with sexual conduct are explained. The conceptual framework is followed by aims and key objectives of the study and finally, the study questions are outlined.

### **4.1 Conceptual framework**

Although this is an exploratory study for Iran, numerous studies assessing the predictors of premarital sexual relationships among adolescents and young people have been conducted in other settings (Mmari and Blum 2004). The existence of a tentative model based on the earlier studies in other setting helps in selecting the logical structure of the entire research project and planning it. Thus the conceptual model assisted in decisions about which material to collect, from which cases and about which attributes or variables of these cases.

Three main concepts examined in this model were social norms, personal attitudes and sexual conduct. Various social and individual factors mediate the relationships between these three main concepts. Individual's perceptions of societal and cultural norms with regard to premarital sexual relationships are assumed to be associated with sexual conduct. Individuals tend to acquire those patterns of behaviours which are appropriate for their culture (Laumann, Gagnon et al. 1994). Thus perceived societal norms were considered to be associated with sexual behaviour by influencing personal attitude, parents' attitude and peer norms.



Another set of important factors at the macro level relates to the university setting and discipline of study. One of the key comparisons in this study is differences in sexual behaviours between students of governmental universities and private universities. Students of private universities may differ from students of governmental universities for several reasons. One is that private universities, unlike governmental universities, charge students and it is likely that the economic status of students who are enrolled in private universities is higher than their counterparts in governmental universities. Another reason is that there is an extremely competitive university entrance examination for governmental universities unlike private universities; hence students who are enrolled in governmental universities probably have higher educational aspirations and better academic performance than students of governmental universities. Such differences are assumed to contribute to premarital sexual behaviours of students of different types of universities.

Sexual behaviour is fundamentally social. In a social network, other people surrounding the individuals influence sexual behaviour, implicitly or explicitly. Parents and peers are particularly likely to influence the sexual behaviour of young people. Therefore, links between family and peer factors and personal attitudes are assessed. Individual characteristics such as religiosity as well as life style and leisure activities are also conceptualized to be associated with personal attitude.

One of the important determinants of sexual behaviour was presupposed to be personal attitude toward sex. Personal attitude in turn is influenced by perceived societal norms, parents' attitude and peer norms and university context. The importance of normative beliefs also has been considered to be important in this process. Individual characteristics such as family background, socio-economic situation, and religiosity also influence personal beliefs about premarital sexual activity. Personal attitude or

consistency with societal norms affects lifestyle or leisure activities including risky behaviours (e.g. alcohol use, smoking, drug use, and watching pornography).

Self-efficacy is having confidence in one's ability to perform a particular behaviour.

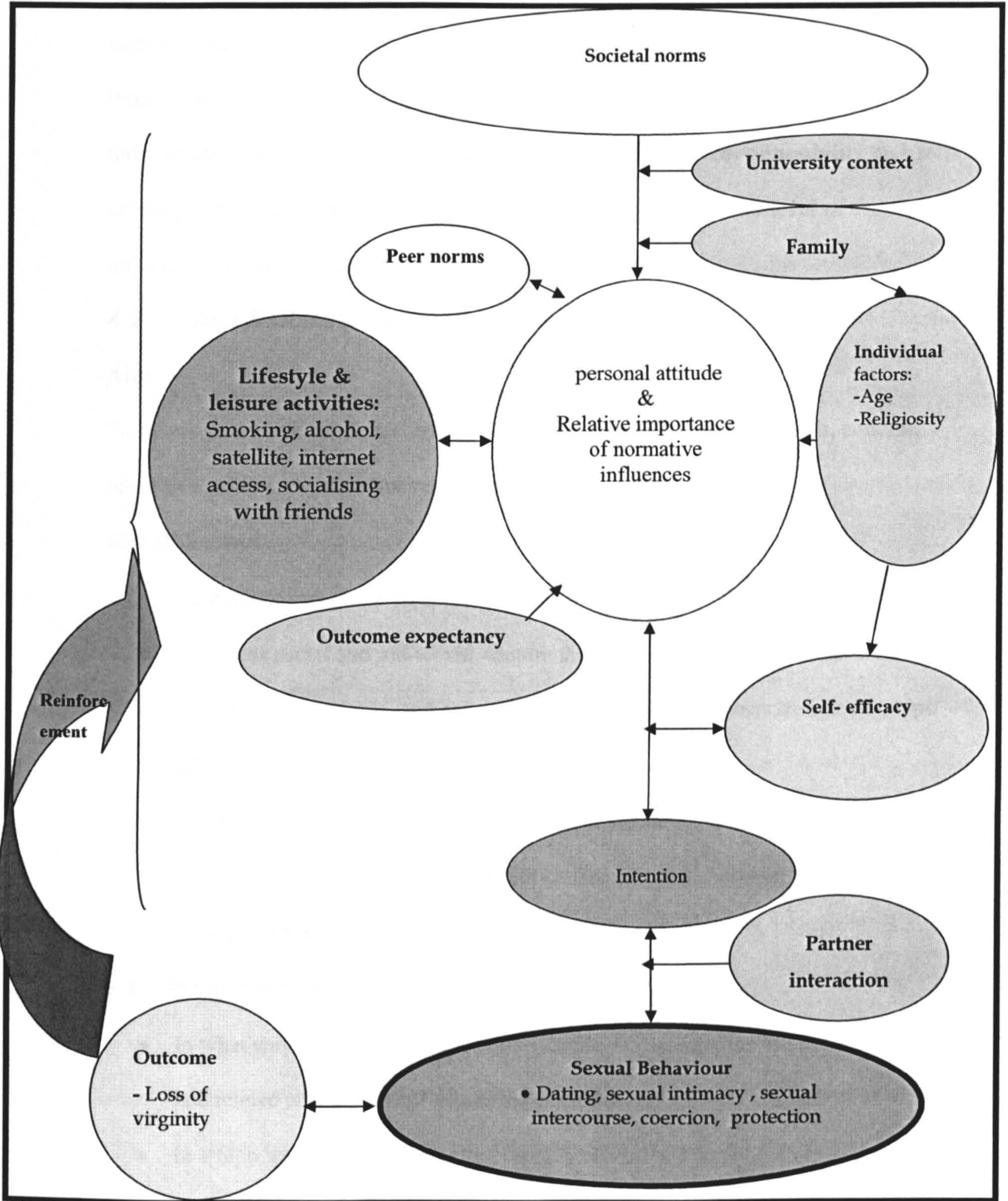
Based on social cognitive theory, the concept of self-efficacy is an important component of health-related behavioural change (Bandura 1986). According to the conceptual model, self-efficacy or skills to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse is presumed to be associated with engagement in premarital sexual activity and it may be also shaped by other factors such as knowledge, outcome expectancy or vulnerability and normative beliefs.

The concept of intention was used in the model as a potential substitute for sexual behaviour itself, because sexual relationships may be rarely reported by unmarried females. Intention was taken as a predictor of behaviour in this model. Of course, intention is not always predictive of the behaviour because of the effect of other situational factors (Ingham and Zessen 1997). The concept of intention is used in the study model as a contextualised propensity to refrain from premarital sexual contact.

Assessing a social behaviour with dyadic nature such as sexual behaviour without considering the role of the partner is inappropriate. Partner characteristics, motivations and expectations are presumed to be important factor in the model. Personal attitude, intention and sexual behaviour are defined as the main outcomes of interest, but attitude and intention also act as influences on sexual behaviour. Personal beliefs and attitude are posited to influence situational intention or propensity towards pre-marital sex and sexual conduct. However other individual factors such as perceived self- efficacy, perceived negative consequences of pre-marital sex or vulnerability toward STIs, HIV/AIDS and pregnancy may also influence intention or internal tendency towards



**Figure 4. 1 Conceptual framework**





pre-marital sex. As is clear from the model, the direction of relationship for most variables is two-way. Individuals, families, peers and the environment or society interact continuously and dynamically. And finally the engagement in premarital sexual intercourse and its outcome such as losing virginity will have a reinforcement effect on most factors such as reproductive health knowledge, perceived vulnerability and self-efficacy, leisure activities and perceived peer norms but not at the level of family and university context (Fig 4.1).

## **4.2 Aim & Objectives**

### **Aim**

To investigate to what extent elite young female college students in Tehran, endorse, reject or modify societal norms related to sexuality

### **Key Objectives**

- To explore sexual norms and attitudes among female college students
- To assess social and individual factors that are responsible for variation in sexual norms, attitude, and behaviour (including family, peers, religiosity, type of university, access to media, social class, ...)
- To explore the process and circumstances of sexual behaviour (protection, type of sexual experience, coercion, health consequences,...) among sexually experienced female college students

## **4.3 Study questions**

- In what ways do young female college students' perceptions of sexual norms and related attitudes vary? (*pre-survey qualitative study*)
- In which ways and to what extent do institutional and social factors (e.g. type of college, family, peers,) influence sexual norms, attitudes and behaviour of young female college students in Tehran? (*survey question*)



- To what extent do individual and partnership differences between young female college students determine sexual norms, attitudes and behaviours? (*survey question*)
- What processes underlie sexual behaviour of young female college students? (*Post –survey qualitative study*)

## **5 Design and Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This chapter sets out the study design and methods were used to meet the objectives outlined in chapter 4. Initially the study setting and study population are described. Secondly, it presents overall design of the study and thereafter different phases of the study are explained in detail, including pre-survey, survey and post-survey phases. Consideration of each phase includes the issues of validity, reliability, data analysis and ethics..

### ***5.1 Study Setting and study population***

The setting of this study is Tehran, the capital of Iran. In 2005, Tehran had a population of about 14 million accounting for about one- fifth of the population of Iran (SCI 2006) and comprising a mixture of all socio-economic and major ethnic groups. In these ways the city represents a cross section of the whole country. However, young people in a major urban area, such as Tehran, are particularly exposed to new ideas in terms of sexuality and sexual conduct, and thus are likely to be in the vanguard of social and behavioural changes. The capital has been the most important economical pole in the country for the last two decades. The majority of industrial and welfare facilities and resources are centred on Tehran. More than half of the residents have migrated from outside the capital.

The study population comprises female undergraduate students at all levels from both junior (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year) and senior (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year) in both private and government multidisciplinary universities of Tehran. The study is focused on women for several reasons. First, the sexuality of women has been studied far less than that of men in Iran. Second, the principal investigator is female and, because of sensitivity of the topic in



the country, it is more acceptable and justifiable to conduct this research among females than among males.

Nearly one-quarter (24%) of the 1,700,000 college students in the whole country in 2002-3 studied in the universities and higher education institutions of Tehran, in both governmental and private sectors (SCI, 2004). A total of seven private colleges enrol a huge number of students who fail to pass the highly competitive examination for entry into free governmental universities. Iran has a large network of public, and state affiliated, universities. State-run universities of Iran are under the direct supervision of Iran's Ministry of Science, Research and Technology (for non-medical universities) and Ministry of Health and Medical Education (for medical schools). Hence universities of this city can be a representative setting for the study of sexual behaviour of tertiary-level students. As shown in Table 5.1, 53% of students in Tehran universities are females (SCI, 2004).

**Table 5. 1 The distribution of college students in Tehran, by bachelor degree, sex and type of university**

Type of university	All degrees		Female bachelors	
	Both sexes	Females	No.	%
Governmental	175,965	84,912(48%)	53, 392	37
Private	231,334	131,468 (56%)	89, 398	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>407,299</b>	<b>216,380 (53%)</b>	<b>142,790</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Statistical Centre of Iran, 2004.*

### 5.1.1 Overall study design

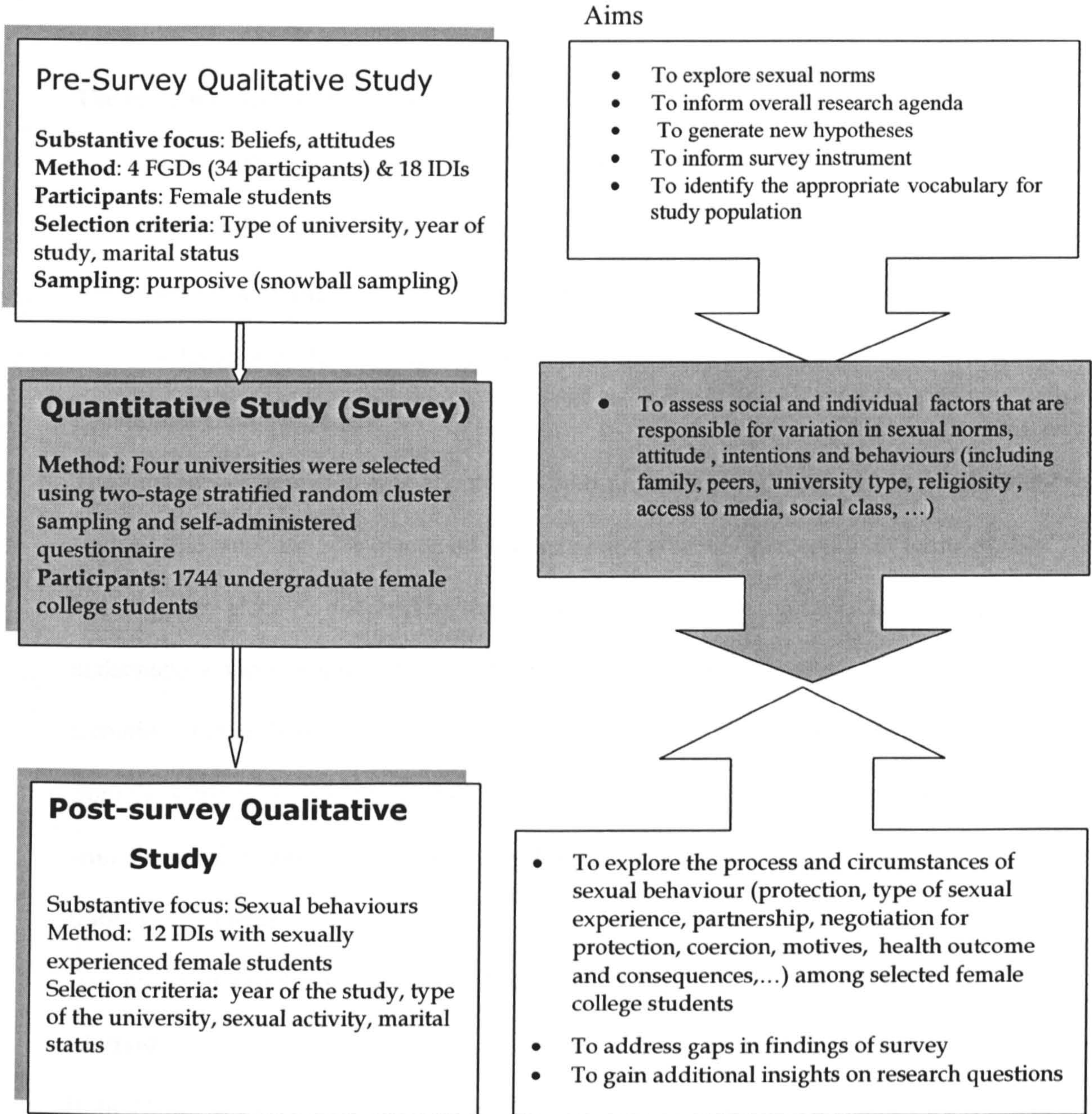
This thesis presents findings from a non-experimental, exploratory study that used both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Since the research questions were of different types, they required different methodological approaches. Quantitative research in the form of a survey was required to assess the variation in perceived sexual

norms, attitude and behaviour among young female college students and the individual and social and institutional factors associated with those variations. A qualitative approach, both before and after the survey, was needed for two reasons. Before the survey, it was necessary to explore the perceived social norms related to sexual relationships within a group of female college students and also to clarify concepts and terminology developed for the survey instrument. After the survey, it was also important to gain an in-depth understanding of the formation of romantic and sexual partnerships, including highly sensitive issues of coercion, risk perception and safe sex practices among different groups of respondents. These issues could not be addressed and explored in-depth in the survey because of their complexity and intimate nature.

Qualitative and quantitative approaches were in fact complementary and mutually strengthening in this study. Quantitative methods are associated with positivism in which social reality is assumed to be external to the researcher, while qualitative methods with interpretivism assume social realities are constituted through the subjective meaning that people attach to the phenomena (O'cathain and Thomas 2006). It should also be emphasised that the qualitative approach did more than merely inform and interpret the quantitative evidence. It enabled the researcher to challenge the assumptions of this study and modify the conceptualisation of social and individual factors associated with sexual norms and behaviours. The overall study design is shown in Figure 5.1.



**Figure 5. 1 Overall Study Design**



Note : FGDs is abbreviation of Focus group Discussions and IDIs is abbreviation of In Depth Interviews



## **5.2 The First Phase (pre- survey qualitative study)**

### **Aims**

The main aims of the first phase:

- To explore sexual norms of female college students
- To inform overall research agenda and to generate hypotheses
- To inform the content of survey instrument, and
- To identify the language appropriate for the study population

### **Epistemological approach**

The interpretive approach was adopted in both pre-survey and post-survey qualitative studies. The emphasis was placed on understanding students' perception in terms of the meaning they place on different sexual behaviours. This approach seeks to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and views of people involved, or a combination of these (Merriam 2002). The meaning and interpretation is itself derived from the subjects' own complex body of knowledge and beliefs, which is closely linked with the social context in which they live (Nettleton 2006).

### **Substantive Focus**

The nature of social phenomenon explored in this phase is beliefs and attitudes.

### **Method**

Both FGDs and IDIs were used. Since the research problem focused on social norms and attitudes with regard to sexuality and the reaction of groups of participant to sexual conduct among unmarried young people, FGDs appeared to be a rewarding technique because:

1. FGDs are particularly useful for obtaining data on social norms and cultural expectations on various issues. The theoretical basis is that the sexuality of young people is mostly shaped and influenced by conversations and interactions with



peers. Although individual reactions to peer norms and pressure will be very diverse (conforming, rejecting, ignoring, and so on), an identification of discourses will add useful knowledge to individual accounts (Cleland, Ingham et al. 2005).

2. The group approach is used to get a feel for the language, the values expressed by the language, the range of meanings and to identify conflicting arenas between members of communities.
3. FGDs are valuable in sensitising researchers to the social or group dimensions of the individual's conduct, language, dominant discourses, and social pressures. The content analysis of the group discussions may produce an interpretive framework for the individual interviews, where they tap into discourse on sex education, gender differences and sex, risks and responsibilities, setting, guarding and breaking rules, and perceptions towards condoms and other safe sex practices, including postponing sex (Cleland, Ingham et al. 2005).

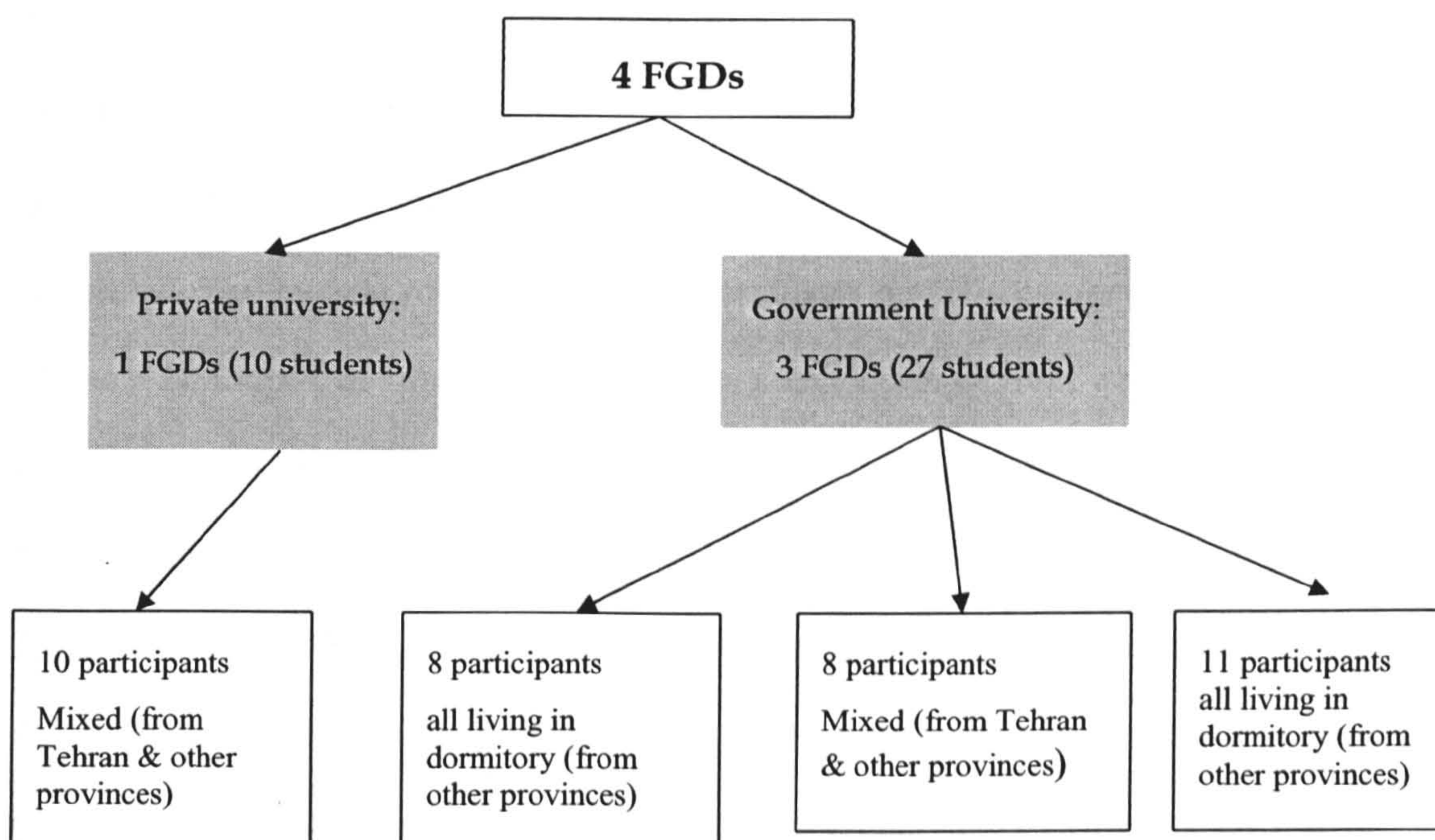
### **Sample selection and recruitment**

The study population comprised female undergraduate college students studying in colleges in Tehran that were not selected for the quantitative study. After getting permission and consent from the three university authorities, coordination with some lecturers was done and those who agreed allocated a part of their time for this study and three classes from different subjects (architecture, psychology, engineering) were provided with a brief description of the study and its importance for developing appropriate policies for improving young people's sexual and reproductive health. Female students were then invited to participate in FGDs. Thereafter, an appropriate time and confidential place were mutually agreed for running FGDs. Four FGDs were conducted among volunteer female college students irrespective of their sexual experience. Participants were recruited from three different universities (two



governmental and one private university). All but one FGD group were homogenous in terms of age range, type of universities and discipline. One FGD was conducted among female students living in a governmental university dormitory. Participants of this FGD were not homogenous in terms of age and study subjects. The researcher encouraged the participants to discuss explicitly about norms related to relationships and sex among unmarried young people. A total number of 37 students (range 8-11 students per FGD) participated in FGDs (Figure 5.2).

**Figure 5. 2 Purposive sampling for FGDs**



### **Representativeness**

The sample was selected from both private and government universities. Because of difficulties in recruiting participants in private universities, only one FGD from private university was run during the defined time. There were fewer volunteers for participating in FGDs among students studying in private universities. This was due to both the different atmosphere between governmental and private universities and the sensitivity of the subjects. Although it appeared that students from private universities



were more liberal in attitude and practice with regard to sexual behaviour, they were more concerned about their status in the university and reluctant to address sensitive topics in a group. In fact, when the investigator asked the main reason for not participating, they said that their views in the group might be conveyed to the university authorities and jeopardise their status of studentship. In each type of university, the sample covered students from both senior and junior students and also covered both students who had come from other provinces and those who originally had come from Tehran. The sample also included students from a variety of subjects from human sciences, such as psychology and history, to technical and engineering subjects. This distribution ensured that these FGDs cover the major strata of interest.

Twelve IDIs in governmental universities and six IDIs in private universities were conducted. The method of selection of these subjects for IDIs was purposive sampling (Table 5.2). Purposive sampling assisted us to select a sample from which the most can be learned (Merriam 2002). Patton (1990) argues that it is important to select “information –rich cases” for in-depth study (Patton 1990). In this phase, volunteers for IDIs were selected by snowball sampling. In each university the researcher introduced the study into 2-3 classes of interest and sought volunteers. Those who introduced themselves as volunteers were given a preliminary interview to ensure each had the criteria needed for inclusion in terms of age, sexual experience and type of university. Subsequently, they introduced their peers who might be willing to participate. In this way it was possible to reach information-rich cases in each sequence of snowball sampling. In FGDs both married and single students participated, and two interviews were carried out among married students.

## **Incentives**

The investigator assured participants that questions regarding sexual relationships and health-related concerns will be answered by the principal investigator (a qualified midwife) and that referral for specialist advice or counselling and services will be available.

**Table 5. 2 Theoretical sampling for pre-survey IDIs**

<b>Type of university</b>	<b>Unmarried</b>		<b>Married</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Sexually experienced</b>	<b>Sexually inexperienced</b>		
<b>Private</b>	4	2	0	6
<b>Government</b>	5	5	2	12
<b>Total</b>	9	7	2	18

Note: Numbers represent number of IDIs in each sub group

One student, who was concerned about HIV infection because of unprotected sexual relationship with multiple partners, was introduced for HIV test and counselling. Some students needed psychological counselling because of termination of their relationship or problems in their relationship and they were given some information about the potential counselling services within the selected universities. A few had some questions regarding HIV transmission, prevention of pregnancy (morning after pills) and different types of sex, which were answered by the principal investigator.

## **Data collection**

A topic guideline was prepared for both FGDs and IDIs. The FGD guideline focused mainly on social norms related to pre-marital relationships. The guideline incorporated main questions and probing questions for each main topic. Box 5.1 and Box 5.2 show the main topics which were addressed in FGDs and IDIs before the survey. The



preliminary topic guides for IDIs and FGDs were revised after doing pre-tests including pilot FGDs.

The IDI guideline covered individual attitudes toward pre-marital relationships and sex and also the issues to be investigated in the survey instrument. But these issues were explored in greater depth along with personal experiences and this guide allowed the interviewer to control the interview more.

The principal investigator moderated all FGDs and IDIs. Another two young females, university graduates who were experienced in conducting research on sensitive topics, were also recruited to cooperate in arranging the FGDs and IDIs and note taking. They were given one week's training on the topic of the research. Most interviews and FGDs were conducted without attendance of anybody except participants, moderator and note taker. A few volunteers for IDIs preferred nobody except the principal investigator to be present in the interview but they agreed for their interviews to be taped. Each FGD took about two hours and IDIs took a maximum of 2.5 hours. The participants were told that, because of the importance of recording all verbal communication for data analysis, the IDIs and FGDs should be tape recorded, subject to their agreement. Fortunately all participants agreed. They were reassured about confidentiality and anonymity as well. The main topics, which were discussed in FGDs are shown in Box 5.1. IDIs with unmarried female college students attempted to draw out their personal attitude and experiences of relationships and sexual behaviour. The main topics and themes in IDIs are shown in Box 5.2. Some questions about demographic details and individual life style and social networks were incorporated into the early stages of the interviews to gain both an overall assessment of the sample characteristics of the interviewees and also to form the basis of preliminary comparison both within and between respondents.



## Box 5. 1 Topic Guide for FGDs

1. The most important goals in life for young female university students? Motivations for higher education among females and rationales? The main role models for female college students.
2. Different means of expressing attraction and building friendship with opposite sex among unmarried females
3. The views of today's young females on acceptability of friendship, dating, and other intimate relationships with opposite sex (hand holding, hugging, kissing, touching and sex). Men's views, parents' views, people's expectations.
4. Perceived changes of norms toward premarital relationships among young people, parents, peers and community, perceived factors contributing to these changes including influence of media (role model)
5. Main concerns of females regarding marriage in terms of:
  - a. The extent of intimate relationships before marriage
  - b. The appropriate ways of partner selection for marriage, views toward opposite sex among females and males
  - c. The importance of virginity for successful marriage, men's views
6. Commencement of relationship and sexual activity among today's young females:
  - a. Differences between today's young people and older generation
  - b. Characteristics of sexually experienced girls
  - c. Reasons, motivations and expectations for having relationship and sex for females: risks and benefits and its differences between females and males
7. Reactions to improper behaviours (conflict in sticking to norms) including :
  - a. Perceived pressure to engage in relationship and sex among young females and males and its differences
8. The motives for abstaining from sex before marriage among sexually inexperienced females
9. Peer pressure for relationship with opposite sex and sexual relationship, reasons



## Box 5. 2 Topic Guide for Pre-survey IDIs

1. Demographic information: Age, year of the study, discipline, family size, employment, and economic situation
2. Family Characteristics: Marital status, entertainment, privacy at home, communication with parents and other family members
3. Personality: Religiosity, self-esteem, assertiveness, future aspiration with regard to marriage, education and employment
4. Reproductive health Knowledge: Sufficiency of reproductive health knowledge ( contraceptive methods, sexual contact, pregnancy, STDs), sources, preferred sources, preferred age for receiving information, role of friend, parents, school, media, preferred subjects
5. Communication and relationship with parents: Description of relationship with parent, communication with parents about daily matters and important issues, parents' strictness, parents' view toward going alone to parties, park, out, friends' home, parents' reaction toward doing something wrong, type of punishment, responsible person in disciplining children in home, communication with parents about issue, a genital infection, otherwise, with whom, having boyfriend, parent's awareness about boyfriend, parents' reaction, family values with regard to females mixing with males in the family atmosphere, communication between unrelated females and males, parents' double standard (gender based, sibling-based ) and its reasons
6. Intimate friendship with opposite sex: The story of how getting acquainted, age, duration, emotional feeling, motivations, fears, the activities experienced within that intimate relationship (handholding, kissing, hugging, ...), meaning of each activity to her, attempt to maintain the relationship, communication with others about the relationship, other's reaction, and termination, reasons
7. Personal attitude on: The friendship between unmarried girls and boys, the intimate relationship, hugging, kissing, sexual relationship , importance of virginity, and men's view on virginity
8. Sexual experience, partnership: Story telling (First sex, type of sex, at what age, where, when, how, expected or unexpected, forced or wanted, second sex.....third sex.....), personal motivation , partner's motivation, feelings, willingness, outcomes, such as losing virginity, pregnancy, STDs, abortion, duration and interval of sexual practices, number of partners, protection against pregnancy and STDs/HIV, how prepared
9. Feel of concern towards STDs, HIV, pregnancy,
10. Abstinence, motivation, how overcome, peer pressure
11. Solution, marriage, why?

Due to time constraints, a full analysis of pre-survey qualitative in-depth interviews and FGDs was not feasible; therefore the role of the pre-survey qualitative study in



informing the survey instruments was only based on a preliminary analysis. Full analysis of all interviews was conducted after the survey which is explained in details in section 5.4.

The preliminary analysis of the pre-survey interviews assisted the researcher with the common language used for different type of sex and also revisions of the survey questionnaire. During the interviews, the investigator encountered frequently used description of sex as “complete sex” and “incomplete sex”. Complete sex was mainly used for vaginal intercourse and incomplete sex for all other type of sexual contact. These terms were used particularly in the context of discussion of contraception and condom use during first and last sexual contacts. The qualitative study showed that one frequently reported reason for not using contraception or condoms at sexual contact was the practice of non-vaginal sex or incomplete sex. Consequently, questions 8.23 and 8.24 which elicited information about contraceptive and condom use at first sex, and questions 8.37 and 8.38 which elicited information about contraceptive and condom use at last sex were changed. Indeed, the response options of questions were changed in a way that contraceptive and condom non-use were asked under two different circumstances, when the contact was complete (vaginal) and when it was incomplete (non-vaginal).

Another important contribution of the pre-survey qualitative study on the survey instrument related to different practices of sexual contact among sexually experienced students. Initially, different types of sexual act were not distinguished in the questionnaire because of their sensitive nature and no previous awareness of the respondents’ reaction. Only one question was proposed as “Have you ever had sexual intercourse?” but the pre-survey qualitative study showed that sexually experienced interviewees were comfortable in discussing different types of sexual act. It was also



recognised that females practice sex in four different main ways: vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral sex and finally sex by touch. Sex by touch was exactly phrased by interviewees as a type of sex in which both partners are naked and use genital touch or stimulation with no vaginal, anal or oral penetration. Accordingly, different types of sex were asked individually in the questionnaire (questions 8.14, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17).

Another important role of the pre-survey qualitative study was the recognition that some married students reported several different premarital relationships with men other than their husband. This issue had been ignored primarily and it had been intended that section 8 which included questions about sexual intention and experiences were only answered by unmarried respondents. In the qualitative study, some in-depth interviewees reported premarital relationships with men other than their husband. Hence the skip pattern of the questionnaire for these two sections was changed to elicit information from married students about premarital relationships. Married respondents had to think back to before their marriage and respond to those questions.

### **5.3 The Second Phase**

This phase was a survey which was carried out on a sample of 1743 female students of governmental and private multidisciplinary universities of Tehran.

#### **Criteria for selecting subjects and subject allocation**

This study covered young female undergraduate students (both married and unmarried) drawn from four multidisciplinary universities in Tehran. The selection of universities was carried out in a way to achieve a reasonably representative sample of female students who study in multidisciplinary universities of Tehran.

Since most young female students aged 18-24 study in undergraduate programmes, it was decided to focus exclusively on undergraduate students. Because of practical complexity and difficulty of recruiting equal proportions of students in each year of the

study (from 1<sup>st</sup> year to 4<sup>th</sup> year), it was also decided to recruit approximately equal numbers from both junior (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year) and senior college students (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year).

### **Sample size**

In this study, there was no overriding important hypothesis or relationship to be assessed. Rather a large number of outcome variables were measured and a large number of comparisons were made. Hence no simple power calculation could be used to determine sample size. Required sample size calculation was in fact performed in different ways, striking a balance between what was desirable and what was logistically and financially feasible. Sample size calculation for this study was carried out for several different scenarios, not just one, in order to give a clear picture of the scope of the study. One way of estimating sample size for this study was determining sample size by costs, time, and feasibility and then assessing, with desired power and precision, what size of difference will be detected between outcome prevalence in two categories of interest. If a power of 80% and 95% confidence level is desirable, what size differences in the prevalence of different main outcomes in two categories of determinants will be detected? Accordingly, a target sample of 2000 was taken as achievable according to practical considerations. Because of the method of sampling which was two-stage stratified random cluster sampling, the sample size had to be adjusted in order to take into account intra-cluster correlation. Because there was no established estimate of design effect, the design effect of two was assumed. Using EPI statistical software, the size of differences was examined that would be detectable in the prevalence of different important outcome variables between two categories. Table 5.3 shows some of these estimations with this sample size.

If it is assumed that the distribution of the sample in a dichotomous predictor factor is roughly 35% and 65%, and that the prevalence of an outcome in the lower category is



5%, 7.5% and 10%, Table 5.3 shows the smallest prevalence in the higher category that can be detected with 80% power and 95% confidence.

An alternative way of calculating sample size for this study was based on one important hypothesis. This hypothesis was that sexual experience is more common in private colleges than in government colleges. It was assumed that 14 % of students in private universities are sexually experienced compared with 8% in governmental universities.

**Table 5.3 Estimation of prevalence of different outcomes between categories of determinant factors based of desirable sample size**

<b>Example for outcome and groups</b>	<b>Prevalence of outcome in lower group</b>	<b>Prevalence of outcome in higher group</b>
Sexual experience by family type	5%	9.8%
Sexual propensity or intention by economical class	7.5%	13%
Liberal attitude by family type	10%	16.15%

In order to detect this difference between two types of universities, with 95% confidence interval and 80% power, and taking account of the fact that the ratio of female students in private universities to students in government universities is 1.5, the sample size for each sub-sample or stratum was calculated with STATA as follows:

*P1 (the estimated percentage of young female college students that it is guessed have had sexual experience in private universities) =14%*

*P2= (the estimated percentage of young female college students that it is guessed have had sexual experience in governmental universities) =8%*

*Alfa =0.05*

*Confidence level: 95%*

*Power of the study: 80%*

*R (N2/N1) =1.5*

*So:*

$N_1$  (governmental) = 376

$N_2$  (private) = 564

*But* the sample size needed to be increased to take account of the intra-cluster correlation with an assumed design effect of two. After a further increase of 10% of total sample for non-response, the final sample size needed is as follows:

$N_1$  (governmental) = 376 *with allowance for a design effect of 2*       $N_1 = 752$

$N_2$  (private) = 564      *with allowance for a design effect of 2*       $N_2 = 1128$

Total sample = 1880

1880 + 10% because of non-response rate = 2060

Another important consideration in sample size decision was to obtain sufficient sexually experienced female college students to sustain at least some analysis. It was assumed that 10% of female college students might be involved in such relationships, therefore with a sample size of 2000, it would be expected to obtain approximately 200 such subjects. This is sufficient for at least simple statistical analysis of this sub-group. This sample size has also been tested by EPI-5 in order to check whether it will be sufficient for comparing the results between two strata or sub-samples (private vs. government) with a relatively good power.

As all female undergraduate students were considered in multidisciplinary universities in Tehran as the study universe, which is very large compared to the sample, the finite population correction  $(1 - n/N)$  approximates to one, which can be omitted (Moser and Kalton 1971).

On the basis of these considerations, it was decided to aim for sample of about 2000 (about 800 from governmental universities and 1200 from private universities).



### Survey sample selection

The method of sampling was two-stage stratified random cluster sampling with inclusion of all subjects (female undergraduate students in each class) at the second stage. This study was conducted at four multidisciplinary universities, which covered both governmental and private universities. Nearly 23,100 female undergraduate students were studying in the three governmental multidisciplinary universities and 52,600 students were studying in private universities in Tehran. After preliminary evaluation of the methodology of previous studies among college students in Tehran, it was recognised that academic discipline is an important factor associated with diversity of social behaviour. The method of selection with probability proportionate to size (PPS) was used, once the estimated number of students had been calculated in each discipline. These numbers of students were allocated to another sub-sample or stratum at the second stage according to type of university (governmental vs. private). It should also be noted that agricultural science was omitted because nearly all students were men.

**Table 5. 4 Number and percentage of female undergraduate students in four selected multidisciplinary universities, by discipline**

Discipline	Number of undergraduate female students in all four multidisciplinary universities	Proportion
Medical Science	7,565	10%
Human Science	44,637	59%
Basic Science	9836	13%
Technical & engineering	6808	9%
Art	6811	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,657</b>	<b>100%</b>

By multiplying the proportion in each discipline by the target sample size, the required number of students in each discipline was determined. The next step was to calculate

the proportion of students in each discipline by type of university (governmental vs. private). This proportion was different for each discipline. For instance, once the total desired number of medical students was determined within the study population, it was estimated that 86% of medical students are studying medicine in governmental universities and 14% in private. This proportion was quite different for human science. Only 28% of students who take human sciences do so in a governmental university, whereas 72% study in private universities. Therefore, the required sample for each discipline by type of university was calculated. Accordingly for selecting study subjects in each stratum, the university was chosen randomly and the desired number in each discipline was derived from the chosen university.

Table 5.5 shows the number of universities in Tehran, by type. In this study, it was assumed that multidisciplinary universities are roughly identical to single disciplinary universities in Tehran, hence single disciplinary universities were excluded. Since the study endeavoured to compare students from government universities with private universities, and single-sex universities with mixed-sex universities, it was decided to select with certainty the only single-sex university in Tehran in the public sector. In addition, two randomly chosen mixed-sex multidisciplinary colleges from the government sector were selected, and also one single-sex college from the private sector and two randomly chosen mixed-sex colleges from the private sector.

It was preferable to select more universities at the first stage and select fewer students from each cluster to enhance the precision of the survey's estimates. However, owing to practical considerations such as difficulty of obtaining approval from university authorities, and time constraints for field work, it was decided to restrict the study to a manageable number of universities. However, within each primary sampling stratum, the outcome of interest (sexual behaviour) was not expected to vary much from one



university to another. The selected universities are multidisciplinary and they appear to be roughly representative of all universities.

**Table 5. 5 Number of universities in Tehran, by type of university**

Type of university		Number of universities		Total
		Multidisciplinary	Single disciplinary	
Government	Female sex	1	0	1
	Mixed sex	2	10	12
Private	Female sex	1	-	1
	Mixed sex	6	-	6
<b>Total</b>		10	10	20

*Sources: 1) Guide booklet for university entrance, 2004 Islamic Azad(Private) University, Sanjesh Institution, 2) Office of Communication and Information Technology, Islamic Azad University, 2005.*

### **Sample implementation**

In practice, a total of 1743 students (526 students from governmental and 1217 student from private universities) were recruited within the 8 months period of survey field work (from Oct. 2005 till May 2006). This sample was distributed according to the proportion of female students studying in each of sub-samples (different disciplines and type of universities). An error in reported population of arts students in selected private university was committed by the computer department and in the middle of data collection, this error was notified to the researcher. Therefore the number of art students selected was more than required. In order to prevent overrepresentation of arts students, weighting at the analysis stage was implemented based on discipline. In this way, the weighted proportion of students studying in each discipline is similar to the real proportion in the whole student population of these four universities (Table 5.6)

Overall, 75 clusters were selected from chosen universities. The clusters or classes from each university were selected at random with equal probability without replacement, until the required sample size for the university was reached. The number of students in

**Table 5. 6 Proportion of students in four multidisciplinary universities, the proportion in the sample and weighting factor, by discipline**

<b>Discipline</b>	<b>The proportion of students by discipline in the whole population</b>	<b>The proportion in the sample of research</b>	<b>Weighting factor</b>
Medical science	10%	13.1%	0.770
Human Science	59%	46.2%	1.265
Basic Science	13%	8.4%	1.570
Technical-Engineering	9%	4.8%	1.937
Arts	9%	27.6%	0.332

each class varied considerably by study unit and type of university (e.g. in governmental mixed-sex universities, the size of some classes was as high as 90 (approximately half females and half males) while some classes had only nine female students. But on average each class, or cluster, comprised 23 female students. All female students in each selected class were invited to participate in the study.

Application of these sampling criteria assured a reasonably representative sample of female college students in Tehran from both governmental and private multidisciplinary universities, and from a variety of disciplines. Moreover, the sample is representative of both junior and senior students, because clusters were selected equally from both senior students and junior students. Sufficient numbers of sexually experienced female students (more than 300 sexually experienced) within the achieved sample size were obtained. Figure 5.3 shows the sampling scheme in which highlighted figures indicate the numbers and percentages of the achieved sample, while the other figures indicate the target number and percentages for sample selection.

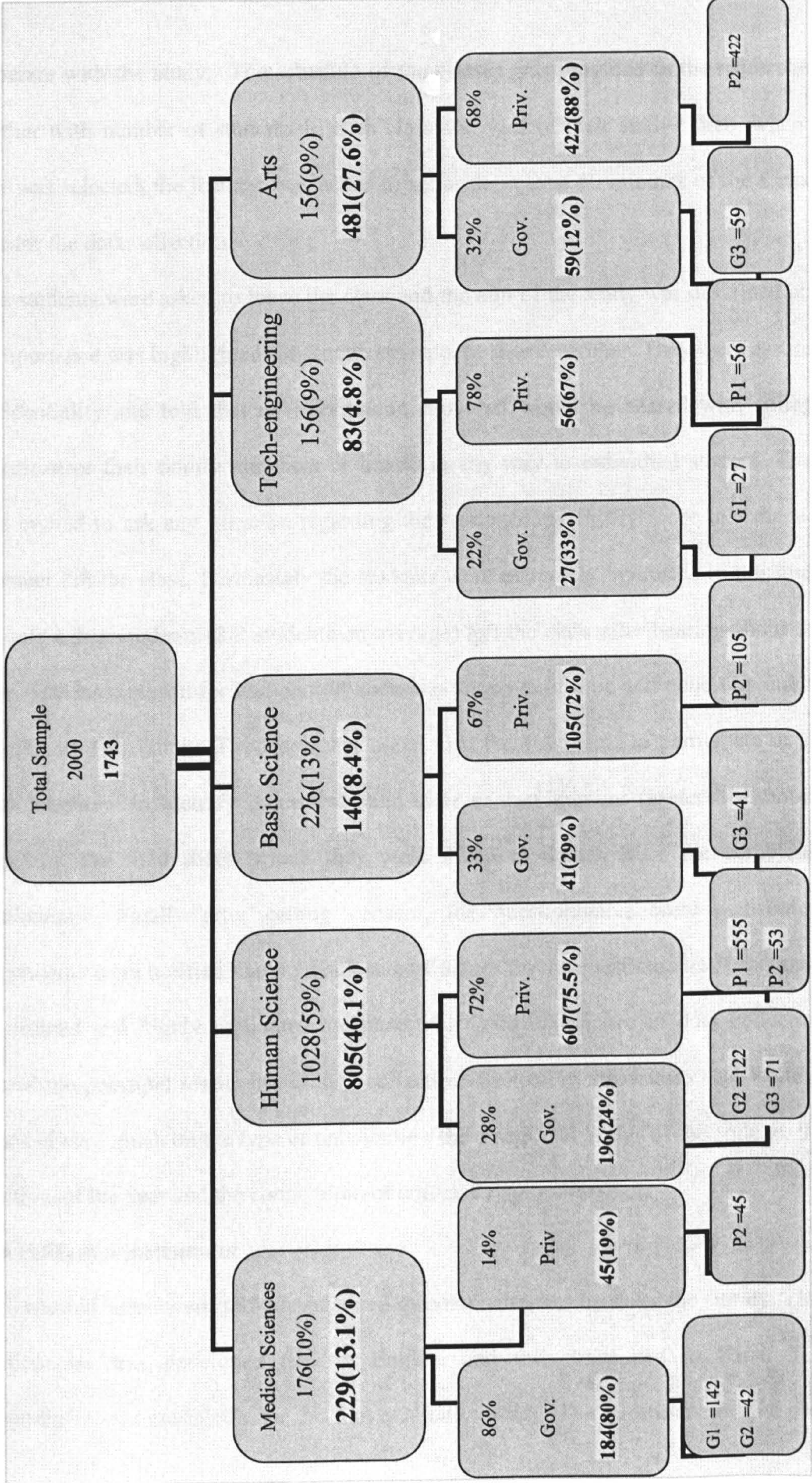
### **Data collection**

University authorities were briefed about the importance of the study and they were invited to cooperate. After getting their consent, the disciplinary directors were asked to



**Figure 5. 3 Sampling scheme**

Universities are identified with G1, G2, G3, P1, P2 (G stands for government and P stands for private).





cooperate with the study. The schedule of the classes was provided to the researcher, together with number of students in each class and year of their study. Then, when a class was selected, the lecturer was asked to set aside at least 50 minutes of the formal class for the data collection.

Male students were asked to leave the class and the aim of the study was described and its importance was highlighted for female students by the researcher. They were assured confidentiality and told that no information provided would be shared with college authorities or their family members or linked in any way to individual student. They were invited to ask any question regarding the research and finally those that did not volunteer left the class. Fortunately the students were extremely interested in the study and only a few students (2-3 students on average) left the class after hearing about the study. The main reason for non-participation was shortage of time and none was due to the subject of the study. The researcher asked also for volunteers to participate in in-depth interview to identify themselves and their contact number (preferably mobile phone) on the final sheet, which they were asked to detach from the completed questionnaire. Finally after getting consent, the questionnaires were distributed. Respondents were notified that no disclosure of names on the questionnaire is required. One trained and highly motivated assistant with good experience in data collection assisted the principal researcher in data collection. Collecting the data in each college depended very much on the type of universities, the disciplinary rules of the college, the term time of the year and the cooperation of university authorities.

### **Data collection instrument**

A pilot-tested, structured, self-administered questionnaire was used for the survey. This questionnaire was developed first in English and then translated to Farsi. The questionnaire was modified after the first qualitative study. The questionnaire was pre-



tested by asking six undergraduate university students to complete it and explain their interpretation of each question. The intention was to make sure that the questions were interpreted by the respondents as they were intended to be. According to their suggestions and concerns, the questionnaire was revised in such a way as to be more understandable. One IDI was done with a student from one unselected governmental university and one FGD among first year students in the same university. These qualitative explorations assisted the researcher to improve the questionnaire.

Societal norms, peer norms, and personal attitude were measured using the 5- point Likert scale. The Likert technique presents a set of attitude statements. Subjects are asked to express agreement or disagreement on a five-point scale. Each degree of agreement is given a numerical value from one to five. Thus a total numerical value is calculated from all the responses (Moser and Kalton 1971). As some respondents, because of lack of motivation, may take the easy way out and agree to all attitude questions or disagree (i.e. response sets), both positive and negative-wordings were used to minimise this problem (Likert 1932; Anastasi 1982). However, negatively-worded questions were used less than positively-worded ones, because simply reversing the polarity of an item does not necessarily reverse the meaning (Benson and Haocevar 1985; Streiner and Norman 2003) and also because the subject of study was sensitive, there is a tendency for respondents to endorse a negative item rather than reject a positive one (Streiner and Norman 2003). Apart from Likert scaling, for measuring some variables, other scales such as Rating Scales<sup>2</sup> and Semantic Differential Scales<sup>3</sup> were used. In order to measure social desirability, the Eysenck lie scale was used. The Eysenck Lie Scale, employed in this study, comprised nine items. Its reliability has been

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<sup>2</sup> Rating scales, similar to Likert scales, allow degrees of expression of an underlying opinion.

<sup>3</sup> Semantic Differential Scales consist of a pair of opposite responses, with several check points between them. These scales are excellent for measuring attitudes.



assessed in Iran's culture (Barahini 1995). The responses to items are binary. The study instrument comprises 10 parts (See Appendix 1):

### **Box 5. 3 Sections of the questionnaire**

1. **PERSONAL DETAILS (8 QUESTIONS)**
2. **MOTIVATION AND GOALS(5 QUESTIONS)**
3. **FAMILY (40 QUESTIONS)**
4. **LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND SOCIALIZATION(14 QUESTIONS)**
5. **PEERS INTERACTION(9 QUESTIONS)**
6. **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE (8 QUESTIONS)**
7. **NORMS, PERSONAL AND PEERS BELIEFS TOWARDS SEXUALITY, GENDER (30 QUESTIONS)**
8. **SEXUAL PROPENSITY AND EXPERIENCES(53 QUESTIONS)**
9. **SELF-EFFICACY( 7 QUESTIONS)**
10. **SOCIAL DESIRABILITY (9 QUESTIONS)**

### **Pre-test and pilot study**

Since there was no guarantee that the questions would be interpreted by the respondents as they were intended to be, the best way to ensure that questions are understood and unambiguous was to pre-test them on a group of subjects comparable to those who were ultimate target (Belson 1981). In the pre-test various methods were employed to find out which questions were misunderstood or ambiguous, for instance, by repeat interviews, asking a few students to think aloud, and doing verbal probing (Streiner and Norman 2003).

Thereafter a systematic small scale study or pilot was conducted. The Pilot study was conducted among three classes from one governmental university (Shahid Beheshti University) and 54 questionnaires were filled by the participants. After the completion of questionnaires, a debriefing session was conducted among respondents. Moser highlighted some important aims of pilot studies (Moser and Kalton 1971). Some of these aims particularly relevant to this study are as follows:

1. The non-response rate to be expected
2. The adequacy of the questionnaire



3. The way respondents react to questions
4. The answers they are likely to give
5. Whether the questions are meaningful to the respondents as well to the investigator
6. The efficiency of the instructions and general briefing of interviewers
7. The codes chosen for pre-coded questions. Some categories were added and some were omitted after pilot and pre-test.
8. The probable cost and duration of the main survey and its various stages
9. Practical difficulties and constraints and ways to minimise them prior to the survey

The discourse and language that respondents use for different type of sexual behaviours and their meaning were in fact determined in pilot study. (E.g. complete sex was used for vaginal sex and incomplete sex was used for all other penetrative sex or non-penetrative sex). Finally, analysing the pilot data by running marginal distributions and a few tables assisted us to eliminate useless questions.

### **Measurement of variables derived from conceptual framework**

Table 5.7 shows the source questions for outcome and predictor variables. Data reduction was conducted using factor analysis and principal component analysis. Those relevant variables which highly correlated with each other were collapsed and built up a scale variable accordingly.

Intention or propensity to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse in some hypothetical situations was ascertained from both sexually experienced and inexperienced respondents by asking two questions from each group. Sexually experienced respondents had to think back to before their involvement in sex and



**Table 5.7 Outcome and explanatory variables according to corresponding questions in the survey instrument & conceptual framework**

<b>Outcome Variables:</b>	<b>Corresponding Questions</b>
<p>❖ <b>Perceived societal norms on sexuality (SCALE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Perceived social acceptability of (a) mixed sex socializing, (b) boyfriend, (c) dating, (d) sexual intimacy, and (e) sexual contact (any type) before marriage (SCALE_SOCIETAL NORMS)</li> </ul>	7.1-7.5
<p>❖ <b>Attitude towards relationships/virginity /gender(SCALE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Personal attitude on (a) mixed sex socializing, (b) girlfriend, (c) boyfriend, (d) dating, (e) physical intimacy (SCALE_PERSONAL ATTITUDES ON RELATIONSHIPS)</li> <li>➤ Personal attitude on (a) pre-marital sexual intercourse even when love each other, (b) boys not respect girls who agree to have sexual intercourse with, (c) girls regret after sexual intercourse, (d) importance of remaining virgin for females, (e) hesitate any type of sexual contact before marriage, (f) religious belief in premarital sexual intercourse, (g) family values in premarital sexual intercourse (SCALE_PERSONAL ATTITUDES ON VIRGINITY)</li> <li>➤ gender imbalance in pre-marital sexual intercourse (SCALE_PERSONAL ATTITUDES ON GENDER DOUBLE STANDARD)</li> </ul>	7.6-7.10  7.11- 7.17  7.18
<p>❖ <b>Perceived peer norms toward relationship/virginity/gender</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Peers' attitude on (a) friendship with opposite sex, (c) dating, (d) sexual intimacy (SCALE_PEER NORMS ON RELATIONSHIPS)</li> <li>➤ Peers' attitude on (a) pre-marital sexual intercourse for unmarried young people even love, (b) pre-marital sexual intercourse if contraceptive used, (c) regret after sexual intercourse for females, (d) virginity for females (SCALE_PEER NORMS ON VIRGINITY)</li> <li>➤ Peers' attitude on (a) gender imbalance in pre-marital sexual intercourse (SCALE_PEER NORMS ON VIRGINITY)</li> </ul>	7.19-7.22  7.23-7.26  7.27
<p>❖ <b>Intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse (SCALE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Among sexually experienced: Intention to avoid sexual intercourse when someone who is attracted to her with or without marriage intention asks for sexual intercourse (SCALE_INTENTION)</li> <li>➤ Among sexually inexperienced: Intention to avoid sexual intercourse when some one with/without marriage intention ask for sexual intercourse (SCALE_INTENTION)</li> </ul>	8.40, 8.41  8.42, 8.43



❖ <b>Sexual conduct</b>	
<b>If Unmarried</b>	
❖ <b>Relationship</b>	
➤ The experience (a) having boyfriend, (b) number of boyfriend ever had, (c) age at first boyfriend, (d) dating, (e) whom were told about dating, (f) experience of physical intimacy (hand holding, kissing, hugging, touching),	8.1.8.5
➤ Current situation of relationship, current boyfriend, How acquainted	8.6, 8.7, 8.8
❖ <b>Sexual experience</b>	
➤ Experience of (a) Any type of sexual contact, (b) vaginal intercourse, (c) oral sex, (d) anal intercourse, (e) sex by touch (non-penetrative)	8.13-8.17
➤ Number of sexual partners in life time	8.39
❖ <b>First sexual intercourse</b>	
➤ Characteristics: (a) when, (b) age, (c) regret	8.18-8.20
➤ First partner: (a) type, (b) age	8.21-8.22
➤ Protection at first sexual intercourse against (a) STD/HIV, (b) pregnancy	8.23-8.24
➤ The place where the first sexual intercourse happened.	8.26
❖ <b>Last sexual intercourse</b>	
➤ Characteristics (a) how many weeks ago it happened	8.35
➤ Type of partner in last sexual intercourse	8.36
➤ Protection at last sexual intercourse against: (a) HIV/STD, (b) pregnancy	8.37, 8.38
❖ <b>Coercion:</b>	
➤ Sexual coercion at first sexual intercourse	8.25
➤ Ever had coercive sexual intercourse, by whom	8.33, 8.34
➤ Expected or unexpected sex at first sexual intercourse	8.27
❖ <b>If married</b>	
➤ Living with husband	8.44
➤ How selected her current husband	8.45
➤ The experience of sexual intercourse with husband before marriage ceremony	8.46
▪ Ever pregnant before marriage	8.47
▪ Decision on pregnancy	8.48
❖ <b>First sexual intercourse with her husband</b>	
➤ Protection at first sexual intercourse with husband: (a) against pregnancy (b) condom use	8.49, 8.50
❖ <b>Last sexual intercourse with her husband</b>	
➤ How long ago was last sexual intercourse?	8.51
❖ <b>Current sex</b>	
➤ Consistent (a) contraceptive use, (b) condom use	8.52, 8.53



<i>Explanatory or predictor variables</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Personal Background</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Age, co-residency, employment, father's income , economic class and religiosity</li> <li>➤ General academic performance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>1.1-1.7</p> <p>1.8</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Family-related factors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Marital and cohabitation status of parents</li> <li>➤ Having older and younger siblings</li> <li>➤ Parental education</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>Type of family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ (a) parent-youth communication style, (b)kindness, (c)level of conflict in family, (d)happiness, (e)understanding, (f)time spending (SCALE_FAMILY ATMOSPHERE &amp; RELATIONSHIP)</li> <li>➤ (a)religiosity, (b)modernity(SCALE_FAMILY VALUES)</li> <li>➤ Economical class</li> <li>➤ Parental control</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>Parent's attitude on,</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ (a) pre-marital friendship, (b) going to mixed parties, (c) dating with a boyfriend(SCALE_PARENTS' ATTITUDE)</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ (a) parents talked about family values, (b) emotional dependency to parents (c)Parental values on education, (d)parental value on marriage</li> <li>❖ <b>Parental influences on marriage choice</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Parental reaction to relationship with opposite sex</b>(a) father reaction on dating, (b) mother reaction on dating, (c)father reaction on physical intimacy, (d)mother reaction on physical intimacy, (e)father reaction on sexual contact, (f)mother reaction on sexual contact (SCALE_PARENTS' REACTION)</li> <li>❖ <b>Communication with mother on</b> (a) important issues, (b) sex, learning from mother about: (c)changing body during puberty, (d)menstruation, (e)reproductive system of men and women, (f)contraceptive methods, (g) male-female sexual relationship (SCALE_MOTHER-DOUGHTER COMMUNICATION)</li> </ul>	<p>3.1</p> <p>3.4-3.7</p> <p>3.2 &amp; 3.3</p> <p>3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.16, 3.17</p> <p>3.8, 3.9</p> <p>3.10</p> <p>3.15</p> <p>3.18-3.20</p> <p>3.21, 3.24, 3.25, 3.26</p> <p>3.27</p> <p>3.28-3.33</p> <p>3.34-3.40</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Life-style &amp; societal conduct</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Leisure activities (SCALE)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Access to (a) satellite TV , (b)frequency of access, (c) internet , (d) using chat rooms</li> <li>➤ (a)going to cinema, (b)going to hotel/restaurants, (c) going to late night parties(SCALE_SOCIALISING WITH FRIENDS)</li> <li>➤ (a) going to health or sport club, (b) going picnics,</li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>Other risky behaviours including</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ (a) smoking and(b) its frequency ,(c) alcohol use and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>4.1, 4.4</p> <p>4.5, 4.7, 4.8</p> <p>4.9-4.10</p> <p>4.11-4.13</p>



➤ ever watched pornography movies in entire life	4.14
❖ <b>Peer influences</b>	
➤ Peers' risky behaviour(SCALE)	
▪ How many : (a) smokes, (b)drink alcohol(SCALE_PEERS' INVOLVEMNET IN RISKY BEHAVIOURS)	5.1-5.2 5.3, 5.5
▪ How many (a) have boyfriend, (b) had pre-marital sex(SCALE_PEERS' INVOLVMENT IN PREMARITAL RELATIONSHIPS)	5.4
▪ Peer are not religious	5.6, 5.7, 5.8
➤ Peer communication (SCALE)	
▪ (a)freely discuss on personal matters with female friend, (b)going out with female friend, (c)peer pressure for having relationship with opposite sex(SCALE_PEERS COMMUNICATION)	5.9
➤ Having peers of opposite sex	
❖ <b>Partner's interaction</b>	
➤ Ability to (a) ask her first partner easily her interests, (b) talk with him about sex and contraception, (c) have more power in relationship, (d)respecting him(SCALE_(PARTNER INTERACTION)	8.28-8.29,8.30, 8.31
❖ <b>University influences</b>	
➤ Type of university	
▪ Private vs. government	
▪ Single sex vs. mixed sex	
➤ Academic discipline	
➤ Year of study	
	There is a box at first page about type of university , year and academic programmes
❖ <b>Perceived self-efficacy (SCALE)</b>	
➤ Confidence in discussing (a) STD/HIV/AIDS with an adult or reproductive health provider, (b) confidence in visiting a gynaecologist (SCALE_SELF-EFFICACY ON COMMUNICATION WITH ADULT ABOUT STD)	9.1-9.2
➤ How comfortable is avoiding the situations that lead to unwanted sexual contact from any type	9.3
➤ How comfortable asking future husband or partner about his previous sexual experiences	9.4
➤ (a) ability to refuse premarital sexual contact (any type) with someone who are attracted to him, (b) ability to refuse sexual contact (any type) with someone who cares about him, (c) ability to refuse sexual contact (any type) with someone who wants to marry him (SCALE_SELF-EFFICACY TO SAYING NO TO PREMARITAL SEXUAL CONTACT)	9.5, 9.6, 9.7
❖ <b>Importance of normative belief(SCALE)</b>	
➤ (a) respect for parental values on relationship and sex, (b) agreement with parental values, (c) doing care about what parents think and expect(SCALE_IMPORTANCE OF COMPLYNING WITH PARENTS'	3.22, 3.23, 7.28 7.29, 7.30

<p>BELIEF )</p> <p>➤ (d) doing care about what peers think and expect you, (e) doing care about what society and other people think and expect you (SCALE_IMPORTANCE OF COMPLYING WITH PEERS' BELIEF )</p>	
<p>❖ <b>Motivation and goals</b></p> <p>➤ Motivation for marriage in next 2 years</p> <p>➤ The most important goal in life, (a) successful marriage, (b) relaxed way of life (SCALE_GOAL_PRIVATE LIFE)</p> <p>➤ (a) high academic degree, (b) carrier and job (SCALE_GOAL CAREER)</p>	<p>2.1</p> <p>2.2, 2.5</p> <p>2.3, 2.4</p>
<p>❖ <b>Sexual and reproductive health knowledge (SCALE)</b></p> <p>➤ Awareness that (a) a woman can get pregnant at first time (b) HIV infected people may have healthy appearance, (c) Condom is an effective method against HIV/AIDS, (d) Oral pill is as an effective method against pregnancy (SCALE_REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE)</p> <p>➤ Ever attended family planning education in university</p>	<p>6.1- 6.4</p> <p>6.5</p>
<p>❖ <b>Vulnerability towards reproductive outcomes (SCALE)</b></p> <p>➤ The perception of (a) HIV risk, (b) pregnancy risk, among sexually active unmarried people (SCALE_VULNERABILITY)</p>	<p>6.6- 6.7</p>
<p>❖ <b>Eysenck Lie scale (SCALE)</b></p> <p>➤ Have you ever done your promises in all cases? Is that possible that you lose your calm sometimes and get angry? Do you prefer your benefits than other's benefits? Are all of your habits appropriate and approved? Do you sometimes talk about others when they are absent? Do you sometimes feel jealous toward your friend? Do you sometimes angry with your friends? Is that possible for you that really hate from one or two members of your relatives? Do you hide sometimes your weaknesses from others? (SCALE_SOCIAL DESIRABILITY)</p>	<p>10.1-10.9</p>

respond to these questions. Each question elicited their confidence to abstain from sexual intercourse when their male partner, with or without marital motive, asks them to have sex. By adding the scores related to each question, a scale was developed for each respondent and it was then categorised into three categories; low, average and high intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse. Intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse was used as dependent variable.



With regard to father's income, a monthly income of lower than 3,000,000 Rials was considered as below the poverty line in year 2005 (Iran-Daily 2005). Because the data collection took place in 2005-6, we considered 300 million R. as a base for categorisation of father's income. Low father's income refers to monthly income lower than 3000000 R., average income refers to an income between 3000000 R. and 5000000 R. and high income refers to monthly incomes more than 5000000 R. The total non-response rate for father income was 2.6%.

Family relationship and atmosphere is a scale variable representing some aspects of family relationship which showed a high correlation (range 6-30). These family factors included "open communication, kindness, low conflict, happiness, understanding, and time-spending with respondent at adolescent times". The lower the score, the better is the family atmosphere and the higher the score, the poorer is the family relationships and atmosphere. Family relationship and atmosphere is represented in most tables as a collapsed version of the scale. Frequency distribution of transformed scale was obtained and, using the cumulative percentage column for each scale, each scale was divided into three equal sized groups; good, moderate and poor.

Family endorsement of tradition and religion is also a scale variable and in all tables a collapsed version has been shown. The method of collapsing the scale variables is the same as family atmosphere and relationships.

### **Data management and analysis**

Completed questionnaires were gathered daily and checked and manually edited at the end of the working day and then entered into an access data base. In order to minimize data entry errors, the data base was similar to the format of the questionnaire with drop down options. The data were cleaned and verified as soon as possible. The data were converted to SPSS-14 for statistical analysis. Data reduction was done using principal

components analysis (Factor analysis) in deriving scales from individual items. Scales were developed for those set of variables which correlated highly. As indicated earlier, the association of perceived societal and peer norms, personal and parental attitudes and self-efficacy with the main outcomes (intention and sexual behaviour) were assessed by multivariate analysis. Scores were developed for knowledge of different topics of reproductive health, personal and parental attitude, societal and peer norms, self-efficacy, intention and family relationship, and family values. Some questions were scored according to Likert scales (5 point scales, from strongly agree to strongly disagree) (Moser and Kalton 1971). The scores were added to construct scales for attitude and norms towards sex.

The results were presented in descriptive tables and graphs, means, standard deviation. The hypotheses were tested on the basis of two sided t-test. Bivariate analysis, chi-square testing, t-test and ANOVA were used to examine the association between sexual experience and attitudes and each of the independent and proximate variables. Pearson correlation and partial correlation was applied for assessing associations between continuous variables (norms and attitude). Multivariate analysis was performed to quantify and compare the likelihood of sexual experience among youth within the categories of selected independent variables using logistic regression analysis. For dependent variables which were continuous, multiple regression was applied and, for dependent variables which were categorical, logistic regression was used.

It should be noted that identifying causation of some factors that interact with each other continuously is impossible to achieve with confidence in cross-sectional studies. In this study sexual activity has a complex relationship with other associated behaviours. The notion of interaction between different individual behaviours makes it difficult to explain which caused which. Having less religious conviction, alcohol use,



drug use, smoking, having sexually experienced peers, holding liberal attitude towards sex are among factors which are likely to be associated with sexual behaviour. Though these factors are hypothesised to be positively associated to pre-marital sex, a direct causal connection is impossible to establish. However, factors related to family and institutions are among those factors that are less likely to be affected by sexual activity and causality can be inferred with more confidence for these factors.

## **5.4 The Third Phase (Post- survey qualitative study)**

The aims of the third phase were:

- To explore personal experiences of partnerships and sexual behaviour among sexually experienced female college students, including their process of sexual initiation, negotiation, their motivations, their practices during sex, and coercion.
- Addressing gaps in findings of survey by including issues that were excluded in the survey
- Additional insights on research questions

### **Epistemological approach**

In this study, the interpretative approach has been approached because the aim was understanding the actual behaviour of educated females with regard to sexuality.

### **Ontology**

The phenomenon to be explored in this phase is behaviour and experience.

### **Sampling and recruitment**

At the end of the questionnaire, on a separate sheet, the survey respondents were asked whether they were willing to be interviewed by the researcher in a private and confidential situation and to discuss their own attitudes, relationships and experiences.

If they agreed they could write their contact telephone number and their identification in

order to be invited for interview. Any questions on sexual health were welcomed at the end of IDIs as an incentive.

Although the principal investigator had asked the respondents to detach the final page including their contact number and name, most of them did not follow this instruction. Out of 1744 respondents, 226 volunteered for post-survey interviews and provided their contact address and first name. In order to facilitate recruiting volunteers for IDIs according to our criteria (age, type of university and sexual experience), these characteristics were identified from the questionnaire and were used as codes to another sheet with their contact numbers. Then the final sheets were detached from the questionnaires and stored in a safe place to be unrelated to the questionnaire. Seventy seven volunteers were sexually experienced, 27 volunteers were involved in relationship with opposite sex but were not sexually experienced, 82 volunteers were not involved in any friendship and sex with opposite sex and finally 40 volunteers were married.

These volunteers had identified their contact telephone number (mostly mobile phone) at the end of the questionnaire in a separate sheet. Sexually experienced volunteers were contacted by the researcher and were invited for IDI. Since some of these contacts took place after months, some needed more assurance of confidentiality for attendance. Because post-survey IDIs were started in the summer, most students from outside Tehran were unavailable and some students had changed their numbers and some had lost interest in participating in the interview. Every effort were made to select a diversity of respondents in terms of age, university type, type of sexual relationship, to obtain a range of opinion and experiences (Table 5.8 ). The main topics, which were discussed in IDIs, are shown in Box 5.4.



## Box 5. 4 Topic guide for post-survey IDIs

- 1- Demographic information: Age, year of the study, discipline, family size if unmarried , employment, economic situation
- 2- Family characteristics: Marital status ,entertainment, privacy at home, communication with parents and other family members
- 3- Personality: Religiosity, self-esteem , assertiveness, future inspiration with regard to marriage, education and employment
- 4- Reproductive health Knowledge: Sufficiency of reproductive health knowledge (contraceptive methods, sexual contact, pregnancy, STDs), current sources, , preferred sources, preferred age for receiving information, role of friend, parents, school, media, preferred subjects
- 5- Communication and relationship with parents: Description of relationship with parent, communication with parents about daily matters and important issues, parents' strictness, parents' view toward going alone to parties, park, out, friends' home, parents reaction toward doing something wrong, type of punishment, responsible person in disciplining children in home, communication with parents about issues such as genital infection, otherwise, with whom, having boyfriend, parent's awareness about boyfriend, parents' reaction, family values with regard to females mixing with males in the family atmosphere, communication between unrelated females and males, parents' double standard (gender- based, sibling-based , .....), reasons
- 6- Intimate friendship with opposite sex: The story of how getting acquainted, age, duration, emotional feeling, motivations, fears, the activities experienced within that intimate relationship (handholding, kissing, hugging, ...), meaning of each activity to her, attempt to maintain the relationship, communication with others about the relationship, other's reaction, termination, reasons
- 7- Personal attitude on: The friendship between unmarried girls and boys, the intimate relationship, hugging, kissing, the sexual relationship, importance of virginity, men's view on virginity
- 8- Sexual experience and partnership: Story telling (First sex, type of sex, at what age, where, when, how, expected or unexpected, forced or wanted, second sex.....third sex.....), personal motivation , partner's motivation, feelings, willingness, outcomes such as losing virginity, pregnancy, STDs, abortion, duration and interval of sexual practices, number of partners, protection against pregnancy and STDs/HIV, how prepared,
- 9- Feel of concern towards STDs, HIV, pregnancy
- 10- Abstinence, motivation, how overcome, peer pressure



**Table 5. 8 Post-survey IDIs, age range, type of university and type of sexual experience ever had**

<b>Interview No.</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Type of university</b>	<b>Type of Sex</b>
1	21	Private	Anal, Oral, Touch
2	22	Private	Vaginal
3	23	Private	Anal, Oral, Touch
4	23	Private	Oral, Vaginal, Touch
5	23	Governmental	Vaginal, Anal, Oral, Touch
6	27	Private	Vaginal, Anal, touch
7	22	Private	Touch, Anal
8	25	Private	Touch, Oral
9	23	Governmental	Vaginal, Oral, Anal, Touch
10	21	Private	Anal, Oral, Touch
11	25	Private	Touch, oral
12	25	Private	Vaginal, Oral, Anal, Touch

### **Qualitative data Analysis**

The analysis of the qualitative data began during data collection by re-reading the notes and transcripts and annotating the documents with interpretations and emerging main themes. Simultaneous data collection and analysis allowed the researcher to make adjustments along the way, even to the point of redirecting data collection, and to “test” emerging concepts, themes, and categories against subsequent data (Merriam 2002). Although a full Grounded Theory approach was beyond the scope of this study, some principles of Grounded Theory were adapted to guide the process of coding, sorting and organising data. Grounded Theory argues that theory can be built up inductively through careful observation of the social world (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Theory is then verified through systematic data collection pertaining to



the research matter, and is therefore not inhibited by the application of prior categories or theories.

For analysing the focus group discussions the unit of analysis was the group and the method of analysis was the same as IDIs. Themes developed from open coding of IDIs and FGDs assisted developing index systems or conceptual frameworks for IDIs and FGDs.

Audio-tapes of interviews and group discussions were transcribed by hand in Farsi, each typed into a separate word document. The manuscripts were read several times, and initial impressions were noted. Based on open coding (Rice and Ezzy 1999) and using topic guides for IDIs and FGDs, initial themes or concepts were identified. Thereafter themes were sorted and grouped into a smaller number and broader categories or main themes. Based on these categories and subcategories, two index systems were developed for IDIs and FGDs independently. Different numbers were assigned to the individual categories. For instance, in the index system for IDIs, six major themes emerged, number "3" assigned to "relationships" and number "3.2" assigned to one of its sub-categories as "friendships with the opposite sex". Another major theme is "sexual behaviour", which has 18 sub-categories. One of the sub-categories is "motivations and reasons" (Appendix 3). The Index or coding system was flexible and under constant review because some categories were missing and some needed collapsing. Any problem in coding was checked with the thesis supervisor and local colleagues. The reliability of the coding system was checked by having ten transcripts coded by another qualified person in qualitative analysis.

Thereafter, the data or transcripts were labelled or tagged using the index system, and bookmark in Microsoft Word. Different sections of any transcripts were coded by defining a theme or code using "insert bookmark". Book marking the codes or



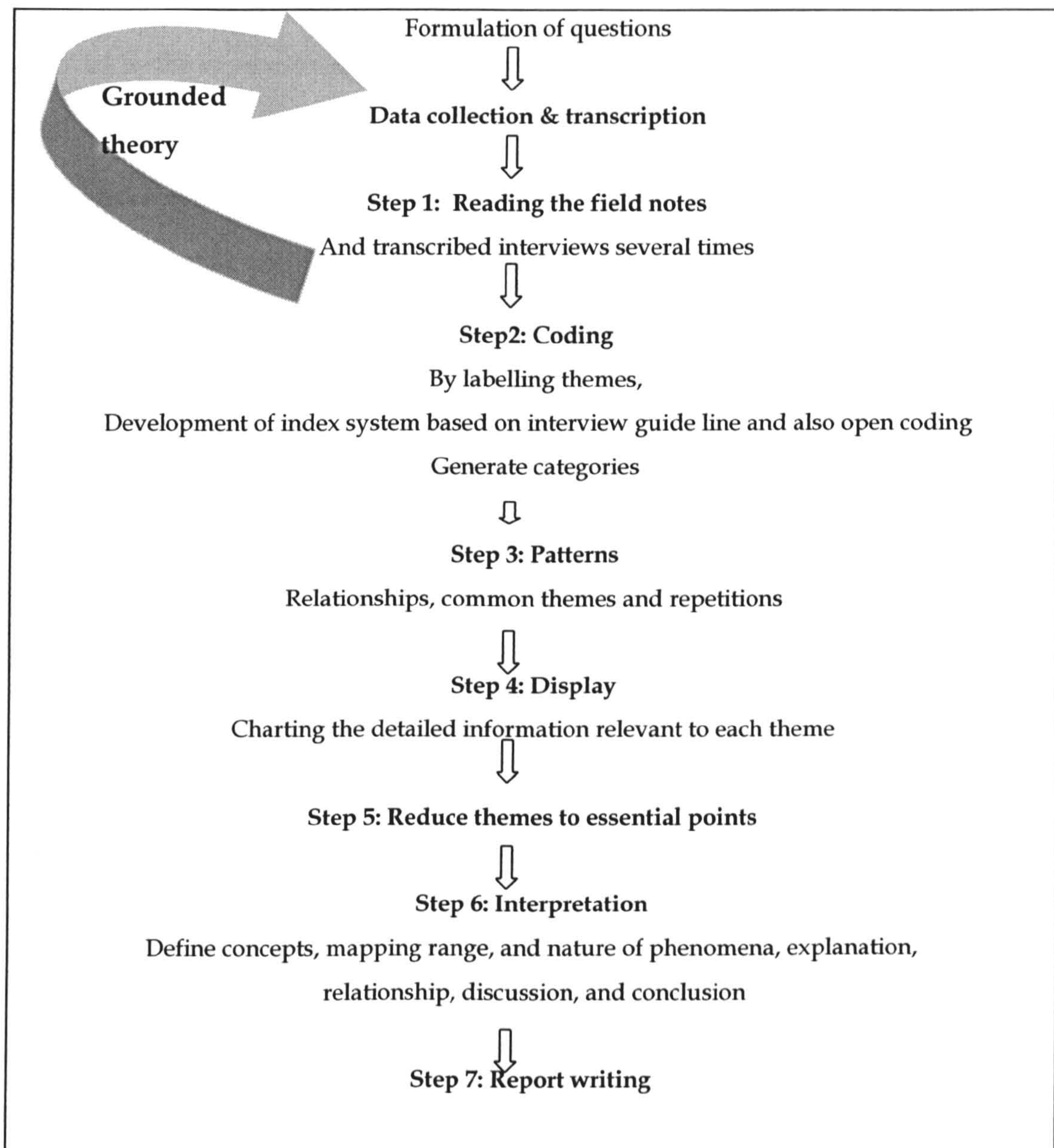
subcategories provided the possibility for retrieving each code and its related text in each transcript. It also was possible to do parallel coding when a section was assigned to different codes.

The next step was sorting the data by themes or concepts using spreadsheets (Microsoft Excel). For each major theme, one thematic framework or matrix was developed using one Excel file. In the thematic framework, each column was a subcategory within the index system and each row was an interviewee for IDIs or a group for FGDs. All information related to each theme or subcategory in Word was inserted in the relevant cell in the thematic framework in Excel using cut and paste. Some of these frameworks were translated into English, while the rest remained in Farsi. For each column of thematic framework, one thematic chart was developed in a separate table (Appendix 4). Framework chart was used for descriptive accounts. The left column of the thematic chart included the sections of the transcripts related to the specified sub-category or sub-theme in Farsi or a summary in English. The middle or next column included elements and dimensions identified in the left column in order in the chart for each interviewee. The summary attempted to represent as much as possible the participant's own accounts and language in the second column. The final step involved reading through the summaries of different interviewees and creating main categories, concepts, and classes at the last column. At this stage based on main concepts the range of all different recurrent themes was mapped and the relationships between them were explained, interpreted and reported. This process was important to reduce data and to recognise patterns in the data (Riessman 1993).

All 30 IDIs were merged together after the survey and were analysed. The analysis of qualitative data in pre-survey and post-survey was the same. All data were anonymised



**Figure 5. 4 Steps for analysis qualitative data**



for reasons of confidentiality. Figure 5.4 outlines the steps for the analysis of qualitative data.

### **5.5 Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was acquired from the Ethical Committee of Shahid Beheshti University and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. In order to



facilitate the cooperation of all selected universities in this study, it was decided to base the study in Family Research Institute of Shahid Beheshti University. This decision was approved by the supervisor in advance. The university authorities were also assured that in all publications of the study or dissemination of the results, the name of the universities would not be made public.

For both qualitative studies, participants' written informed consent was obtained before their participation in the study (Appendix 2). In IDIs and FGDs, it was emphasised that they can either refuse to respond to any question during the interview or terminate the interview at any time. The respondents were assured that their answers would be confidential. Finally they were assured that their questions in terms of sexual and reproductive health are to be answered by the principal investigator at the end of interview. Where appropriate, some respondents were referred to counselling services of specialist advice or even for HIV Test.

Written consent was also obtained from the survey participants (Appendix 2). The researcher asked very respectfully male students to leave the class. The Principal investigator then briefed the students about the purpose and significance of the study. They were assured that responses would be confidential. Before their participation they were asked to read and sign an informed consent form which was collected in separate folder unlinked to their completed questionnaires.

The consent form contained information about the project and potential benefit of its results and also instructions for completing the questionnaire. The subjects were asked not to identify themselves in the questionnaire and place their consent form in a separate file and place the completed questionnaire directly into another sealed box. The respondents were assured that their answers would be confidential and their names would never be linked to their answers. This strategy encouraged participants to provide



valid and honest responses and lowered the non-response rate. However, since some of the participants were needed for in-depth interview, at the end of questionnaire, the researcher had asked those who were willing to be re-interviewed in more detail to identify themselves and provide the most convenient contact means (e.g. telephone, preferably mobile, or e-mail). Furthermore, the university staffs were not allowed to participate in administrating the survey and qualitative studies.

Such measures encouraged reliable responses from young female college students. As participation of young female college students in the survey was entirely voluntary, students were allowed to decline participation in our investigation or leave it in any time. University authorities were not informed of the name of students who participated in the survey to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of respondents.



## **6. Quality of data**

### **Introduction**

This short chapter assesses the degree of trust that can be placed on the study data. Since the focus of this study was culturally sensitive, it was important to ensure as far as possible that the responses provided by respondents are close to reality. This chapter describes techniques that were used to maximise reliability and validity of responses. Thereafter total and item response rates are analysed and possible justifications for non-response rate are explained. The ways that missing values were handled in analysis and the data were checked for missing value biases are described. Acquiescence and social desirability, as two possible problems, are outlined and finally the Eysenck Lie scale is applied to evaluate responses to sensitive questions.

### **6.1 Reliability and Validity**

Formal tests of reliability by the test-retest method were not undertaken because of time and budget constraints. One of the best ways to create reliable indicators was using multiple-item indicators. Assessment of their reliability is straightforward (e.g. Likert Scale for attitude and norms)(De Vaus 2002). Careful wording and the presence of a trained interviewer (the principal investigator) to answer queries during questionnaire administration were all among techniques which appear to improve the reliability of the survey questionnaire. In order to determine that the instrument is measuring what is intended ( attitude and behaviour), the validity of the instrument must be confirmed (Streiner and Norman 2003). To maximise the validity in this study, a qualitative study (IDIs & FGDs) prior to the survey was conducted. The qualitative phase informed the questionnaire and also assisted us to identify the appropriate language for the study population. A few questions were understood differently by respondents from that of the



researcher. Verbal probing revealed this problem and offending questions omitted or modified. For instance, "sexual contact" or "*Tamas-e- Jensi*" was understood as two categories of sex; "complete sex", and "incomplete sex". Most respondents perceived complete sex to mean "penetrative vaginal sex", and incomplete sex is applicable to "sex by touch", or "penetrative anal sex" or "penetrative oral sex". To differentiate between different types of sex that they had ever experienced, four separate questions were presented to identify these different types of sex acts, including vaginal intercourse, anal sex, oral sex and sex by touch. In the questionnaire the terms complete and incomplete sex were used particularly when asking about using contraception and condoms. The researcher also made sure that the respondents understood different type of sexual contact including vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse, oral sex and sex by touch. Since only a few questions relied on the respondents' memory, recall bias in past sexual behaviours or feelings, was not a major issue in this study. Finally, respondents might have provided social desirable answers (Streiner and Norman 2003), these answers were minimised by ensuring anonymity and confidentiality. Social desirability in the study was measured using the Eysenck Lie scale to control for social desirable answers. Various ways of improving the validity of qualitative results were applied including:

- Using triangulation (FGDs & IDIs) to compare the results from different methods of data collection. Using a second experienced researcher to code and interpret some parts of the qualitative data.
- Clear exposition of methods of data collection and analysis
- The research results explicitly incorporated a wide range of different perspectives (Fair dealing )



## **Relevance**

One way of achieving relevance in this study was to write the report in such a way that reader is able to judge whether or not the findings apply to such similar settings. Moreover, theoretical sampling used in this study ensured that the initial sample was drawn to include as many as possible of the factors that might affect variability of norms and behaviours, and this was extended as required in the light of early findings or emergent theory. The full sample therefore attempts to include the full range of settings relevant to the conceptualisation of the subjects.

## **Acquiescence**

Some respondents are liable to provide a certain type of answer regardless of the content of the question. This problem is called acquiescence –the tendency to agree with a statement regardless of its content. This problem is most likely to occur in attitude statements. In order to minimise this problem, a response format was adapted which included both conservative and non-conservative statements. Although most statements reflected a conservative attitude, respondents had to pay attention to the content before choosing the answer. Otherwise, any inconsistencies in responses become clear.

## **Constructing scales**

A scale in a survey is a composite measure of a concept, a measure composed of information derived from several questions or indicators. The information contained in several relatively specific indicators is converted into a new and more abstract variable. There are several reasons for using scales in this study. First, it helped to get at the complexity of the concept. Owing to the complexity of concepts such as attitude, norms, family atmosphere, and self-efficacy, a series of questions relevant to each concept were presented to survey respondents to be able to elicit their responses to various situations and construct scales that do justice to the complexity of these concepts. Secondly,



multiple indicators assisted developing more valid measures. One observation is often misleading and it should be seen in the context of other observations to prevent misinterpretation. Third, multiple indicators increase reliability. The way in which a question is worded can affect substantially the way people answer it. If reliance is placed on only one question, answers could be largely a function of wording of the question. Using a series of questions minimises the effect of one which is poorly worded. Fourth, the construction of scales increases precision. A single question does not help to differentiate between people with much precision. For instance, family atmosphere is a function of different aspects of family relationship such as time allocation, kindness, communication, happiness, etc. None of them in isolation could be an indicator of family relationship or atmosphere. With a multiple indicators a better ranking of people will be achieved. Fifth, the use of scales makes the analysis more straightforward.

Several scales have been constructed in this study mostly based on Likert scaling. The following steps were taken to construct scales. First, a set of questions in the questionnaire was identified, which, on the face of it, seemed to measure the relevant concept. Second, each person's response to each question was scored. Third, codes for some items, which were not coded in the consistent direction, were reversed. Fourth, each person's scores on each item were added to obtain a scale score. To make sure that the items chosen for constructing scale were appropriate, a correlation matrix of items that conceivably belong together was obtained. Items that belong together in a scale normally have at least modest correlations with each other item in the scale. Since correlations do not always show that items are related conceptually, two other tests were done as well. One was unidimensionality test and the other was test for reliability.



Factor analysis was used for testing unidimensionality, which indicated whether each item measures the same underlying concept. Items which did not measure the concept were omitted. Those items which were highly correlated and resulted in a factor were considered for construction of the scale.

The reliability of scales in this study was assessed by examining the consistency of a person's response on an item compared with each other scale item (item-item correlation). This provided a measure of the overall reliability of the scale. The index of this is given by a statistic, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which ranges between 0 and 1. The higher the figure, the more reliable is the scale. Alpha should be at least 0.7 in order to be able to say that the scale is reliable. Alpha Cronbach coefficients for the majority of the important scales constructed in this study were well above 0.7. The results of reliability test for selected scales are shown in Table 6.1.

## **6.2 Response rate**

### *Total response rate*

The total response rate among female students of different college was high. Only a few students (2-3) from each class or cluster asked to leave the class before distribution of the questionnaire. The size of each class varied by discipline and type of university. The average size of classes was 23 students. Considering this size, non-response rate was about 8-10%. The reasons for non-response were unrelated to the subject of the study. Owing to the fact that some of the lecturers provided only the last 15-30 minutes of their class to the study instead of the requested 40-45 minutes, it was inevitable that sometimes the break time between two classes had to be used. This necessity was explained to the students in advance. Some students who had appointments, or who had



**Table 6. 1 Cronbach's alpha coefficient for selected constructed scales**

<b>Scales</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha Coefficient</b>
Societal norm	0.860
Personal attitude on relationship with men	0.860
Personal attitude on virginity	0.884
Peer norms on relationship with men	0.922
Peer norms on virginity	0.738
Parent's attitude on relationships with men	0.891
Parent's reaction to different types of relationships with men	0.863
Reproductive health knowledge	0.346
Family relationship and atmosphere	0.835
Family values (religiosity, modernity)	0.551
Mother-daughter communication about sexual matters	0.891
Self-efficacy to communicate about sex	0.844
Self-efficacy to say no to premarital sexual contact (any type)	0.932
Partner interaction and communication	0.767
Socialising with peers	0.552
Peers' involvement in risky behaviours (smoking, alcohol)	0.877
Peers' relationships with men	0.753
Vulnerability towards reproductive outcomes (pregnancy, STDs and HIV/AIDS)	0.525

Note: Items in each scale are shown in Table 5.7. See chapter 5.

Relationships with the opposite sex in this study consists dating and friendships with the opposite sex before marriage. It does not include sexual relationships.

Attitude on virginity means attitude on premarital sexual intercourse and the importance of virginity

to do something important in break time, asked the researchers to leave the class and not participate in the study.

### *Item non-response or missing values*

Among 1748 students who agreed to participate in the study, and started to fill the questionnaire, only five questionnaires were incomplete with missing answers to the key questions. These were discarded. Therefore the data of 1743 questionnaires were analysed. Among those entered questionnaires, some items had missing values and item missing values varied for different questions.

Non-response is affected by question content, question construction, method of administration and questionnaire length (De Vaus 2002). Some items in this study had higher non-response rate than other items. Those items with high non-response rate and the percentage of non-response are shown in Table 6.2. Questions about duration between first sex and the time of the study and the last sex had the highest non-response rates (21% and 26%).

One reason for high non-response rate for year of study can be fear that their identity might be recognized in the university. Similarly, the question asking whether they lived with parents in Tehran had a missing value of 7.1%. Father's reaction to hypothetical heterosexual relationships including sexual contact had a high non-response rate. As the principal investigator had noticed at time of data collection, many respondents declared that they really did not know. The non-response rate of these questions varied between 5.7% and 6.7%. This can be because of content of the question. This means those who did not answer probably could not guess what would be the reaction of their father in the hypothetical situations of relationship with opposite sex. Questions about HIV risk among unmarried people who have sex without using condoms, and the risk of HIV



**Table 6. 2 List of variables with high non-response**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Non-response rate %</b>
<b>Among all survey respondents(n=1744)</b>	
Year of study	11.6
Residence of family	7.1
Father's reaction to dating	5.7
Father's reaction to physical contact with men	6.4
Father's reaction to premarital sexual contact (any type)	6.7
<b>Among those unmarried survey respondents who reported ever had boyfriend (n=772)</b>	
Ever kissed men	4.3
Ever hugging men	4.3
Ever touched men	5.1
<b>Among those unmarried survey respondents who reported ever had sex (any type) (n=328)</b>	
How long ago was first sexual intercourse?	21.0
Age at first sexual intercourse	6.0
Age of partner at first sexual intercourse	6.6
Used condom at first sexual intercourse	5.3
Used contraception at first sexual intercourse	6.3
Force at first sexual intercourse	6.3
Place at first sexual intercourse	5.3
Planned first sexual intercourse	6.3
Ability to talk with first partner about sex	6.3
Respect for first partner	6.3
Respondent's power compared to her first partner's power	6.3
Concerns about HIV infection at first sex	7.2
Ever had forced sexual intercourse	6.3
How long ago was last sexual intercourse?	26.0
Type of last sexual partner	8.2
Used condom at last sexual intercourse	10.7
Used contraceptive at last sexual intercourse	10.3

Number of sexual partners	12.9
Intention to refrain from sexual intercourse in a hypothetical relationship without marital intention	9.4
Intention to refrain from sexual intercourse in a hypothetical relationship with marital intention	11.6
<b>Among sexually inexperienced unmarried women(n=1018)</b>	
Intention to refrain from sexual intercourse in a hypothetical relationship without marital intention	7.9
Intention to refrain from sexual intercourse in a hypothetical relationship with marital intention	9.2
<b>Among married women (n=305)</b>	
Had sexual intercourse with husband before marriage	5.2
Contraceptive method at first sexual intercourse with husband	9.2
Condom use at first sexual intercourse with husband	10.2
How long ago she had sexual intercourse with her husband	25.9
Consistent contraceptive use in sexual intercourse with husband	10.2
Consistent condom use at sexual intercourse with husband	13.1
<b>Among all survey respondents (n=1744)</b>	
Ability to refuse sexual contact with an attractive man	11.5
Ability to refuse sexual contact with a man who you care deeply about him	11.8
Ability to refuse sexual contact with a man with marital intention	11.9

from future sexual partners as well, showed a high non-response rate (3-3.3%). Most non-responses indicated that the respondents were not sure about choosing one of the five options provided and they actually did not know the response. Non-response rates for attitudinal statements were typically lower than 2%.



Fortunately response rates for key items such as friendship with opposite sex and sexual relationship was relatively high. Only age of sexual partner at first sexual intercourse had a non-response rate of 3.3% which can be a recall bias or ignorance of his age. The rest had a lower non-response rate. However, the non-response rate was relatively high (7.9% and 9.2%) among the sexually experienced respondents when they were asked about their intention to refrain from sexual intercourse in hypothetical situations with different partner's motivation. The researcher in field data collection had also noticed that respondents found it difficult to answer these questions and some of them mentioned that it depends on the specific situation.

Among married students, item non- response rate was relatively low. One exception was about questions which required recall, for instance "how long ago she had sexual intercourse with her husband?" which had a non-response rate of 26%. This can be due to difficulty in recalling the time of the sexual intercourse and calculating the duration into weeks or months. Item non-response rate was relatively high (11.5%-11.9%) for questions on self-efficacy or "ability to refuse sexual contact before marriage" which were placed at the end of the questionnaire. One reason may be their doubt about their ability to refuse sexual contact depending on the situational factors and another reason may be the length of the questionnaire. Finally the lie scale questions which were also at the end of the questionnaire and were easy to answer (binary responses) had non-response rates between 4.9% and 5.7%.

### **Handling missing values**

In this study, pairwise deletion was used particularly in multivariate analysis (e.g. factor analysis, regression, etc.) that is based on zero-order correlation matrix. For correlation between any two or three variables, all cases that have non-missing values for those two or three variables are used to calculate the correlation even if those cases have missing

values on other variables being used in the analysis. Using the pairwise approach, a correlation matrix coefficient may be based on a different number of cases. Even in cross-tabulation and t-test and ANOVA test the results can be based on slightly different sample sizes. The disadvantage of the pairwise approach is that it leads to some loss of cases, but is not nearly as significant as with the list wise approach.

### **Checking for missing data bias**

To make sure that the students for whom there are missing values are not different from those with valid values, some analysis was conducted such as cross-tabulation and chi-square test. For example, did those who refuse to answer questions about year of study tend to be different with regard to family place of residence, their type of university and other characteristics? The results of chi-square showed that non-response rate was higher among students who came from other cities than among students who live with their family in Tehran (11.7% vs. 9.4%), although the difference is not statistically significant. But students from single-sex universities showed a significantly higher non-response rates than other students (13.6% vs. 10.9%,  $p < 0.01$ ). Year of the study has a significantly higher non-response rate among medical students than technical and engineering students (17.5% vs. 6.2%). But students from governmental and private universities did not show any significant differences in non-response rate. Therefore students whose families live in other cities than Tehran might be particularly concerned about their identity in this study. Similarly medical students may be comparably more concerned about their identity in this study than students of other disciplines.

As shown in Table 6.3, students from private universities had a significantly higher missing data on reporting boyfriend than students of governmental universities. Students of basic science and arts showed a higher non-response rate for reporting boyfriend compared with other disciplines. Among those students who reported having



boyfriends, students of single-sex universities had a higher non-response rate for reporting sexual experience compared with students of mixed sex universities (4.9% vs. 1.7%,  $p < 0.05$ ). Students of government universities also had a significantly higher non-response rate for reporting sexual experience than students of private universities. The highest non-response rate was evident among students of medical science compared with other disciplines. Therefore these factors should be taken into account when interpreting the results of ever having boyfriend and ever having sex, because those with higher non-response rate may be affected by under representation in the data on ever having boyfriend or ever having sex.

**Table 6. 3 Non-response rate of reporting ever had boyfriend among unmarried female students and also ever had sexual contact(any type) among those who reported ever had boyfriend by selected factors**

Selected factors	Ever had boyfriend		Ever had sexual contact(any type) among those who reported ever had boyfriend	
	Denominator N	Missing Value %	Denominator N	Missing Value %
<b>Type of university</b>				
Single-sex	183	2.7	81	4.9*
Mixed-sex	1256	2.6	691	1.7
<b>University by sector</b>				
Government	433	1.6***	178	2.8***
Private	1005	3.1	593	1.9
<b>Family</b>				
Live in Tehran	1124	2.8	619	2.1
Live in other cities	210	2.4	99	1.0
<b>Discipline</b>				
Medical science	206	1.0***	79	3.8*
Human science	616	2.3	333	2.7
Basic science	119	4.2	38	2.6
Technical-engineering	70	0.0	37	0.0
Art	428	4.0	285	1.1
<b>N</b>	<b>1439</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>772</b>	<b>2.1</b>

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

### **6.3 Eysenck Lie scale**

Socially desirable responses are major causes of response bias which are the serious threat to the validity of research findings when the subject of the study is socially sensitive (Lalwani, S et al. 2006). Many study participants answer questions so that they look good in their own eyes and in the eyes of interviewers. Consequently socially "desirable" behaviours are over-reported while social "undesirable" behaviours and attitudes (e.g. alcohol consumption, sexual behaviour and racist attitudes) are under-reported (De Vaus 2002). To minimise social desirable responses confidentiality and anonymity were stressed. In addition, the Eysenck lie scale was used to determine the extent of honesty in responses. This scale had been assessed in Iran in 1995 (Barahini 1995). The scale included nine questions. Each question had a binary response (yes, no). "Yes" is scored "0" and "no" is scored "1". The scores of this scale ranges between 0 and 9. The higher the score indicates the greater the probability of not telling the truth by the survey respondents. The lie scale was used to assess whether those survey respondents who reported behaviours with less social acceptability such as having had boyfriend, having had premarital sexual intercourse and physical intimacy were more truthful than those who did not report these behaviours. The mean score of lie scale among these two subgroups are compared. These subgroups include those with the following attitude and behaviour compared to those without such attitude and behaviours.

- 1- Holding liberal attitude on relationships with men (dating and/or friendships with the opposite sex before marriage)
- 2- Having boyfriends
- 3- Dating with opposite sex
- 4- Physical intimacy with opposite sex



## 5- Sexual intercourse

Table 6.4 shows that the mean score of Eysenck Lie scale is higher among students with liberal views than those with moderate or conservative views, but the difference is not statistically significant. Therefore, responses to attitude questions appear to be trustworthy.

**Table 6. 4 Mean score of Eysenck lie scale among female college students by their attitude towards premarital relationship with opposite sex and virginity**

	N	Eysenck Lie Scale	
		Mean score	SD
<b>Personal attitude on pre-marital relationship with opposite sex</b>			
Conservative	560	4.37	2.43
Moderate	518	4.28	1.48
Liberal	461	4.48	1.47
		p-value=0.084	
<b>Personal attitude on virginity</b>			
Conservative	613	4.34	1.49
Moderate	462	4.30	1.44
Liberal	464	4.49	1.44
		p-value=0.129	

Table 6.5 shows that the mean score of Eysenck Lie scale is not significantly different among those who reported having a boyfriend and those who did not report or did not answer the question ( $p=0.578$ ). The mean score of Eysenck Lie scale is not significantly different among those who reported dating with men and kissing a man with those who did not report such behaviours. Hence responses related to having a boyfriend, dating and physical intimacies are reliable. The mean score of lie scale was not also significantly different between those who reported having sexual experience and those who did not have sexual experience ( $p<0.619$ )(Table 6.6).

As it is evident in the Tables 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6, the mean score of Eysenck scale does not differ among different subgroups significantly. The mean score among those who did

**Table 6.5 Mean score of Eysenck lie scale among unmarried female college students by their report of friendship and physical intimacy with men**

<b>Eysenck Lie Scale</b>			
<b>Relationship and physical intimacy with men</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>Ever had boyfriend</b>			
Yes	651	4.43	1.43
No	609	4.36	1.44
Missing	26	4.56	1.70
P-value=0.578			
<b>Among all unmarried students who had boyfriends</b>			
<b>Ever had dating</b>			
Yes	620	4.45	1.42
No	24	4.08	1.49
Missing	7	3.68	1.93
P=0.184			
<b>Kissing</b>			
Frequently	119	4.60	1.36
Sometimes	254	4.48	1.41
Once	43	4.30	1.39
Never	209	4.32	1.46
Missing	26	4.17	1.56
P-value=0.349			

Note: The higher the mean score of Lie Scale indicates a less reliable response.

**Table 6. 6 Mean score of Eysenck lie scale among unmarried female college students by their hetero sexual behaviours**

<b>Among those who had ever had boyfriend</b>			
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean score</b>	<b>SD</b>
		<b>Eysenck lie scale</b>	
<b>Ever had sex(any type)</b>			
Yes	277	4.46	1.404
No	362	4.40	1.459
P-value=0.619			

not provide a valid answer to the question also was compared to those who provided a valid answer (yes or no). These results indicate that the responses provided by students who answered questions about friendship with opposite sex, dating and physical



intimacy and sexual behaviours were trustworthy. If the lie scale score was significantly higher among non-reporters of such behaviours, it would indicate item non-response bias.

### **Conclusion**

Low level of missing values, particularly for sensitive questions, high coefficient of reliability test for scales and similarity of Eysenck lie scale among those who did and did not report sensitive behaviours strongly suggest that results are reliable and trustworthy. Nevertheless, because of cultural sensitivity of female sexuality in Iran, the prevalence of heterosexual relationships and sex among females may be underreported.

## **7. Sample Characteristics**

### **Introduction**

This short chapter illustrates the main characteristics of the survey respondents. It describes some demographic and background characteristics, media exposure and some behavioural traits by type of university. Finally, selected family-related characteristics of the sample are documented. Because the sample was weighted by type of university and discipline, differences between unweighted and weighted sample have been shown. The main characteristics of the subjects in the qualitative study are also described. These characteristics include marital status, involvement in friendship with opposite sex, sexual experience, and type of sex (penetrative vs. non-penetrative).

### **7.1 Demographic and background characteristics**

As emphasised in chapter 4, type of university in Iran is an important independent factor due to different required criteria and circumstances for university entrance between governmental and private universities. Governmental universities are perceived to enrol highly qualified students who have been able to pass the extremely competitive and demanding entrance university examination. Government universities are also free of charge; hence it is assumed that students with higher educational aspiration and performance are enrolled in government universities than private universities. In addition, students who can afford private universities may have better economic status than students of government universities. There is a widely accepted social belief that students of private universities are more liberal in their social communication and interaction with the opposite sex than students of governmental universities. This chapter examines the context of governmental universities versus private universities as well as the whole sample.



Of the 1743 survey respondents, 1217 were studying at private universities and 526 at the government universities. Over half of the whole sample (about 56%) were senior students (in years 3 or 4 of their university course) and about 44% were junior (1<sup>st</sup> year or 2<sup>nd</sup> year). Although the proportion of senior students was higher among students of governmental universities compared with private universities the difference was not statistically significant. The majority of the sample (58.4%) were studying a subject in human science, 13% basic science, 10% medical science and 9% technical and engineering and 9% were studying arts. These proportions were significantly different between the sample from governmental universities and private universities. Students of human science were the largest disciplinary group; they comprised a significantly smaller proportion of public than in private university students (47% vs. 63%). Although only 10% of the whole sample were students of medical science this proportion was significantly greater in governmental universities than private universities (27% vs. 3%, respectively). The proportion of students of basic science and technical and engineering was approximately similar between governmental and private university (12% vs. 14% and 10% vs. 9%), respectively. However, significantly more students of arts came from private than governmental universities (11% vs. 4%,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Only 14% of the whole sample was derived from single-sex colleges and most of these belonged to the public sector. Nearly 60% of students of the whole sample had attended family planning courses, which this proportion in private universities was significantly greater than in governmental universities (65% vs. 50%, respectively).

The mean age of the whole sample was 21.9 years with little difference by type of university. In the whole sample, 80% were unmarried; private university students were slightly more likely to be married. The majority of all students did not have work

experience (76.6%), only 15% had ever worked for money and 8.5% had ever worked but for other motivations such as achieving experience rather than money. These proportions were similar in students from governmental and private universities. More than half of the students (55%) from the whole sample declared themselves to be somewhat religious and 27% were religious. Only 18% declared that they are not religious at all. The percentage of religious students in governmental universities was significantly more than students of private universities (33% vs. 25%,  $p < 0.01$ ) (Table 7.1).

## ***7.2 Media exposure and behavioural characteristics***

About 44% of the whole sample had no access to satellite and an additional 10% had not used satellite in the past 28 days. Most of the students with access to satellite used it for one to 10 days during the previous 28 days of the survey (26%) and 12% of the satellite users had daily access to satellite. The number of access days among students with access to satellite was significantly different between students of governmental universities and private universities. While 29% of private students accessed satellite for 1-10 days over the previous 28 days of the survey, only 19% of government students had such access.

Most (85%) of the whole sample had access to the internet. Twenty six percent had access to the internet and had used chat rooms while majority (60%) had internet access without using chat rooms. Students of governmental and private universities were not significantly different in access to the internet and use of chat room.

The majority of the whole sample (72%) had ever watched pornography and 21% had watched five or more times. Nearly 9% of the whole sample had ever smoked and a similar proportion had ever taken alcohol. Both behaviours are more common among private than public university students.



**Table 7. 1 Selected demographic and background characteristics of survey participants by university context**

Characteristics	Type of university			P-value
	Governmental %	Private %	Both %	
<b>Year of study</b>				
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	41.9	45.2	44.2	0.129
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	58.1	54.8	55.8	
<b>Academic Discipline</b>				
Medical Sc.	27.0	2.9	10.2	<0.001
Human Sc.	47.2	63.2	58.4	
Basic Sc.	12.2	13.6	13.2	
Technical & engineering	9.9	8.9	9.2	
Arts	3.6	11.4	9.1	
<b>Percent in single-sex universities</b>	33.5	5.4	13.9	<0.001
<b>Attended Family planning courses</b>	49.8	65.0	60.5	<0.001
<b>Age group</b>				
<20	9.5	14.5	13.1	<0.001
20-21	50.2	34.3	39.1	
22-23	27.9	29.7	29.2	
>23	12.4	21.3	18.6	
Mean age	21.41	22.11	21.90	<0.001
<b>Percent unmarried</b>	84.2	78.7	80.4	0.004
<b>Employment over the last 12 months</b>				
Yes, for money	16.4	14.2	14.9	0.475
Yes, not for money	8.2	8.6	8.5	
No	75.3	77.2	76.7	
<b>Religiosity</b>				
Religious	33.0	24.8	27.3	0.002
Somewhat	51.1	56.5	54.9	
Not religious	15.9	18.7	17.9	
<b>N</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>1217</b>	<b>1743</b>	

Note: Because of item non-response, the N for different variables differed and the sample is weighted by discipline.

### **7.3 Family characteristics of the sample**

The majority of the students who participated in the survey had both parents who were living together (87%). One or both parents of nearly 10% of students were dead and only 3% of them had living parents who had separated or divorced. There was no significant difference between students of governmental and private universities in this

**Table 7.2 Media exposure and behavioural characteristics of survey participants, by university context**

	<u>Type of university</u>			P-value
	Governmental %	Private %	Both %	
<b>Use of satellite in the past 28 days</b>				
No access	53.8	40.1	44.3	
Access				<0.001
o No days	13.4	8.0	9.6	
o 1-10days	19.0	29.4	26.2	
o 11-27days	5.6	8.3	7.5	
o 28 days(every day)	8.2	14.2	12.4	
<b>Access to internet &amp; chat rooms</b>				
Yes, using chat rooms	24.2	26.2	25.6	0.060
Yes, not using chat rooms	62.9	57.2	58.9	
No	13.0	16.6	15.5	
<b>Watching pornography</b>				
Never	33.0	26.0	28.1	0.008
1-2 times	38.5	38.4	38.4	
3-4 times	10.7	13.6	12.7	
5 times and more	17.8	22.1	20.8	
<b>Ever smoked</b>	7.3	9.8	9.1	0.056
<b>Ever drunk alcohol</b>	5.6	10.7	9.2	<0.001
<b>N</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>1734</b>	

Note: Because of item non-response, the N for different variables differed.

regard. More than half the students (54.5%) had a mother with middle to high school education while 27% of students had a university educated mother and 18% of students' mothers were illiterate or had a primary school education. The percentage of students whose mother was university educated was significantly higher among governmental universities than private universities (32% vs. 25%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Comparatively, the percentage of fathers with university education was higher than the percentage of mothers with university education (43% vs. 27%).

Over two-thirds (67%) of the students lived with their both parents and this proportion was significantly greater among students of private than governmental universities (72% vs. 57%,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Only 6% of students were living with only one parent and an



additional 13% lived with their fiancé or husband. A very small number lived with friends and relatives or lived alone. Seven percent was living in a dormitory, but this was much more common among public than private university students (21.5% vs. 0.2%). This difference reflects the fact that most students of private universities are from Tehran and live with their family while students in governmental universities are more likely to come from other cities. Overall, 87% of the students' families lived in Tehran, but this percentage was significantly higher among students of private than governmental universities (94% vs. 72%,  $p < 0.001$ ).

About 42% of students had a father with an average income and 37% had a father with a high income. Only 20.5% reported that their father had low income. Surprisingly, reported father's income was not significantly different between students of private and governmental universities. Another factor indicating economical status was the student's perception of the economic status of the family. The majority (71%) perceived their economic status to be moderate and 25% considered their family's economic status as rich or very rich while a small percentage considered it poor or very poor (4%). As expected, students at private universities are more likely to report a favourable economic status than their public-sector counterparts.

### **Religiosity and modernity**

Half of the whole sample considered their family somewhat religious while 36% considered their family religious or highly religious and only 13% considered their family less religious or not religious at all. Government university students are more likely to report that their family is religious than other students. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents had a family which was moderate modern, 24% had modern or very modern family and only 13% had a traditional or very traditional family. The

**Table 7.3 Family characteristics of survey participants, by type of university**

	Type of university			P-value
	Governmental %	Private %	Both %	
<b>Parent status</b>				
Both alive, living together	86.5	87.3	87.0	0.874
Both alive, not living together	3.1	3.1	3.1	
One or both dead	10.5	9.7	9.9	
<b>Mother's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	22.7	16.4	18.3	0.000
Middle /high school	45.3	58.5	54.5	
University graduate	32.0	25.1	27.2	
<b>Father's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	13.5	10.9	11.7	0.044
Middle /high school	38.8	45.0	43.1	
University graduate	47.6	44.1	43.2	
<b>Co-residence with</b>				
Both parents	56.6	71.6	67.0	0.000
One parent	6.1	6.4	6.3	
Fiancé /husband	9.0	14.9	13.1	
Relative/friends	1.7	2.1	2.0	0.000
Dormitory	21.5	0.2	6.7	
Alone	1.7	1.6	1.6	
Other	3.4	3.2	3.3	
<b>Family lives in Tehran</b>	72.2	93.7	87.2	0.000
<b>Father's income</b>				
High	38.3	36.9	37.3	0.305
Average	39.5	43.3	42.1	
Low	22.2	19.8	20.5	
<b>Family economic status</b>				
Very rich/rich	22.3	25.6	24.6	0.032
Moderate	71.7	70.9	71.1	
Very poor/poor	6.0	3.5	4.3	
<b>Family religiosity</b>				
Highly religious/religious	43.6	33.2	36.4	0.000
Somewhat	43.2	53.3	50.2	
Less religious/not at all	13.1	13.5	13.4	
<b>Family modernity</b>				
Very traditional/traditional	15.2	12.5	13.4	0.085
Moderate	63.4	61.7	62.2	
Modern/very modern	21.4	25.8	24.4	
<b>N</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>1210</b>	<b>1735</b>	

reported modernity of the family was not significantly different by type of university (Table 7.3).



Published enrolment figure for the four universities indicate that the majority (59%) of students was studying a subject in human science, 13% were studying basic science, 10% of students were studying medical sciences and similar percentages (9%) were studying in technical and engineering and arts. The distribution by discipline achieved in data collection differed because of preliminary error in reports of the number of art students in private universities which were overestimated. This caused an over-sampling of arts students in private universities. In the sample 27.6% of respondents were arts students, in contrast to the true proportion of 9% in the four universities. To adjust for this overrepresentation, the sample was weighted so that the disciplinary distribution of the sample matched the true distribution. The weighted and unweighted sample is compared in Table 7.4 by discipline and type of university.

**Table 7.4 Comparing weighted and unweighted sample by academic discipline according to type of university**

Academic Discipline	Type of university					
	Governmental		Private		Both	
	%		%		%	
	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted	Unweighted	Weighted
Medical Sc.	36.3	27.0	3.6	2.9	13.1	10.2
Human Sc.	38.7	47.2	49.2	63.2	46.1	58.4
Basic Sc	8.1	12.2	8.5	13.6	8.4	13.2
Tech. & engineering	5.3	9.9	4.5	8.9	4.8	9.2
Arts	11.6	3.6	34.1	11.4	27.6	9.1
<b>N</b>	<b>526</b>		<b>1217</b>		<b>1743</b>	

Overall, students of government universities come from families with better educated parents, more religious, and lower economic status than students of private universities. The majority of students of private universities come from Tehran (94%) while only 73% of students of government universities come from Tehran.

#### **7.4 Characteristics of subjects selected for the qualitative components**

Four focus group discussions were conducted among 37 students before the survey from both private and governmental universities. Selection was confined to those who lived in a dormitory or with their family in Tehran. The age range was 20 to 24.

Eighteen in-depth interviews were conducted before the survey and 12 in-depth interviews were conducted after the survey. The age range was between 21 and 28 years. Among pre-survey interviews, 12 were conducted among students of governmental universities and six among students of private universities. Most of the post-survey interviews (ten) were conducted among sexually experienced students of private universities and only two interviews were conducted with sexually experienced students of governmental universities. Only two married students were interviewed before the survey and none was interviewed after the survey. Ten out of 18 pre-survey interviewees and all post-survey subjects were students whose families lived in Tehran.

Eleven students who were interviewed before the survey were sexually experienced (penetrative or otherwise), while all 12 post-survey interviewees were explicitly selected to be sexually experienced (either penetrative sex or non-penetrative sex). Since the substantive focus in post-survey interviews was sexual behaviours, the required numbers of sexually experienced respondents were selected for post-survey interviews. They were highly selected to be information-rich interviewees with regard to process and circumstances of sexual behaviour, protection, types of sexual experience, partnership, coercion, feeling and motives. Only two interviewees before the survey had vaginal intercourse, and one of these was the result of a sexual assault. Seven had experienced other types of sex such as anal intercourse and oral sex with or without vaginal intercourse, five had sex by touch or non-penetrative sex only and the rest (7) were sexually inexperienced. Because some students had both vaginal intercourse, non-



**Table 7.5 Sample characteristics of Focus Group Discussions before the survey (n=37)**

	Number of participants	Age range	Type of university	Discipline	Type of residence
FGD1	8	20-23	Governmental	Human science	All in dormitory
FGD2	8	22-24	Governmental	Technical and engineering	4 live with family and 4 in dormitory
FGD3	10	21-23	Private	Technical and engineering	Live with family
FGD4	11	20-21	Governmental	Human science	All live in dormitory except one

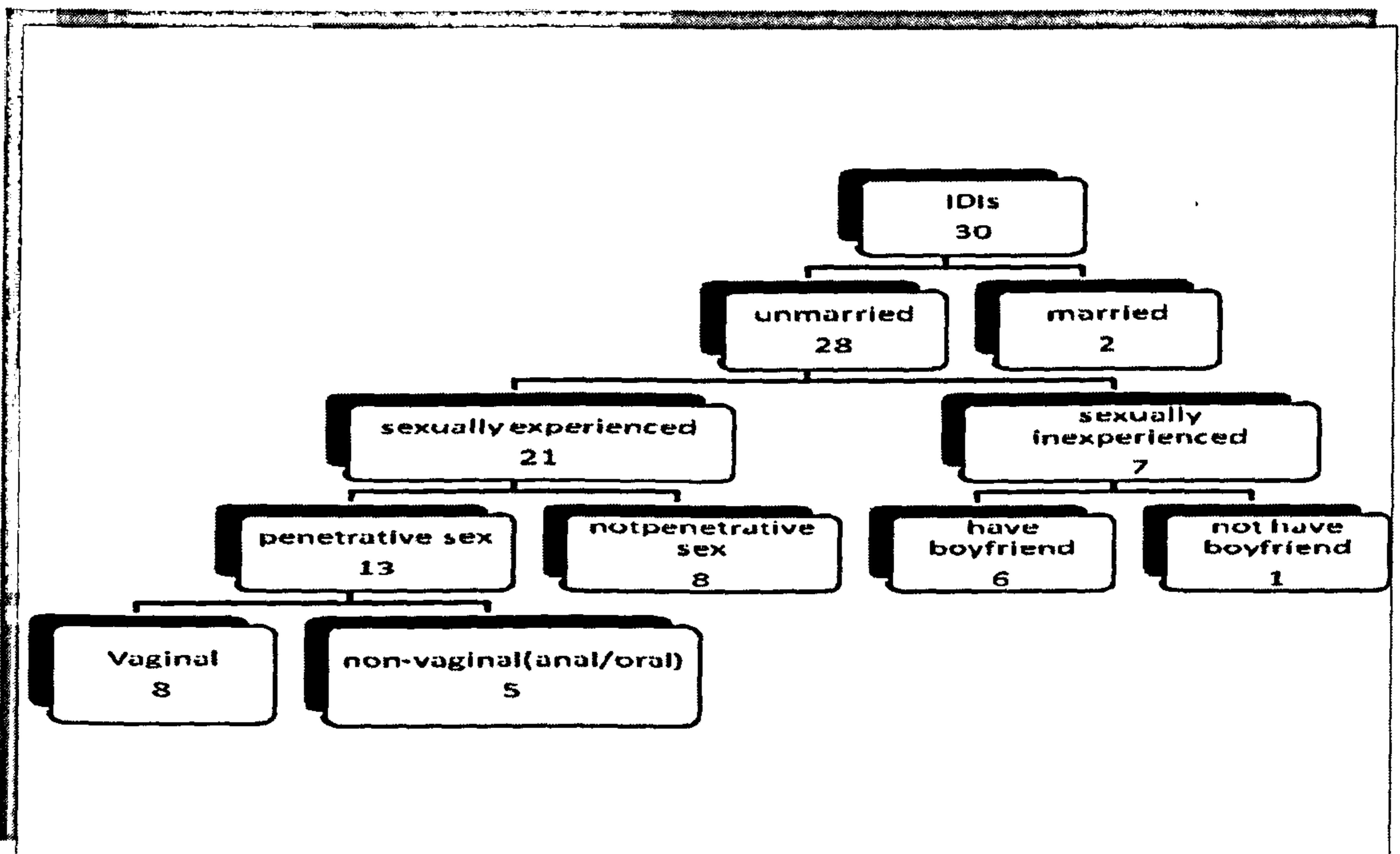
vaginal penetrative sex and sex by touch the figures sum to more than 18. Among post-survey interviews, six had vaginal intercourse and 11 had ever experienced either non-vaginal penetrative sex (anal intercourse and oral sex). Because of overlap of types of sex, the sum of these figures exceeds 12.

Diagram 7.1 shows that 28 out of 30 interviewees were unmarried, 21 out of them were sexually experienced (any type of sex, both penetrative and non-penetrative) while only seven were inexperienced. Six sexually inexperienced students had ever had boyfriends while only one had not any boyfriend. Among the 21 sexually experienced students, 13 had experienced intercourse (either vaginal, anal) or oral sex and eight had non-penetrative sex (sex by touch). Among those who had penetrative sex, eight had vaginal intercourse and five had anal intercourse or oral sex.

**Table 7. 6 Sample characteristics of pre-survey and post- survey in depth interviews**

<b>IDIs</b>	<b>Pre-survey(18)</b>	<b>Post-survey(12)</b>
<b>Type of university</b>		
Governmental	12	2
Private	6	10
<b>Age range</b>		
19-20	4	0
21-22	6	4
23-24	6	4
25-28	2	4
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	2	0
Unmarried	16	12
<b>Family live in</b>		
Tehran	10	12
Other cities	8	0
<b>Have sexual experience</b>		
Yes	11	12
No	7	0
<b>Type of sex ever had</b>		
Vaginal intercourse	2(one sexual assault)	6
Anal intercourse or/and oral sex	7	11
Sex by touch	5	0
No sexual experience	7	0

**Figure 7. 1 Sample characteristics of IDIs including pre-survey and post-survey**





## **8 SOCIAL NORMS ON PREMARITAL HETEROSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Introduction**

Perception of societal norms, peer norms and parental attitudes, three potentially social influences on sexual behaviour, are examined in this chapter. The perception of elite young women of societal norms and peer norms towards different types of heterosexual relationships are presented. Thereafter, the influence of selected individual, family and university factors on perceived societal and peer norms is assessed. Perceived parental attitudes toward premarital heterosexual relationships and perceived parental reactions to hypothetical situations are also described. This section is followed by a statistical analysis of the associations of selected family factors with perceived parental attitude and reactions. Finally, the correlations between perceived societal, peer and parental norms among female college students in Tehran are shown. At the end of this chapter, qualitative results enrich the survey results with regard to perceived norms, where appropriate. In chapter nine, these results will be compared with personal attitude towards heterosexual relationships and virginity and associated factors.

### ***8.1 Perceived societal norms on heterosexual relationships***

A series of statements were presented to survey respondents about the social acceptability of specified types of premarital relationship with the opposite sex. These relationships varied from simple socialisation, having a boyfriend, dating, physical contact or sexual intimacy to sexual relationship for unmarried women. A five point Likert Scale was used to measure respondents' perception of societal norms, peer norms and parental attitude. The responses reflect their perception of the acceptability of each relationship in the society.

Appreciable proportions of respondents (between 28% and 38%) appeared to be unsure by choosing the neutral or intermediate category about societal norms on heterosexual

socialising, friendship, dating and physical contact, but this uncertainty decreased to 16% when they were asked about societal norms on premarital sexual contact (Table 8.1). The percentage of respondents who perceived that society does not accept such relationships was approximately similar to the percentage of respondents who perceived society does accept these relationships. More intimate relationships were believed to face more societal opposition compared with socialisation and dating but, overall, there was a balance in the whole sample between those who perceived permissive societal norms and those who perceived conservative societal norms. With regard to premarital sex, besides their greater certainty of responses, the majority (77.5%) perceived that society would proscribe this behaviour (Table 8.1).

**Table 8. 1 Perception of societal norms with regard to heterosexual relationships**

Social acceptability of specified statement:	Acceptability				
	Very unacceptable %	Unacceptable %	Intermediate %	Acceptable %	Very acceptable %
Unmarried young people socialise with opposite sex	10.0	19.3	38.4	26.6	5.7
Unmarried females have boyfriends	10.9	27.5	33.1	22.7	5.9
Unmarried females date a boyfriend	8.2	22.0	33.1	27.3	9.4
Unmarried females have physical contact with men such as hand holding	15.3	23.7	28.0	23.3	9.7
Unmarried females have sexual contact	44.6	32.9	16.0	5.2	1.3



## **8.2 Peer norms on heterosexual relationships, sex and virginity**

More than half of the survey respondents perceived that their peers agree with having boyfriends and dating. Respondents' perception of peers' attitudes towards heterosexual friendship was approximately identical to their perception of peers' attitude towards dating. However, the proportion of students who perceived that their peers were opposed to premarital physical intimacy is higher than those who perceived peers' support for it. It seems also that educated females' perceptions of peer norms are more liberal and less likely to be intermediate or uncertain than their perception of societal norms with regard to friendship, dating and physical intimacy (Table 8.1 and Table 8.2). Overall, 54%, 58% and 38% of survey respondents perceived that their peers approve of having a boyfriend, dating and physical intimacy before marriage, while their perceptions of societal norms for the corresponding components were 29%, 37% and 33%. Interestingly, there is evidence of gender equity with regard to pre-marital friendship with men; peers were perceived to have identical attitudes for males and females with regard to friendship with opposite sex (Table 8.2).

The majority of respondents believed their peers would not accept premarital sexual intercourse, as is shown in Table 8.3. Only 16% perceived their peers would agree to premarital sex if contraceptives are used. The majority perceived that their peers believe that girls do regret premarital sex and a similar proportion perceived that peers think girls should remain virgins until marriage. However, they perceived more peer agreement with premarital sex when the relationship is based on love (24.5%).

## **8.3 Factors associated with perceived societal and peer norms**

The perceptions of survey respondents towards the social acceptability of a range of premarital heterosexual relationships were ascertained using five point Likert Scales. The scores were added to construct scales for societal norms which range from 5 to 25.

**Table 8. 2 Perception of peer norms towards friendship and relationships with opposite sex**

Specified statements preceded by: "Most of my friends believe that:"	Agreement				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Intermediate	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
It is wrong for unmarried boys to have girl friends.	12.3	20.0	12.7	35.8	19.1
It is wrong for unmarried girls to have boy friends.	12.9	20.4	11.6	36.5	18.0
It is wrong for unmarried people to have dates.	11.4	19.3	11.1	38.9	19.4
It is wrong for boys and girls to have physical intimacy such as touching, kissing and hugging with opposite sex	22.7	25.7	14.0	26.1	11.5

**Table 8. 3 Perception of peer norms towards premarital sexual experience and importance of virginity**

Specified statement preceded by "Most of my friends believe that:"	Agreement				
	Strongly agree	Agree	Intermediate	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
It is wrong for unmarried boys and girls to have sexual intercourse even if they love each other.	38.0	24.6	12.9	16.1	8.4
It is alright for boys and girls to have sexual intercourse before marriage if they use methods to stop pregnancy	6.7	9.2	13.3	24.7	46.1
Girls who have sexual intercourse before marriage regret it afterwards.	41.0	33.3	16.9	7.1	1.8
Girls should remain virgins until they marry.	49.3	29.7	11.5	6.9	2.6

Similarly, survey respondents were asked about their perception of their peers' attitude on a series of statements. Using principal component analysis two main scale variables



on peer norms were derived from these sets of questions. Peer norms on relationships (range: 4-20), and peer norms on virginity (range: 4-20).

Table 8.4 shows the associations of selected characteristics with perceived societal norms, and peer norms on both relationships and the importance of virginity. With regard to societal and peer norms, the higher the score, the more liberal is the perception of norms. The associations between most selected factors and perceived societal and peer norm are statistically significant. However, the associations between selected factors and peer norms are stronger than the associations with societal norms.

The mean score of societal norms was 13.65 (range 5-25). Among survey respondents, perceived peer norms about heterosexual relationship and virginity had mean scores of 12.71 and 8.18, respectively (range: 4-20). The standard deviations (SD) of most associations between perceived societal norms and peer norms on relationships with selected characteristics were larger than SDs for peer norms on virginity. This difference reflects the wider diversity of perceptions towards both societal norms and peer norms on relationships than peer norms on virginity. Survey respondents perceived that their peers held a moderate to liberal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships, but a conservative attitude towards virginity. Table 8.4 reveals that perception of societal and peer norms among senior students are more liberal than junior students although the differences are small. Age was also positively associated with liberal perception of societal and peers norms, although the differences of scores between age groups are also small.

Academic discipline was significantly and strongly associated with respondents' perception of their peers' norms. Students of basic science perceive their peers to be more conservative with regard to relationships with men (mean score: 10.31) than students who studied arts (mean score: 15.30) and technical and engineering science

(mean score: 14.16) ( $P < 0.001$ ). Similarly students of basic science held the most conservative views about peer norms on virginity (mean score: 6.42), while those who studied arts or technical and engineering held the most liberal perception about their peers' norms on virginity (mean scores 10.14 and 8.89, respectively). Students of arts and technical, engineering science are believed to have more interaction with their male classmates in group work than students in other disciplines and this factor may explain the difference in perceived norms. Owing to interactions between perceived peer norms and personal involvement in premarital relationships, one explanation for this finding is that the behaviours of students in different disciplines might be dissimilar.

Students of private universities reported more liberal peer norms regarding relationships and virginity than their public sector counterparts but there was no difference in perceived societal norms. Although the difference in peer norms is highly significant, it is small. Moreover, it may simply reflect the fact that more art students in the sample come from private than public universities. However, type of university by gender was associated with both perception of societal norms and peer norms. Students who studied in mixed-sex colleges and universities tend to have more a liberal perception of peer norms on relationships than those who studied in single-sex colleges (mean scores: 13.10 vs. 10.31,  $p < 0.001$ ). Likewise, students of mixed-sex universities held a more liberal perception of their peers' norms on virginity than those who studied in single-sex colleges (mean scores: 8.43 vs. 6.66,  $P < 0.001$ ).

Family residence was associated with perceived peer norms but not with societal norms. Students whose parents lived in Tehran reported significantly more liberal perception of peer norms on relationships than students whose parents lived in other provinces (mean score :12.86 vs. 11.99,  $p < 0.05$ ). Students whose parents were living apart showed significantly more liberal perception of peer norms on relationships (mean score: 14.17)



**Table 8. 4 Mean score and standard deviation (SD) of perceived societal and peer norms toward relationship with opposite sex and virginity, by selected characteristic**

Selected characteristics	N	Societal norms (Range 5-25)		Peer norms on relationships (Range 4-20)		Peer norms on virginity (Range 4-20)	
		Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD
<b>All</b>		13.65	4.31	12.71	4.79	8.18	3.51
<b>Year of study</b>							
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	673	13.44	4.23	12.16	4.77	7.75	3.22
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	851	13.87	4.32	13.16	4.77	8.38	3.67
		(p=0.051)		(p<0.001)		(p=0.001)	
<b>Age group</b>							
<20	225	12.68	4.04	11.89	4.52	7.62	2.90
20-21	673	13.57	4.20	12.39	4.85	7.86	3.55
22-23	501	14.10	4.44	13.13	4.78	8.37	3.63
>23	313	13.82	4.43	13.30	4.75	8.95	3.49
		(p=0.001)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Academic Discipline</b>							
Medical Sc.	172	13.41	3.89	10.97	4.40	7.26	2.84
Human Sc.	1002	13.75	4.52	12.91	4.76	8.31	3.52
Basic Sc.	225	12.81	4.01	10.31	4.29	6.42	2.50
Technical & engineering	159	14.15	3.79	14.16	4.63	8.89	3.76
Arts	155	13.99	4.21	15.30	4.09	10.14	3.71
		(p=0.013)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Sector of university</b>							
Governmental	522	13.90	3.90	11.61	4.81	7.50	3.29
Private	1190	13.54	4.48	13.20	4.70	8.48	3.57
		(p=0.102)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Type of university</b>							
Single sex	241	12.87	4.24	10.31	4.79	6.66	2.87
Mixed sex	1472	13.78	4.31	13.10	4.67	8.43	3.54
		(p=0.003)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Family residence</b>							
Tehran	1381	13.61	4.34	12.86	4.80	8.20	3.57
Other provinces	203	13.94	3.81	11.99	4.57	7.79	3.16
		(p=0.309)		(p=0.017)		(p=0.123)	
<b>Parental status</b>							
Both alive, live together	1482	13.64	4.30	12.70	4.79	8.15	3.47
Both alive, do no live together	52	14.93	4.14	14.17	4.59	9.77	4.40
One/both dead	169	13.29	4.50	12.24	4.87	7.89	3.50
		(p=0.057)		(p=0.044)		(p=0.003)	
<b>Father's income</b>							
Low	344	13.54	4.60	12.03	4.81	7.48	3.21
Average	704	13.52	4.26	12.24	4.67	7.89	3.28
High	623	13.85	4.17	13.71	4.76	8.90	3.80
		(p=0.324)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	

<b>Mother's education</b>							
No education/Primary school	313	13.38	4.46	11.45	4.49	7.53	3.17
Middle/High school	914	13.71	4.37	12.72	4.87	8.10	3.50
University graduate	463	13.75	4.08	13.48	4.66	8.79	3.67
		(p=0.430)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Father's education</b>							
No education/Primary school	197	13.22	4.70	11.78	4.94	7.43	3.12
Middle/High school	718	13.44	4.28	12.20	4.68	7.70	3.33
University graduate	753	14.00	4.23	13.51	4.74	8.86	3.67
		(p=0.014)		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>N</b>	<b>1713</b>		<b>1671</b>		<b>1671</b>		

Note: The scale for societal norms has scores ranging from 5 to 25 in which 5 means the most conservative or unacceptable view and 25 means the most liberal or acceptable views toward relationships with opposite sex.

Peer norms scale has scores ranging from 4 to 20 in which the lower the score, the more conservative views are reflected and the higher the score, the more liberal views among peers.

and virginity (mean score: 9.77) than those whose parents were living together or had one or both parents dead. But since the sample of students whose parents were living apart or were single or double orphans was very small, these differences are not of much substantive importance.

Father's income was associated with more liberal perception of peer norms but not societal norms. The association is significant but the difference is small. Mother's education was associated with perception of peers' norms on relationship and virginity but not with perception of societal norms. The more educated the mother, the more liberal is the perception of the respondents of their peers' norms. However, father's education was similarly associated significantly with perception of both societal norms and peer norms (Table 8.4).

In summary, it seems that institutional factors such as type of university and university atmosphere and academic discipline are more closely associated with perception of peer norms than with societal norms. Among family factors, both father's economic situation and parents' education are linked with perception of peer norms. But individual factors such as age are more closely associated with perception of societal norm.



#### **8.4 Perception of parents' views toward premarital heterosexual relationships**

The majority of female students perceived that their parents equally disapprove of both premarital friendship and dating (68% and 69%). Perceived parental opposition of going to mixed parties of young people is even more common (77.5%). It seems that parents are considered to be more concerned about going to mixed parties of young people than having a boyfriend and dating.

**Table 8.5 Perception of parents' attitude towards specified behaviours (N=1689)**

Specified behaviours	Perceived parental approval				
	Strongly disapprove %	Disapprove %	Intermediate %	Approve %	Strongly approve %
Premarital friendship with opposite sex( having boyfriend)	46.3	21.5	17.7	10.1	4.3
Going to mixed parties of young people	62.6	14.9	12.0	7.5	3.0
Dating a boyfriend	50.5	18.8	17.1	10.7	3.0

Survey respondents were asked about their perception about their parents' reaction to some hypothetical relationships of their daughter with a man. These relationships vary between dating, physical contact and sex. The extent of hostility of parents' reaction towards each hypothetical relationship is shown in Table 8.6. Mothers are perceived to be more permissive than fathers in dealing with premarital relationships of their daughters. Many respondents (nearly 30%) were uncertain about their parents' reaction to the hypothetical dating of their daughters but this uncertainty diminished when these relationships extended to physical contact and sexual relationships. Overall, respondents perceived that their parents' reaction would become more hostile when it comes to premarital physical contact and nearly 96% of respondents were certain about their parents' hostile reaction to premarital sexual contact of their daughters. In general,

hostility of fathers towards dating, physical contact and sexual contact was perceived to be 46%, 78% and 93.5%, respectively while mother's opposition was 32%, 70% and 92%, respectively (Table 8.6).

### ***8.5 The association between selected factors and perceived parents' attitude and reactions to heterosexual relationships***

The associations were examined between selected family characteristics and perceived parental attitudes and reactions to heterosexual relationships. The higher the score of attitude, the more liberal is their perception of parents. Similarly, the higher is the score of parents' reactions, the more relaxed are their reactions. Female students whose parents were living separately had a more liberal perception of their parents' view of heterosexual relationships than those who lived with both parents and those whose parents were dead (mean: 8.3 vs. 5.7 and 5.5 respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ). Similar results were obtained in terms of parents' reaction. It should be noted again that the number of students with separated parents and dead parents was small.

Parental level of education had a direct association with liberal attitude of parents toward heterosexual relationships. The higher the parents' education, the more liberal was the perceived parents' attitudes and reactions to heterosexual behaviours. Higher parental income was also associated with more liberal perceived attitude towards heterosexual relationships and more relaxed reactions. More liberal parental attitudes were reported among those with a good family atmosphere and relationships than among those with poor family relationships (mean score of attitude: 6.0 vs. 5.3, respectively,  $P = 0.002$ ), although the difference is small. Family relationship and atmosphere is a scale variable representing aspects of family relationships based on items in the questionnaire which showed a high correlation. These family factors



included "open communication, kindness, low conflict, happiness, understanding, and time spent with the respondent during adolescence". Family relationship and

**Table 8. 6 Perception of parents' reactions to hypothetical relationships (N=1602)**

Hypothetical relationship		Parent's reaction					P-value
		Very hostile	Hostile	Intermediate	Relaxed	Very relaxed	
		%	%	%	%	%	
Dating	Father	17.5	28.5	29.2	14.0	11.2	<0.001
	Mother	10.2	21.8	29.4	19.2	19.5	
Physical contact such as handholding, kissing	Father	49.9	28.1	14.8	4.0	3.1	<0.001
	Mother	41.5	28.3	16.8	9.4	4.0	
Sexual contact	Father	79.8	13.7	4.0	1.1	1.4	<0.001
	Mother	75.3	16.6	4.8	1.9	1.5	

atmosphere is presented by a grouped version of the scale in Table 8.7.

Family modernity and lower endorsement of religion was associated with more liberal attitudes among parents. The mean scores among parents in modern and more secular families compared with traditional and religious families were 8.2 and 4.1, respectively ( $p < 0.001$ ). Interestingly, parents of those families in which family values and morals were rarely or never discussed were perceived by respondents to hold more liberal attitudes towards premarital heterosexual relationships than those in which parents frequently communicated with their child about family values and morals (mean score : 6.2 vs. 5.5 respectively,  $p < 0.001$ ). Parental reactions to some hypothetical relationships of the respondents were shown to be very similar to parental attitudes. The more liberal were the parents' attitudes, the more relaxed they were towards such relationships. Thus parents' reaction and parent's attitudes are highly correlated (Table 8.7).

**Table 8. 7 Mean score and standard deviation (SD) of perceived parents' attitude towards relationships with opposite sex and parental reaction by family characteristics**

Family characteristics	N	Parental attitude (Range 3-15)		Parental reaction (Range 6-30)	
		Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD
<b>Parents</b>					
Both alive, live together	1464	5.7	3.10	12.4	4.82
Both alive, do not live together	52	8.3	4.00	16.1	5.49
One/both dead	162	5.5	3.12	11.7	4.26
		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Mother's education</b>					
Illiterate/primary school	302	4.5	2.25	10.7	4.14
Middle /high school	910	5.6	2.95	12.4	4.60
University graduate	454	6.9	3.66	13.8	5.37
		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Father's education</b>					
Illiterate/primary school	191	4.4	2.12	10.9	4.57
Middle /high school	708	5.1	2.67	11.6	4.24
University graduate	745	6.7	3.55	13.7	5.17
		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Father's income</b>					
High	330	6.6	3.54	13.7	5.28
Average	687	5.35	2.82	11.8	4.46
Low	621	5.1	2.74	11.2	4.17
		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Family relationship &amp; atmosphere</b>					
Good	647	6.0	3.41	12.9	5.20
Moderate	512	5.8	2.99	12.7	4.58
Poor	476	5.3	2.90	11.6	4.47
		(p=0.002)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Family endorsement of tradition &amp; religion</b>					
Religious, traditional	564	4.1	1.91	10.5	3.88
Moderate	683	5.7	2.80	12.2	4.24
Modern, not religious	389	8.2	3.63	15.9	5.19
		(p<0.001)		(p<0.001)	
<b>Parent's communication about family morals and values</b>					
Much/very much	1090	5.5	3.10	12.1	4.69
Moderate	393	6.1	3.18	13.1	4.75
Rarely/not at all	199	6.2	3.38	13.2	5.64
		(p<0.001)		(p=0.001)	

\*p<0.05, Note: Parental attitude is a scale variable with scores ranging from 3 to 15 in which 3 means the most conservative or unacceptable view and 15 means the most liberal or acceptable views toward relationships with men. Parental reaction is also a scale variable with scores ranging from 6 to 30 in which 6 means the most hostile reaction and 30 means the most relaxed reaction.

Note : More details about father's income, family relationships and family endorsement of tradition and religion are provided in Chapter 5 .



## 8.6 Correlations between perceived societal, peer and parents' norms

The correlations between the various attitudinal outcomes analysed in this chapter are shown in Table 8.8. Perceived societal norms are only weakly correlated with perceived peer norms or perceived parental attitudes. The poor correlation, albeit significant, between societal and peer norms suggests a gap between the societal expectations in premarital relationships and youth attitudes toward heterosexual relationships. It is interesting to note that parental attitudes and peer norms are moderately correlated, with a coefficient above 0.4. The correlation between peer norms on relationship and on virginity, not surprisingly, is higher.

**Table 8. 8 Pearson Correlation Matrix of perceived societal norms, peer norms and parents' attitude towards relationship with opposite sex and virginity among female college students in Tehran (N=1744)**

	Societal norms	Peer norms on relationship	Peer norms on virginity	Parents' attitude on relationship
Societal norms	1.000			
Peer norms on relationship	0.196 (P<0.001)	1.000		
Peer norms on virginity	0.138 (P<0.001)	0.582 (P<0.001)	1.000	
Parents' attitudes on relationship	0.183 (P<0.001)	0.447 (P<0.001)	0.409 (P<0.001)	1.000

### Synthesis

The survey showed appreciable uncertainty surrounding societal norms on premarital friendship, dating and physical intimacy, but greater certainty about societal norms on premarital sexual contact. One-third of survey respondents were uncertain of social acceptability or unacceptability of heterosexual friendships but not sexual contact. Many of the FGD participants also did not have a clear idea about the societal approval of having a boyfriend or dating, but were more confident about the social unacceptability of premarital sexual contact. In addition, it is clear that perceptions of

societal norms vary according to group characteristics, year of study and discipline. Approximately equal number of students held positive and negative views towards premarital friendship, dating and physical intimacy in the group discussions. In terms of perception of premarital relationships apart from sexual intimacy, FGDs participants can be categorised into three types: 1) those who perceived that the society does not accept heterosexual relationships, 2) those who are totally uncertain and have doubts about their acceptability from the societal perspective, and 3) those who think that society approves of premarital heterosexual relationships except sexual intimacy and sexual contact.

One important contribution of the qualitative study to the survey results was the distinction between “healthy and unhealthy relationships” that emerged from the FGDs. This concept indicates a perception of conditional social approval of heterosexual relationships based on specified criteria and circumstances. A basis in romance, a prospect of marriage, mutual support, and parental awareness are identified as those characteristics that would encourage societal acceptance. One possible interpretation of the evidence of uncertainty towards the social acceptability of heterosexual relationships from the survey data is that it depends on certain circumstances and conditions of such relationships. Some FGDs interviewees also linked this uncertainty to the contradictory evidence in the society with regard to the appropriateness, success and the consequences of such relationships.

In some FGDs there was a controversy and dilemma surrounding the matter. Those who opposed such relationships stressed the negative consequences of intimate relationships with men, such as the vulnerability of females in terms of emotional and psychological attachment, contravening religious doctrine, fear of societal norms and adverse gossip and finally threats to marriage, since a husband may become suspicious of a wife with



whom he had a premarital relationship and sexual contact. They also stressed the greater emotional vulnerability of females than males stemming from gender norms. As the survey results showed, in most FGDs only a few participants bravely endorsed premarital sexual contact even if they had not experienced it yet. However, one participant who initially showed her agreement toward premarital relationships including sexual contact, when faced with the opposition of another participant, tried to be more conservative; she reiterated in the middle of her talk that she personally does not approve of such relationships. This attitude shift on a sensitive topic in a group discussion due to the influence of group dynamic reflects the unacceptability of such pre-marital sexual relationships by society. Gender-based double standards also emerged as a theme in FGDs with regard to social acceptability of heterosexual relationships and sexual contact.

Both survey respondents and FGDs participants believed that society attaches considerable importance to women's virginity. FGDs participants recognised that both society and families endorse gender-based double-standards for virginity. The majority of the qualitative study participants connected the importance of virginity to what society, family and men expect from unmarried females. Very severe consequences of losing virginity were reported by participants, such as suicide attempts and depression, which stemmed from fears of social and family judgment and the negative effect of losing virginity on marriage prospects.

A possible shift towards more liberal norms emerged as a theme in FGDs. Specified aspects of this change were "openness of such relationships" and "the change of motivations among today's heterosexual relationships between young people". Romance in relationships is considered to be clearly diminishing. Increasing marriage age, men's reluctance or inability to marry, wide access to media such as satellite and

internet and more liberal national TV programmes, and changes in political atmosphere in the society were reported as factors responsible for these changes. However, these results are only suggestive of possible change and cannot be generalised to the study population. Since FGDs participants volunteered for the group discussions, they might hold more liberal attitudes than those who did not accept to participate in group discussions.

Perceptions of survey respondents of their peers' attitudes were more liberal than their perception of societal norms. However, with regard to sex, only a few thought that their peers would agree to sex without love. Most believed that their peers value virginity. The qualitative findings also confirmed the survey results but in fact interviewees admitted that they little know about the sexual relationships of their peers, while they were very confident in claiming that the majority of their peers have experienced more visible heterosexual relationships such as having boyfriends and dating. Most accounts about their peers' sexual relationships were based on their boyfriend's or other men's accounts.

The survey did not show any difference in perception of societal norms between students of private universities compared with government universities, while it revealed that students of specific disciplines who have more interaction with the opposite sex due to the nature of their discipline perceive more permissive societal norms than do students of other disciplines with lower interaction with the opposite sex, such as basic science. Students of arts and engineering science who have classes with equal numbers of both sexes and even more male college students than females are different from those who have only a few men in the class. Moreover students of mixed sex universities have more liberal perceptions of societal norms and peer norms than students of single-sex universities. Perceived peer norms among students of certain



discipline such as arts and technical-engineering and students of private universities are more liberal than students of other disciplines and students of governmental universities.

One interesting theme that emerged in FGDs was a difference in disciplinary rules against socialisation and interaction with the opposite sex between private and government universities. Students of private universities perceived that these disciplinary rules against heterosexual socialisation and relationships are more severe in private universities than governmental universities. These strict rules have increased the tendency of students of private universities to seek relationships with boyfriends outside the university.

Both the survey and qualitative study showed that parents are perceived to be opposed to heterosexual relationships for their daughters. The qualitative study revealed that this opposition mainly stems from parents' fears and concerns about sexual relationships and the loss of virginity and its adverse influence on their marriage prospects and related social and family judgments. Parents are perceived to hold much more permissive attitudes towards their son's premarital relationships and sex than their daughter's.

Female college students perceived a moderately hostile reaction of parents towards dating and physical intimacy with low certainty, while they perceived severe hostility from their parents when it comes to premarital sexual contact. Owing to this perception, the majority of females did not tell their parents about relationships. The qualitative study showed that the hostile attitudes of parents lead young women to have clandestine relationships. Those who introduce their boyfriends to their parents mostly pretend that they have marital intention in order to justify their relationships. There was a common belief that parents' attitude and reactions towards premarital relationships become more

relaxed for younger siblings. Better socio-economic situation was linked with more parental liberal attitudes and relaxed reactions.



## **9 REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE & PERSONAL ATTITUDE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter documents reproductive health knowledge and personal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships among female college students. Firstly, reproductive health knowledge of different groups of respondents (unmarried sexually inexperienced, unmarried sexually experienced and married) is compared. Secondly, the personal attitudes of survey respondents towards premarital heterosexual relationships are described. The associations between personal attitude and selected university, background, life style and family characteristics and normative beliefs are also assessed. In-depth exploration of reproductive knowledge and personal attitude such as rationales, circumstances and motivations has enriched the survey data in the synthesis at the end of the chapter. Personal attitudes towards premarital heterosexual relationships and perceived societal norms reported in Chapter 8 are compared by evaluating in-depth interviewees' accounts and that of FGD participants.

### **9.1 Reproductive Health Knowledge**

A few questions assessed survey respondents' knowledge about selected aspects of reproductive health. The correct answers to the questions are compared among unmarried sexually experienced, unmarried sexually inexperienced and married respondents in Table 9.1. The majority of respondents (92%) were well informed about the possibility of a healthy appearance of HIV infected people. More than two-thirds of respondents had correct knowledge about condom efficacy and the contraceptive efficacy of oral pills (OCP). However, 28% of survey respondents were unaware of the fact that a woman can get pregnant at first intercourse and about 24% were unaware that OCP offers effective protection against pregnancy. Unmarried sexually experienced

respondents reported better information about most aspects of reproductive health than the sexually inexperienced, particularly with regard to the effectiveness of condoms in prevention of HIV infection (83% vs. 61%). Married respondents were overall well informed of reproductive health issues in most areas (Table 9.1).

**Table 9. 1 Reproductive health knowledge by marital status and sexual experience (N=1718)**

Statements	Correct answer				P-value
	%				
	Unmarried, sexually inexperienced	Unmarried, sexually experienced	Married	All	
A woman can get pregnant on the very first time that she has sexual intercourse	68.3	73.5	82.9	71.8	<0.001
Condom is an effective method against HIV.	61.2	82.7	81.8	68.9	<0.001
Oral pill is an effective method against pregnancy.	72.5	76.3	85.0	75.8	<0.001
HIV infected people may have healthy appearance.	93.0	92.3	90.5	92.2	0.122
N	1011	304	342	1718	

## **9.2 Personal attitude towards premarital heterosexual relationships**

Different attitudinal statements with regard to premarital heterosexual relationships were presented to survey respondents and they recorded their level of agreement with each statement using five point Likert scale. Table 9.2 shows that 78% of the respondents held a supportive attitude towards premarital socialising with the opposite sex. Fewer, but nonetheless nearly half of respondents, held a positive attitude towards having girlfriends for boys (47%) and having boyfriends for young women (48%). About half (51%) were supportive of dating. Relatively similar personal views towards dating and friendship with a man were shown among female college students. Physical



intimacy such as kissing, hugging and touching was not widely accepted by respondents. Only one-third (34%) agreed to such premarital physical contact. When it came to premarital sexual intercourse, the majority of respondents (68%) showed a negative view towards it even if the partners love each other. About three-fourths (76%) held the belief that boys will not respect young women who agree to have sexual intercourse and also 74% believed that women who have premarital sexual intercourse will regret afterwards.

Interestingly, retaining virginity until marriage is more important than refraining from premarital sexual intercourse. The percentage of females who considered virginity very important before marriage was higher than those who disapproved any type of premarital sexual contact (82.5% vs. 75%, respectively). Respecting family values (82%) and religious beliefs (72%) were two important subjective rationales for preserving virginity, though the former appeared to be slightly more important. Finally nearly three-quarters of respondents supported gender equality with regard to premarital heterosexual relationships (Table 9.2).

### **9.3 Societal norms vs. personal attitudes**

A comparison between personal attitudes and societal norms, as measured in the survey, shows that personal attitudes towards friendship, dating and sexual relationships are more liberal than societal norms. Personal attitude towards premarital physical intimacy was approximately identical with perceived societal norms. But 22% of survey respondents were personally supportive of premarital sexual intercourse if the relationship is based on love in comparison with only 6.5% who perceived society would accept premarital sexual contact (Table 9.3).

**Table 9. 2 Personal attitudes to premarital relationships and sex: agreement with specified statements**

Specified statements	Agreement				
	Strongly agree	agree	No idea	disagree	Strongly disagree
	%	%	%	%	%
It is <b>alright</b> for unmarried young people socialize with opposite sex	36.3	41.5	7.5	7.2	7.5
It is <b>wrong</b> for unmarried boys to have girl friend.	14.9	19.8	18.7	30.2	16.5
It is <b>wrong</b> for unmarried girls to have boy friend.	15.6	20.0	16.9	30.8	16.7
It is <b>wrong</b> for unmarried people to have dates.	11.7	19.8	17.0	31.8	19.6
It is <b>wrong</b> for boys and girls to have physical intimacy such as touching, kissing and hugging with opposite sex	28.1	21.5	16.0	21.1	13.2
It is <b>wrong</b> with unmarried boys and girls having sexual intercourse even if they love each other.	52.0	16.1	10.2	10.4	11.3
A boy will not respect a girl who agrees to have sexual intercourse with him	54.1	21.6	11.5	8.0	4.7
Most girls who have sexual intercourse before marriage regret it afterwards	46.0	27.7	18.3	6.2	1.8
Girls should remain virgins until they marry.	63.0	19.5	8.5	5.9	3.2
Unmarried girls should hesitate from any sexual contact before marriage	58.2	17.0	10.2	10.3	4.3
My religious beliefs prohibit me from premarital sexual intercourse	52.9	18.9	10.1	12.4	5.8
My family values prohibit me from premarital sexual intercourse	57.6	24.5	6.1	8.0	3.7
It is okay for boys to have sexual intercourse before marriage but not so for girls.	8.3	3.7	7.8	18.4	56.8



**Table 9. 3 Acceptance of different degree of premarital heterosexual relationships: a comparison between personal attitude and societal norms**

Degree of premarital heterosexual relationships	Agreement	
	Societal norm	Personal attitude
	%	%
Having boyfriend	28.6	47.5
Having a date	36.7	51.4
Having physical intimacy	33.0	34.3
Having sexual relationships	6.5	21.7a

a: The personal attitude of respondents was asked regarding sexual intercourse when the relationship is based on love while as norms, premarital sexual contact(any type) was asked irrespective of the motivation.

#### **9.4 Correlates of personal attitude towards premarital relationships**

In the survey, a series of statements were presented to respondents and their agreement towards each statement was recorded using five-point Likert Scale. Principal component analysis was used for the attitudinal statements shown in Table 9.2 and two factors were extracted. The first factor consisted of the first five statements and the second factor comprised the other attitudinal statements. The first factor indicates personal attitude toward relationships with men and the second factor indicates the personal attitude toward virginity. The last statement as "It is okay for boys to have sexual intercourse before marriage but not for girls" was considered separately in all analyses as an indicator of attitude toward gender double standards. The higher was the score, the more liberal the attitude held.

For the whole sample, the mean score of personal attitude on relationships with opposite sex was 16.16 (score range: 5-25), a little more than the median score (15). This indicates a moderately liberal attitude towards heterosexual relationships among female college students. The mean score of attitude on virginity was 13.18 (score range: 7-35), suggesting more conservative attitudes towards virginity. The mean score of attitude on

gender double standard was 4.7(score range: 1-5), which shows a supportive attitude on gender equity among respondents (Table 9.4).

Associations between university characteristics and personal attitude of respondents toward premarital heterosexual relationship are examined in Table 9.4. Overall, attitudes towards virginity are associated with most selected university characteristics. Senior students (year 3 or year 4 of the study course) held more liberal attitudes on both relationships with men and virginity than junior students. Academic discipline was also associated with personal attitudes on virginity but not with attitude on premarital

**Table 9. 4 Personal attitude scores and standard deviation (SD) on relationships, virginity and gender double standard, by university context**

University context	N	Attitude on relationships		Attitude on importance of virginity		Attitude on gender double-standard	
		Scores(5-25)a		Scores(7-35)a		Score(1-5)b	
		Mean Score	SD	Mean Score	SD	Mean Score	SD
<b>All</b>		16.16	5.25	13.18	6.40	4.7	1.31
<b>Year of study</b>							
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	653	15.83*	5.25	12.32*	5.69	4.08	1.31
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	824	16.43	5.29	13.72	6.78	4.11	1.29
<b>Academic Discipline</b>							
Medical Sc.	168	15.17	5.37	11.82*	5.12	4.17*	1.27
Human Sc.	965	16.22	5.06	13.38	6.46	4.02	1.37
Basic Sc.	218	13.46	4.90	9.98	3.49	4.11	1.27
Tech. & engineering	155	17.92	5.29	14.15	7.22	4.26	1.15
Arts	151	18.89	4.68	17.04	7.13	4.08	1.27
<b>Sector of the university</b>							
Government	510	15.43*	5.44	12.35*	5.90	4.25*	1.19
Private	1147	16.48	5.14	13.55	6.59	3.99	1.36
<b>Type of university</b>							
Single- sex	232	13.69*	5.60	10.83*	4.61	4.18	1.35
Mixed sex	1426	16.56	5.08	13.56	6.57	4.05	1.31

\*p<0.05

a The lower the score, the more conservative is the attitude on relationship and the higher the score, the more liberal is the personal opinion on relationships with men.

b The lower the attitude score of gender double standard, the more supportive of gender double standard is the personal attitude and the higher the score, the more supportive of gender equality is the attitude.



heterosexual relationships. The mean attitudinal score on virginity among students of arts and technical- engineering and human science was significantly higher (17.04, 14.15, and 13.38, respectively) than that among students of basic science and medical science (9.98 and 11.92,  $p < 0.05$ ). Academic discipline was associated with attitude on gender equality. Students of human science were less supportive of gender-equity than students of medical science and technical-engineering science. Students of governmental universities were more supportive of gender equity than students of private universities (mean score: 4.25 vs. 3.99).

Students of private universities showed significantly more liberal attitudes on both relationships with men and virginity than those at government universities. Moreover, female students of mixed-sex universities held significantly more liberal attitudes on relationships and virginity than students of single-sex universities.

Table 9.5 presents the associations of personal attitudes towards heterosexual relationship, virginity and gender and selected background characteristics. All selected factors, except father's income, are significantly associated with personal attitude. Age was significantly associated with more liberal attitudes toward virginity. Unmarried students held significantly more liberal attitudes on both relationships and virginity than married students. In contrast, married students were more supportive of gender-equity than unmarried students (mean score: 4.26 vs. 4.04, respectively). Those students who had worked for money over the past 12 months held a significantly more liberal attitude on virginity than those who had not (mean score: 15.04 vs. 12.06). Not unexpectedly, religiosity showed a very strong association with conservative attitudes towards relationships and virginity. Those who were not religious held significantly more liberal attitude on relationships than religious respondents (mean score: 19.75 vs. 12.76,  $p < 0.05$ ) and also held a significantly more liberal attitude on virginity than religious

**Table 9. 5 Personal attitudes scores on relationships, virginity and gender double standard by background characteristics**

Background characteristics	N	Attitude on relationships		Attitude on importance of virginity		Attitude on gender double-standard	
		Scores(5-25)a		Scores(7-35)a		Score(1-5)a	
		Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD
<b>Age group</b>							
<20	218	15.58	5.02	11.61*	4.73	3.96	1.40
20-21	652	15.63	5.41	12.75	6.41	4.09	1.28
22-23	486	16.64	5.24	13.54	6.63	4.09	1.35
>23	301	16.93	4.95	14.64	6.75	4.06	1.28
<b>Marital status</b>							
Married	324	15.07*	5.47	12.42*	5.99	4.26*	1.24
Unmarried	1334	16.42	5.16	13.36	6.49	4.02	1.33
<b>Employment over the last 12 months</b>							
Yes, for money	246	17.81	4.99	15.04*	7.39	4.19*	1.28
Yes, not for money	134	16.87	5.17	14.21	6.46	4.21	1.15
No	1272	15.77	5.25	12.69	6.10	4.03	1.34
<b>Father's income</b>							
High	336	17.07	5.44	14.50	6.98	4.13	1.27
Average	680	15.73	5.07	12.68	6.04	4.12	1.31
Low	598	15.52	5.10	12.10	5.86	3.84	1.42
<b>Religiosity</b>							
Religious	445	12.76*	5.26	9.80*	3.96	4.35*	1.21
Somewhat	903	16.64	4.47	12.82	5.48	3.95	1.32
Not religious	292	19.75	4.45	19.35	4.45	3.99	1.41

\*P<0.05

a: see footnote of Table 9.4.

respondents (mean score: 19.35 vs. 9.80,  $p<0.05$ ). However, religious students were more supportive of gender equity than non-religious students (mean score: 4.35 vs. 3.99, respectively).

The associations of selected family characteristics with personal attitude towards heterosexual relationships, virginity and gender are shown in Table 9.6. Most selected factors are linked with personal attitude, except parents' status and parent-child communication on moral issues. Both mother's education and fathers' education were significantly associated with personal attitude on premarital relationship and virginity but not gender double-standards. Students whose mother had a university degree held significantly more liberal attitudes than those whose mother had a middle or high school



education or even lower educational levels (mean score: 17.05 vs. 15.94, 15.41,  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, those whose father had a university degree had a significantly higher mean attitudinal score on relationships and virginity than with those whose father was illiterate or had primary school education. Surprisingly, family relationship and atmosphere was not related to personal attitude on relationships and gender double-standard but it was significantly associated with personal attitude on virginity. Female students who benefited from a good relationship and atmosphere in their family held a significantly more conservative attitude towards virginity (mean score: 12.13) than students with a poor family relationship (mean score: 13.97). Moreover, family endorsement of tradition and religion was strongly associated with personal attitudes of students towards relationships, virginity and double-standard. Students with modern and non-religious families showed significantly more liberal attitudes (mean score: 19.02) on relationships and also virginity (mean score: 16.83) than students whose families were religious and traditional (mean score: 13.97 and 11.10, respectively). On the contrary, students with traditional and religious families were more supportive of gender equity than those whose families were modern and not religious (mean score: 4.28 vs. 3.89, respectively) (Table 9.6).

Parents' attitude towards relationships with the opposite sex was significantly and strongly associated with students' personal attitude on such relationships and virginity. Female students who perceived that their parents approve premarital relationships showed more liberal attitudes (mean score: 19.62) towards relationships than those who perceived the reverse (mean score: 13.74,  $p < 0.05$ ). Similarly, students who perceived that their parents approve such relationships held a more liberal attitude on virginity (mean score: 17.51) than those who perceived their parents held conservative views (mean score: 10.60). The attitude on gender double-standards was not related to

**Table 9. 6 Personal attitude scores on relationships, virginity and gender double standard by family characteristics**

Family characteristics & type	N	Attitude on relationships		Attitude on importance of virginity		Attitude on gender double standard	
		Scores(5-25)		Scores(7-35)		Score(1-5)	
		Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD
<b>Family residence</b>							
Tehran	1334	16.22	5.32	13.18	6.48	4.07	1.33
Other provinces	200	15.81	5.17	13.07	6.23	4.11	1.22
<b>Parents</b>							
Both alive, live together	1433	16.11	5.26	13.13	6.41	4.05	1.32
Both alive, do not live together	51	17.54	5.36	15.82	6.91	3.87	1.48
One/both dead	164	16.09	5.19	12.78	5.98	4.25	1.20
<b>Mother's education</b>							
No education/ primary school	304	15.41*	4.70	12.08*	5.43	4.05	1.31
Middle/High school	880	15.94	5.30	12.71	6.25	4.06	1.33
University graduate	454	17.05	5.43	14.83	7.01	4.07	1.31
<b>Father's education</b>							
No education/primary school	190	15.10*	4.94	12.26*	5.71	4.00	1.40
Middle /high school	691	15.76	5.02	12.16	5.84	3.99	1.35
University graduate	733	16.87	5.48	14.46	6.92	4.14	1.26
<b>Family atmosphere</b>							
Good	638	15.67	5.41	12.13*	5.99	4.00	1.35
Moderate	508	16.35	5.16	13.70	6.60	4.13	1.29
Poor	464	16.61	5.07	13.97	6.51	4.09	1.31
<b>Family endorsement of tradition &amp; religion</b>							
Religious, traditional	555	13.97*	5.39	11.10*	5.27	4.28*	1.19
Moderate	673	16.33	4.72	12.84	5.69	4.01	1.34
Modern, not religious	378	19.02	4.51	16.83	7.41	3.89	1.41
<b>Parents' attitude toward relationships with men</b>							
Disapprove	628	13.74*	5.32	10.60*	4.74	4.15	1.33
No idea	558	16.36	4.23	12.80	5.64	4.02	1.33
Approve	420	19.62	4.36	17.51	7.31	3.99	1.28
<b>Parent's communication about family morals</b>							
Much/very much	1068	15.83	5.32	12.67	6.26	4.10	1.31
Moderate	383	16.57	5.04	13.86	6.45	4.00	1.33
Rarely/not at all	194	17.14	5.15	14.73	6.85	4.04	1.32
<b>Parents' reaction</b>							
Hostile	640	14.38	5.06	11.00*	4.94	4.05*	1.38
Moderate	452	16.65	4.84	13.07	6.00	4.09	1.28
Relaxed	436	18.59	4.88	16.55	7.41	4.07	1.28

\*P<0.05

students' perception of their parents' attitude. Although respondents whose parents frequently communicated about morals and values in the family had lower scores of



personal attitude on relationships and virginity, but unexpectedly, those differences was not statistically significant. Thus parents' communication about family morals and values failed to be associated with respondents' personal attitude on relationships, virginity and gender double standard. Female students who perceived that their parents would have a relaxed reaction towards different types of relationship with the opposite sex showed significantly more liberal attitude towards virginity than those with hostile parents (mean score: 16.55 vs. 11.00). These results suggest that females are more concerned about virginity when it comes to their parents' reaction than about their premarital relationships.

The associations between selected lifestyle factors and personal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships, virginity and gender are shown in Table 9.7. A significant direct association is evident between ever-smoking and ever-drinking alcoholic beverages and liberal attitudes on relationships and virginity. Smokers and drinkers had more liberal attitudes than their counterparts. Similarly, those students who perceived all or most of their peers are involved in risk-taking behaviours such as smoking and drinking alcohol, demonstrated more liberal attitudes on relationships and virginity than those who perceived that none or a few of their peers were involved in such behaviours. As expected, students who had access to satellite held more liberal attitudes towards both relationships and virginity than those who did not have a regular access to satellite. Conversely, access to satellite was associated with a low score of attitude on gender double-standard or supportive beliefs on gender equality. However, access to internet was associated with liberal attitudes towards relationships, virginity and gender double-standards.

Female students who frequently socialise with their friends held a significantly more liberal attitude to virginity than others. But there was no association between socialising

**Table 9. 7 Personal attitude scores on relationships, virginity and gender double standard by life style**

Life style and peer factors	N	Attitude on relationships		Attitude on importance of virginity		Attitude on gender double-standard	
		Scores(5-25)		Scores(7-35)		Score(1-5)	
		Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD
<b>Ever smoked</b>							
Yes	144	19.86*	4.65	20.18*	7.68	4.06	1.41
No	1488	15.81	5.18	12.53	5.87	4.07	1.31
<b>Ever drunk alcohol</b>							
Yes	150	20.94*	4.43	22.80*	6.68	4.07	1.31
No	1503	15.67	5.08	12.22	5.53	4.07	1.32
<b>Access to satellite</b>							
Yes	926	17.61*	4.74	14.79*	6.96	3.92*	1.38
No	713	14.30	5.33	11.07	4.90	4.25	1.21
<b>Access to internet</b>							
Yes	1372	16.30*	5.31	13.40*	6.51	4.10*	1.31
No	252	15.12	4.78	12.02	5.78	3.92	1.36
<b>Socialising with friends <sup>4</sup></b>							
Never/rarely	645	14.35	5.07	11.00*	4.88	4.07	1.34
Average	576	16.29	4.99	13.02	6.02	4.11	1.28
Frequently	406	18.92	4.74	16.83	7.41	4.02	1.34
<b>Perception of peers' risky behaviors (smoking, alcohol)<sup>5</sup></b>							
None/ a few	1177	14.90*	5.02	11.23*	4.87	4.10	1.30
Average	169	18.58	4.57	15.44	6.25	4.01	1.24
Most/all	294	19.75	4.39	19.58	7.31	4.02	1.39
<b>Perception of peers' friendship and sexual contact(any type) with men<sup>6</sup></b>							
None/ a few	736	13.71*	4.94	10.32*	4.10	4.27*	1.20
Average	424	16.84	4.37	12.55	5.28	3.86	1.38
Most/all	461	19.36	4.60	18.13	7.35	3.98	1.37
<b>Proportion peers considered religious</b>							
None/a few	730	18.23*	4.71	15.49*	7.00	3.96*	1.23
Average	430	15.94	4.74	12.53	5.95	4.04	1.28
Most/all	483	13.20	5.06	10.24	4.19	4.29	1.37

\*P<0.05, a: see footnote of Table 9.4.

<sup>4</sup> Socialising with friends for leisure is a scale variable which has been collapsed into three categories in this table. The relevant question referred to "going to cinema, going to restaurant/hotels and night parties where young people dance". Its range varies between 3 to 15. The more higher the score, the more often is the respondent involved in going out with friends for leisure and vice versa.

<sup>5</sup> Perception of peers' involvement in risky behaviours such as smoking and alcohol is a scale variable and it has been collapsed into 3 categories. Its range varies between 2 and 10; the bottom third of distribution indicates those who perceived that none or only a few of their friends smoke or use alcoholic drinks, the middle third indicates those who perceive average number of their friends do such behaviours and the highest third indicates those who perceive most or all of their friends smoke or use alcoholic drinks.

<sup>6</sup> This is a collapsed version of a scale variable on perception of peers' friendships and sexual relationships. Its range varies between 2 to 10.



with friends and personal attitude towards premarital heterosexual relationships and gender double-standard.

As expected, respondents' perception of peers' heterosexual relationships and sex was strongly associated with their personal attitudes on relationships and virginity. Those who perceived that all or most of their peers have boyfriends or have premarital sexual contact had a significantly more liberal attitude on premarital heterosexual relationship than those who perceived that none or a few of peers are involved in such behaviours. An interesting finding is that students who perceived that their peers are likely to be involved in premarital relationship and sex had a less progressive attitude to gender double-standard than others. It appears that belief in gender equity accompanies a conservative attitude towards relationships with the opposite sex. Those who held more liberal attitudes towards relationships and virginity are more likely to view women and men differently. They mostly believe that premarital sexual contact is fine for men but not for women. Women who perceived that all or most of their friends are religious held more conservative attitudes on premarital relationship and virginity but a more liberal attitude towards gender double- standard (Table 9.7).

The associations between perception of societal norms and personal attitudes on premarital heterosexual relationship, virginity and gender double-standards are examined in the top panel of Table 9.8. Students whose perceptions of societal norms were liberal held a significantly more liberal attitude on virginity than those with a conservative perception of norms. However, perception of norms was not associated with personal attitudes on premarital heterosexual relationships, nor with gender double- standard. Interestingly, the importance attached to parents' beliefs was strongly associated with personal attitude. Those students who considered their parents' views unimportant held significantly more liberal attitudes on both premarital heterosexual

relationships and virginity than those who considered their parents' beliefs as important. Finally, students who did not care what others believe showed significantly more liberal attitudes on premarital heterosexual relationship, virginity and double-standard than those who did care (Table 9.8).

**Table 9. 8 Personal attitude scores on relationships, virginity and gender double-standard by normative beliefs and their importance**

Normative beliefs	N	Attitude on relationships		Attitude on importance of virginity		Attitude on gender double-standard	
		Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD	Mean score	SD
<b>Perceived societal norms</b>							
Conservative	555	15.46	5.31	12.35*	6.04	4.11	1.36
Moderate	630	16.18	5.05	13.02	6.43	4.07	1.27
Liberal	455	17.04	5.30	14.42	6.66	4.04	1.31
<b>Importance attached to parents' attitudes</b>							
Important	519	13.35*	5.56	10.22*	4.55	4.20	1.29
Average	594	16.32	4.61	12.52	5.40	4.02	1.33
Not important	507	18.81	4.20	16.99	7.28	4.04	1.32
<b>Importance of normative beliefs of others</b>							
Important	868	15.47*	5.31	11.74*	5.34	4.04*	1.35
Average	336	15.98	5.17	13.71	6.46	4.03	1.34
Not important	424	17.77	4.92	15.79	7.47	4.20	1.19

\*P<0.05

The adjusted effects of factors on personal attitudes towards premarital heterosexual relationships and virginity were examined in a multiple regression analysis (Table 9.9). Factors which were associated significantly with personal attitude on relationships and virginity in bivariate analysis were selected for the multivariate model. Type of university by gender and by sector, age, mother's education, religiosity, access to satellite and internet, family atmosphere and relationship, parents' attitude towards relationships with opposite sex and finally peer norms were considered as predictors in this analysis and personal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships and virginity were considered as dependent variables.



**Table 9. 9 Multiple regression analysis of selected factors associated with personal attitude on relationships and virginity**

Independent variables	Personal attitude on relationships <sup>a</sup>		Personal attitude on virginity <sup>b</sup>	
	Coefficient b	t	Coefficient b	t
University type (0=single-sex, 1=mixed-sex)	0.39	1.29	0.03	0.08
University type by sector (0=government, 1=private)	-0.27	-1.18	0.02	0.08
Age (mean: 21.90, SD=3.02)	0.11	2.83**	0.23	4.53***
Mother's education‡ (0=others, 1=university educated)	0.24	1.02	1.14	3.62***
Religiosity (0=others, 1=religious)	-1.86	-7.46***	-1.53	-4.54***
Access to satellite (0=no, 1=yes)	0.25	1.10	0.57	1.87
Access to internet (0=no, 1=yes)	0.45	1.57	0.47	1.19
Family atmosphere and relationship (score range:6-30, SD=4.33)	0.09	4.01***	0.21	6.75***
Parents' attitude toward relationships (score range:3-15, SD=3.16)	0.32	8.69***	0.59	11.58***
Peer norms on relationships (score range:4-20, SD=4.79)	0.53	21.88***	0.39	11.87***
Constant	3.58	3.65***	-3.98	-2.99**

\* p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

Note: Age, family atmosphere, parents attitude and peer norms are continuous variables and the rest are categorical and dichotomous variables.

n= 1447 due to missing values of the variables used in the model

a. R-square =0.50; Adjusted R-square= 0.49; F value=141.70

b. R-square =0.38; Adjusted R-square= 0.37; F value=86.23

Only five independent variables were significantly associated with personal attitude towards heterosexual relationships when other factors were controlled. These were age, religiosity, family atmosphere, parents' attitude and peer norms on heterosexual relationships. Age has a significant positive association with attitudes towards relationships, while religiosity has a strong negative association with attitudes towards relationships. The poorer is the family's relationships and atmosphere, the more liberal is the personal attitude towards heterosexual relationships. There is also a positive and significant association between parents' attitudes towards premarital relationships and peer norms towards relationships and personal attitude.

Results for personal attitude towards virginity follow a similar pattern as personal attitude towards relationships. However, mother's education has also a positive association with personal attitudes towards virginity.

#### ***9.5 Correlation between societal norms, personal attitudes, parents' attitude and peer norms on heterosexual relationships and virginity***

The Pearson correlations of societal norms, personal attitude, parents' attitudes and peer norms as interval variables are examined in Table 9.10. According to the theory of Reasoned Action, one component that is expected to influence behaviour strongly is subjective norms. Subjective norms refer to respondents' perception about parents' or peers' attitudes towards the behaviours and the importance of complying with them. In Table 9.10 and Table 9.11, the attitudes of parents and peers have been weighted by the importance attached to them by respondents, as described in chapter 4.

Pearson correlations showed a significant but weak correlation between perceived societal norms and personal and parental attitudes and peer norms, but the correlation between parents' attitude and societal norms is greater ( $r=0.15$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). Expectedly, personal attitudes on relationship and also on virginity are moderately and significantly



correlated ( $r=0.56$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). Interestingly, peer norms on relationships also have a relatively high correlation with personal attitudes on relationships ( $r=0.49$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). The correlation between personal attitudes and parents' attitudes on relationships was weaker ( $r=0.42$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), but parents' attitude on relationships was strongly correlated with personal attitudes on virginity ( $r=0.57$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). This finding reflects that young women's attitude are heavily influenced by their parents' attitude with respect to virginity and its importance. However, personal attitudes towards virginity showed a high correlation with both peer norms on relationships and virginity ( $r=0.50$  and  $r=0.63$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) which also suggests a strong relationship between peer norms and personal attitudes towards virginity.

Since perceived societal norms, peer norms and parents' attitude are also highly correlated, partial correlation analysis was conducted. to describe linear relationships between personal attitude and any of these factors while the effects of other variables are controlled, The partial correlation coefficient indicates the strength of correlation between interval variables, after adjustment for other factors (Norusis 2004). Partial correlation coefficients for approximately all pairs of variables are less than the Pearson correlation coefficients in Table 9.10. In Table 9.11, due to the strong correlation between peer norms on relationships and virginity ( $r=0.83$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), peer norms on relationships was removed from partial correlation analysis. Partial correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) presented in Table 9.11 indicate how strongly two variables are related (De Vaus 2002). For example, it tells us how accurately the score of young women's personal attitudes can be predicted if we know the score of their parents' attitude. Partial correlation is similar to Pearson correlation or zero-order correlation except that the distorting effects of other factors in the model have been removed (partialled out). It

**Table 9. 10 Pearson correlation matrix of societal norms, personal attitude, parents' attitude and peers' norms on heterosexual relationships and virginity weighted for normative beliefs ( N=1711)**

	Societal norm	Personal attitude on relationships	Personal attitude on virginity	Parents' attitude on relationship	Peer norms on relationships	Peer norms on virginity
Societal norm	1.000					
Personal attitude on relationship	0.12 p<0.001	1.000				
Personal attitude on virginity	0.14 p<0.001	0.56 p<0.001	1.000			
Parents' attitude on relationships <sup>a</sup>	0.15 p<0.001	0.42 p<0.001	0.57 p<0.001	1.000		
Peers' norms on relationships <sup>b</sup>	0.14 p<0.001	0.49 p<0.001	0.50 p<0.001	0.48 p<0.001	1.000	
Peers' norms on virginity <sup>b</sup>	0.11 p<0.001	0.38 p<0.001	0.63 p<0.001	0.52 p<0.001	0.83 p<0.001	1.000

a Weighted for importance of how parents expect her to behave.

b Weighted for importance of how peers expect her to behave.

**Table 9. 11 Partial correlation matrix of societal norms, personal attitude, parents' attitude and peers' norms on heterosexual relationships and virginity weighted for normative beliefs (N=1545)**

	Societal norm	Personal attitude on relationships	Personal attitude on virginity	Parents' attitude on relationship	Peer norms on virginity
Societal norm	1.000				
Personal attitude on relationship	0.04 P=0.149	1.000			
Personal attitude on virginity	0.05 P=0.073	0.38 p<0.001	1.000		
Parents' attitude on relationships <sup>a</sup>	0.08 P=0.002	0.14 p<0.001	0.26 p<0.001	1.000	
Peers' norms on virginity	0.003 p =0.905	0.008 P=0.750	0.43 p<0.001	0.26 P<0.001	1.000

a Weighted for importance of how parents expect her to behave.

b Weighted for importance of how peers expect her to behave.



enabled us to compare which factor or variable provide the most accurate predictions of scores on the dependent variable. For instance, the correlation coefficient of relationship between parents' attitude on relationships and personal attitude on virginity is 0.26 assuming that young women are identical in their perceived societal norms and peer norms. Partial correlation coefficient shows which variable has the strongest "pure" relationship with personal attitude on relationship and virginity.

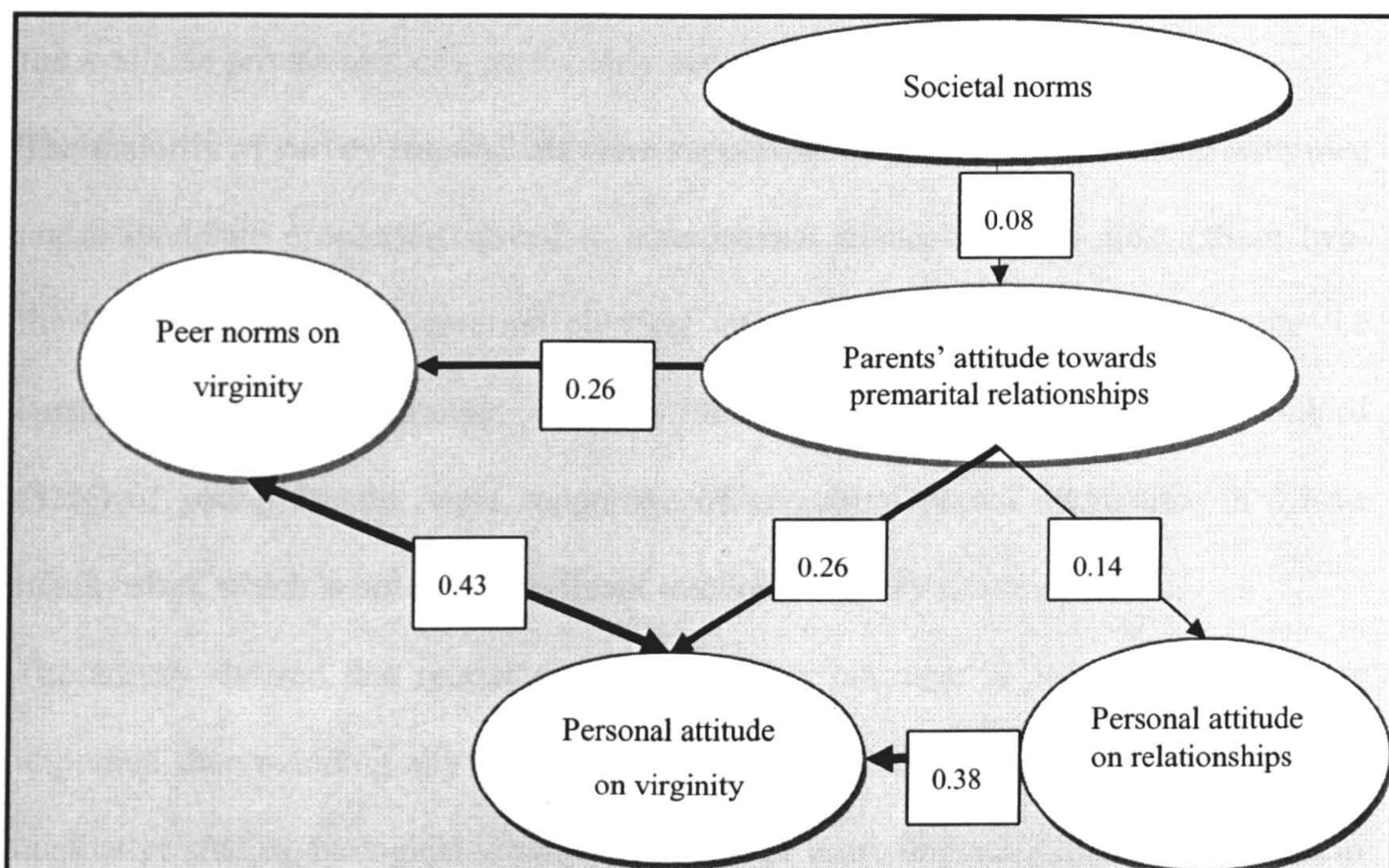
Table 9.11 revealed that when the influence of other variables in the analysis is controlled, the strength of correlation between most variables is diminished. Interestingly, the correlations between perceived societal norms and personal attitudes towards relationships and virginity are not significant anymore when the effects of peer norms and parents' attitude are controlled. In addition, the correlation between societal norms and peer norms is not significant anymore and the strength of correlation between societal norms and parents' attitudes diminishes ( $r=0.08$ ,  $p=0.002$ ). Therefore, societal norms do not appear to have an importance on personal attitudes and peer norms. The correlation between parents' attitude and personal attitude on relationships and also personal attitude on virginity is still significant ( $r=0.14$  and  $0.26$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), while the correlation between personal attitude on relationships and peer norms on virginity became insignificant after controlling other variables.

Figure 9.1 visualises the correlations between different factors shown in Table 9.11 using partial correlation coefficients. According to this figure, young women tend to be influenced by their parents on both their attitude towards relationships and virginity rather than by their society. Perceived societal norms are related to their parents' attitude rather than their own attitude directly. Particularly, their personal attitude on virginity is more influenced by parents' attitude than their personal attitude on relationship. Peer norms also has a pure strong relationship with personal attitude on



virginity, but, owing to the fact that peers are always chosen by young people and young people tend to choose similar peers, any conclusion about the direction of causality between personal attitudes and peer norms is complex.

**Figure 9. 1 Partial correlation between societal and peer norms, personal and parents' attitude and normative belief**



Note: Parents' attitude and peer norms have been weighted by the importance of normative beliefs in this figure.

-The arrows between two variables show only the significant correlations between the two variables when the influences of other variables in the model are removed.

### Synthesis

The results of the survey suggested a good reproductive health knowledge among young women, but the qualitative evidence showed a lack of in-depth knowledge about the most sensitive aspects of reproductive health such as sexual intercourse, its process, different types of sex, the hymen and sexual transmission of HIV in different types of sex particularly anal and oral sex. The didactic nature of compulsory family planning courses in universities, tutors' discomfort in addressing sensitive issues such as sex due to fears of strict rules within the university or their poor skills were reported as



limitations of such courses. Women were mostly unaware of available and confidential services for HIV counselling, prevention and testing. One interviewee reported an example of worries about HIV of one of her friends in the same dormitory who was involved in a sexual relationship. She suffered emotional and psychological problems due to her concern about HIV infection. They were suspicious of the confidentiality of the available private services, particularly counselling services within universities.

The majority of survey respondents were supportive of premarital socialising with men and a moderate proportion agreed to heterosexual friendships, but most (about two-thirds) disapproved of premarital physical intimacy and sexual contact. Despite the conservative nature of Iranian society with religious and social controls, one-third (32%) of young females were supportive of premarital sexual intercourse in a love relationship, which is not an insignificant fraction of survey respondents.

The survey showed that retaining virginity before marriage is perceived to be more important than avoiding any type of pre-marital sex. Interestingly, in the light of the qualitative studies, biological virginity seems to be more important than involvement in premarital sexual contact. This attitude stemmed from the importance attached to virginity or intact hymen by the society, families and men, rather than young women themselves; the majority of in-depth interviewees did not recognise an intact hymen as an appropriate criterion of virginity anymore. Rationales against the importance of hymen included the recognition that many sexually experienced young people practiced non-vaginal sex, the availability of hymen-repair and non-bleeding or flexible congenital hymens in some young women. However, an intact hymen was seen by most interviewees as a sign of women's strength in their relationships with their marital partners. They considered a bleeding hymen as a symbol of women's pride in their first intercourse with their husband which enhances the husband's trust in marital life.

Qualitative data indicated that attitudes toward premarital relationships and sex are not static; they change with circumstances such as getting older, involvement in heterosexual relationships, having premarital sexual contact, marriage, divorce and experiencing forced sex. Three types of personal attitudes were identifiable: women who are opposed to any type of premarital heterosexual relationships even friendship, those who were supportive of friendships but under specified circumstances such as setting boundaries (not having sex or not having penetrative sex); and third, were a minority of women who were supportive of any type of heterosexual relationships including non-penetrative sex or even penetrative sex.

Specific women-centred rationales and motivations were raised for premarital friendships and sex by in-depth interviewees such as *“women need love, care and support of men”*, *“women need to gain sexual experience for a better marital sexual life”*, *“sex is an instinctive need for women as well as men”* and *“necessity of treating genders equally in terms of premarital relationships and sex”*. Sexually experienced women who regretted their sexual involvement characterised premarital relationships as follows: lack of genuine love or commitment; men’s hedonistic motives; and hampering marital prospects. Rationales against such relationships reported by sexually inexperienced women included respecting societal and family norms and religious beliefs, fears and worries that relationships would progress to physical intimacy and sex. Personal attitudes towards all different types of heterosexual relationships are more liberal than perceived societal norms. This discrepancy can explain paradoxical views or uncertainty about this issue to some extent. The majority of in-depth interviewees expressed agreement to pre-marital friendships with men (27 out of 30). However, it should be noted that 21 out of 28 unmarried in-depth interviewees were sexually experienced; hence their expressed liberal attitudes may not be generalisable to the



study population of female college students. Comparing accounts of FGDs and IDIs showed some differences between FGDs and IDIs. If we assume that people tend to reveal societal norms in a group discussion and tend to present their personal attitudes in IDIs, these differences may reflect the difference between the nature of societal norms and personal attitudes. Reported motivations for sexual relationships in IDIs were mostly based on sexual desires of women while in FGDs were based on men's expectations or responding to the partner's sexual desires and securing the relationship. FGD participants valued the hymen as a sign of virginity from the viewpoint of men and society, but in-depth interviewees were less supportive of the hymen as a sign of virginity and chastity. A negative view towards men's hedonistic motivations was observed in both IDIs and FGDs. However, since a few FGD participants appeared to be liberal in their attitudes, the distinctions between norms and personal attitude is complex.

Personal attitudes towards relationships and virginity among survey respondents were diverse, from very liberal to very conservative. Various individual, family, social factors were associated with personal attitudes towards premarital relationships and virginity in bivariate analysis. However, in multivariate analysis, only a few factors were independently determinants of personal attitude. Age and lack of religious conviction among individual factors are predictors of liberal personal attitudes towards both relationships and virginity. Among family factors, a poor family atmosphere and having parents with liberal attitudes are predictors of liberal personal attitude towards both premarital heterosexual relationships and virginity; mother's education was a determinant of liberal personal attitude towards virginity, but not of premarital relationships. Among social factors, only a liberal perception of peer norms was a

determinant of liberal personal attitudes towards both premarital relationships and virginity.

Partial correlation analysis suggests that societal norms do not have a direct pure relationship with personal attitudes and peer norms. They are mediated through parents' attitude. In fact, parents' attitude and peers' norms are two important correlates of personal attitude. Since peers, unlike parents, can be chosen by young people, parents may exert more influence on personal attitudes than peers.



## 10 PARTNERSHIP & SEXUAL CONDUCT

### Introduction

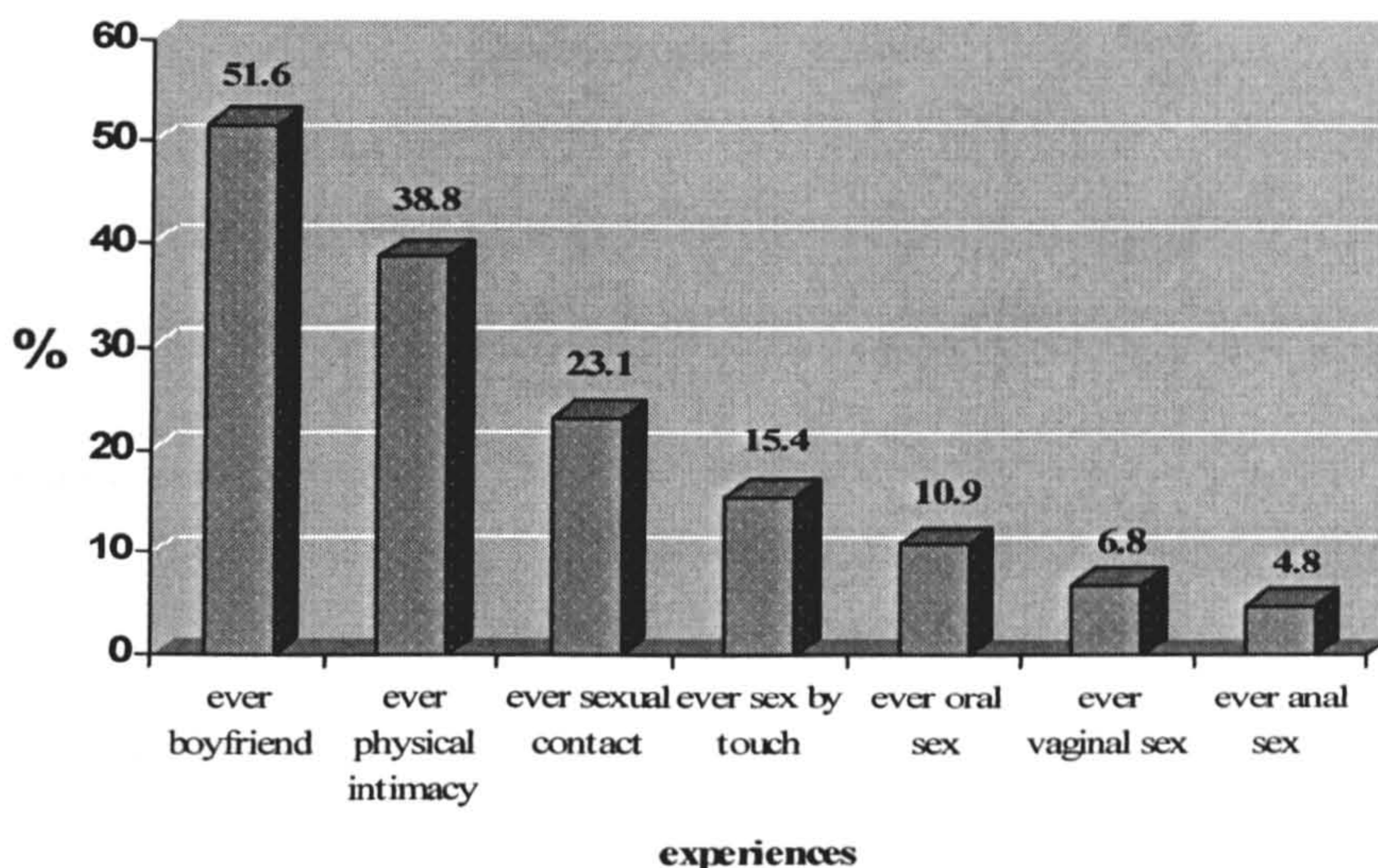
This chapter draws an empirical picture of premarital friendship, physical intimacy and heterosexual sexual contact among female college students in Tehran. This comprises the survey results of the prevalence of heterosexual partnerships and sexual behaviour and current relationships. The qualitative findings about the nature, process and circumstances of heterosexual relationships, motivations, feelings and all other in-depth information which could not be explored in the survey are presented. Thereafter, sexual debut and its characteristics are discussed. Sexual contact and practices and partners and characteristics of the most recent sexual intercourse are discussed afterwards. Correlates and predictors of premarital relationships and sex are assessed using bivariate and multivariate analysis based on the initial conceptual framework. Finally, this section is followed by a brief description of sexual behaviours of married respondents. Qualitative data enriches the survey data where appropriate in each section.

### *10.1 Prevalence of heterosexual partnerships and sexual behaviours*

Figure 10.1 provides a useful summary of the romantic and sexual experiences of the sample. Among all unmarried females who participated in this study, a little over half (52%) had ever experienced having boyfriends in their lifetime. Almost the same proportion (49%) had ever dated a man. More than one-third of unmarried respondents have ever had physical intimacy such as hand holding and hugging with a man (39%). Nearly 23% of unmarried respondents had ever experienced any type of sexual contact including touching of genitals. Nearly 11% had experienced oral sex, 6.8% vaginal intercourse and 4.8% anal intercourse (Figure 10.1). Sex by touch was described by most sexually experienced interviewees as female-male genital touching and getting aroused with no vaginal, anal or oral penetration while both are naked.



**Figure 10. 1 Friendships, intimacy and sexual conduct with men among unmarried female college students in Tehran, 2005**



Unmarried college students of private universities had experienced boyfriends significantly more than students of government universities (57.0% vs. 40.3%,  $P < 0.001$ ) (Table 10.1).

Physical intimacy including hand holding, kissing, hugging and touching with the opposite sex is analysed by type of university in Table 10.1. The prevalence of experiencing any type of physical intimacy and contact decreases steadily from holding hands (58%) to touching or being touched by a man (32%). The prevalence of kissing and hugging with the opposite sex are very similar. A small percentage of respondents had ever experienced any of these physical contacts only once. The prevalence and the frequency of physical intimacy with a man was significantly higher among students of private universities than students of government universities.

### **10.2 Sexual debut and its characteristics**

Over one-third (37%) of unmarried sexually experienced respondents had their first sexual experience including sex by touch, less than six months preceding the survey.



**Table 10. 1 The frequency of physical intimacy reported by unmarried female college students in Tehran, by type of university**

	Type of university			P-value
	Governmental %	Private %	Both %	
<b>Ever held hands with opposite sex</b>				
Frequently	22.7	32.0	29.0	<0.001
Sometimes	17.3	25.4	22.9	
Once	7.3	6.0	6.4	
Never	52.7	36.6	41.7	
<b>Ever kissed opposite sex‡</b>				
Frequently	6.8	12.5	10.7	<0.001
Sometimes	16.0	27.4	23.7	
Once	3.7	4.7	4.4	
Never	73.6	55.5	61.2	
<b>Ever hugged opposite sex</b>				
Frequently	7.3	9.8	9.0	<0.001
Sometimes	15.8	28.0	24.1	
Once	4.4	4.6	4.5	
Never	72.5	57.6	62.4	
<b>Ever touched opposite sex</b>				
Frequently	4.7	7.1	6.4	0.004
Sometimes	15.2	22.5	20.2	
Once	4.7	5.2	5.0	
Never	75.4	65.1	68.4	
<b>N</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>1225</b>	

\* Note: Because of item non response, the N of different variables differed.

Item non response for ever handholding was 12.0%, for ever kissing was 13.3%, for ever hugging was 13.3%, and for touching was 13.7%.

Nearly 21% had their first sexual intercourse within 6 to 12 months preceding the survey and 41% had their first sexual intercourse more than 12 months before the survey. The duration between sexual debut and the survey was marginally different between students of private and government universities ( $p=0.057$ ). Interestingly, nearly half (47%) had sexual debut before entrance the university. The female students of private universities were more likely to have had their first sexual intercourse before university entrance than their counterparts in public universities (49% vs. 36%,  $P<0.05$ ). Hence university seems to be more influential in terms of sexual behaviours of students in government universities than private universities.

The age of first sexual partner for 37% of respondents was younger than 22 years old. Almost 35% of first partners were between 22 and 25 years old and in 28% of cases the first partner was older than 25 years old. The age of first sexual partner was not significantly different by type of university. Only 6% of sexually experienced respondents had their first sexual intercourse with a partner younger than themselves. Nearly 10% of survey respondents reported their first partner was the same age as them. Most commonly their first partner was between 1-3 years older than them at the time (32%) and one-fifth reported their first partner to be more than eight years older than them at the time.

About two-thirds of sexually experienced girls (62%) regretted their first sexual intercourse with no significant difference by type of university.

Most respondents reported that their first sexual partner was their boyfriend either without marital motive (45%) or with marital motive (42%). First sexual intercourse in 8% of cases was forced. Only 1.4% of first partners were casual (no relationship with the person) and 2.8% were fiancés. The type of partners at first sexual experience was not significantly different by type of university (Table 10.2).

The majority of respondents (74%) did not use any method against HIV/AIDS and STDs at their first sexual experience because their sexual contact was not vaginal intercourse (incomplete sex). The corresponding rate was only 13.5% among those whose first sexual experience was a vaginal intercourse. Protection at first sex did not differ significantly by type of university. Similarly the majority of respondents (71%) did not protect themselves from pregnancy because their first sex was not vaginal intercourse but 7%, despite vaginal intercourse, did not use any contraceptive method. Protection against pregnancy was not different by type of university. Contraceptive use in first sex and most recent sex is compared later in Figure 10.3.



Most respondents reported that their first sex was based on willingness of both parties. More than one-third of respondents (35%) reported that their first sex happened because the man persuaded them to have sex and 19% because of force by the male partner. The percentage of students in private universities whose their first partner either forced them or persuaded them to have sex was significantly greater than in government universities, however the significance value is marginal ( $P=0.059$ ). The majority of respondents reported that their first sex happened in the partner's residence (63%), while in 17% of cases it occurred in her residence. In about 10% of cases it happened in a friend's residence. The place of first sex was not different by type of university. The majority of respondents (77%) reported that their first sex was unplanned with no significant difference by type of university. Nearly 22% of respondents were concerned about STDs, HIV/AIDS at their first sex (Table 10.2).

Complete sex implies vaginal intercourse and incomplete sex implies all other types of sex including anal sex, oral sex and sex by touch. About 18% of those who had vaginal intercourse at first sex did not use any contraceptive method. About one-third of those with vaginal intercourse at first sex used a condom as contraception. Similarly one-third at first sex (33%) used withdrawal method as contraception. Hence withdrawal and condoms were the two common methods used as contraception in first vaginal intercourse.

The survey showed that oral contraceptive pills (OCP) alone accounted for only about 7% of contraception at first vaginal intercourse, but the qualitative study suggested that OCPs are mainly used by respondents as emergency contraception, after unprotected sex or a broken condom, not as a regular contraception of OCP intake. In-depth interviewees were also well-informed about emergency contraception. The qualitative study indeed widened the scope of the survey with regard to the common contraceptive

**Table 10. 2 Sexual debut among unmarried sexually experienced female college students in Tehran by type of university**

	Type of university		Both %	P-value
	Governmental %	Private %		
<b>How long ago had first sexual intercourse</b>				
< 6 months	30.2	38.8	37.2	0.057
6-12 months	17.0	22.4	22.4	
12-24 months	34.0	17.3	17.3	
>24 months	18.9	21.5	21.5	
<b>First sexual intercourse</b>				
Before university entrance	35.7	48.9	46.6	0.048
After university entrance	64.3	51.1	53.4	
<b>Age of first sexual partner</b>				
<22	36.7	37.1	37.0	0.172
22-25	38.3	34.2	34.9	
>25	25.0	28.7	28.1	
<b>Age difference with partner at first sex</b>				
Younger male partner	5.3	6.2	6.0	0.047
Same age	7.0	10.7	10.1	
Older partner 1-3 years	26.3	33.7	32.5	
Older partner 3-5 years	36.8	17.5	20.7	
Older partner 5-8 years	7.0	11.7	10.9	
Older partner >8years	17.5	20.3	19.8	
<b>First sexual partner</b>				
Fiancé	3.8	2.6	2.8	0.450
Serious boyfriend with marital prospect	34.6	43.4	41.8	
Serious boyfriend, no marital prospect	50.0	43.4	44.6	
Casual partner	3.8	0.9	1.4	
Coercive partner	5.8	8.5	8.0	
Others	1.9	1.3	1.4	
<b>Protection against STDs/HIV at first sexual intercourse</b>				
Condom	15.7	11.6	12.4	0.329
No method, because of incomplete sex *	76.5	72.8	73.5	
No method, although the sex was complete	5.9	15.2	13.5	
Other	2.0	0.4	0.7	
<b>Protection against pregnancy at first sexual intercourse</b>				
No method, because incomplete sex	75.5	69.5	70.6	0.464
No method, although it was complete sex	4.1	7.6	7.0	
Condom	12.2	10.3	10.7	
OCP	2.0	1.8	1.8	
Condom and OCP	2.0	0.4	0.7	
Rhythm	2.0	0.9	1.1	
Withdrawal	2.0	9.4	8.1	
<b>Coercion at first sexual intercourse</b>				
Forced by male	10.0	21.2	19.2	0.059
Forced by female	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Persuasion by male	26.0	37.2	35.1	
Persuasion by female	0.0	0.4	0.4	
Both equally willing	64.0	41.2	45.3	



	Type of university		Both	P-value
	Governmental %	Private %		
<b>Location of first sexual intercourse</b>				
Respondent's residence	10.0	18.3	16.8	0.255
Partner's residence	76.0	60.7	63.4	
Friend's residence	8.0	10.0	9.7	
Park	2.0	2.6	2.5	
Car	4.0	2.6	2.9	
Other	0.0	5.7	4.7	
<b>First sexual intercourse</b>				
Unplanned	78.0	77.2	77.3	0.534
Planned	22.0	22.8	22.7	
<b>Regret after first sexual intercourse</b>				
Yes	60.0	62.8	62.3	0.413
No	40.0	37.2	37.7	
<b>Feeling of vulnerability towards STDs and HIV/AIDS at first sexual intercourse</b>				
Much/very much	14.3	15.8	15.5	0.653
Moderate	4.1	7.5	6.9	
Little/None	81.6	76.8	77.6	
N	62	311	373	

a) Incomplete sex implies anal sex, oral sex and sex by touch, while complete sex implies vaginal intercourse in this study.

methods used by young women. The emergency contraceptive method had not been considered in the survey questionnaire as a possible contraception method used.

Similarly, survey respondents were asked about their protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS in their first sexual intercourse. Nearly 70% of survey respondents reported that their first sex was not a vaginal intercourse. After excluding those cases, only those respondents who had a vaginal intercourse were considered for the analysis in Table 10.3. Despite having vaginal intercourse, only 51% of respondents reported condom use at first vaginal intercourse to protect themselves from STDs and HIV/AIDS.

#### ***Correlates of contraception and condom use at first vaginal intercourse***

Specified factors such as age at sexual debut, age difference with partner, type of sexual partner, self-efficacy to say no premarital sexual contact and ease of communication with partner were assessed in relation to contraception and condom use at first vaginal

intercourse (Table 10.3). Important differences in condom use among subgroups are identifiable although are not statistically significant due to small numbers of

**Table 10.3 Percentage who protected themselves against STD and HIV and pregnancy in first vaginal intercourse among unmarried female college students by selected factors**

	Denominator			
	All unmarried females who had vaginal intercourse at sexual debut			
	N	Condom use %	N	Contraceptive use %
<b>Age at first sexual intercourse</b>				
<19	37	51.4	39	84.6
19-22	35	48.6	41	75.6
>22	7	14.3	7	57.1
<b>Age difference with partner</b>				
Younger /same age male partner				
1-3 years	25	52.0	25	80.0
3-5 years	10	60.0	13	84.6
>5 years	27	37.0	30	76.7
<b>Type of sexual partner</b>				
Serious boyfriend with marital prospect	40	50.0	43	81.4
Serious boyfriend, no marital prospect	35	48.6	27	75.0
Casual partner/coercive/others	7	14.3	9	81.8
<b>Self-efficacy to say no to sex</b>				
High	9	55.6	9	77.8
Average	11	36.4	14	71.4
Low	52	42.2	54	77.8
<b>Communication with partner<sup>7</sup></b>				
Easy	30	56.7*	29	86.2
Moderate	29	27.6	33	69.7
Difficult	20	55.0	25	80.0
<b>N</b>	<b>82</b>		<b>90</b>	

\*P=<0.05

respondents who reported vaginal intercourse at first sex in each subgroup. Surprisingly, those who described communication with their first partner either easy or difficult reported significantly more condom use than those who felt moderately confident in their communication with their first sexual partner (p=0.05). No significant difference was found in contraceptive use among the different subgroups of specified factors. Sexually experienced respondents were equally balanced in terms of ability to express

<sup>7</sup> Communication with partner is a variable based on a question "how comfortable were you to ask your partner about his previous sexual experiences". Using five point Likert scale, responses ranged from very comfortable to not at all comfortable and were grouped into three categories.



their own wishes to their partner while about one-fourth were uncertain about their ability. About 40% were comfortable to express their interests and similar proportions were not. More sexually experienced females reported an easy communication with their first partner about sex and contraception than those who were not comfortable in such communication (47.5% vs. 34.6%, respectively). The first sexual partner was respected by the majority of sexually experienced women (67%). Sexually experienced respondents were more likely to consider that their first sexual partner had more power than the respondent in the relationship than to consider that he had less power in their relationships (44% vs. 32%), while 28% were unsure about that. Thus it seems that most sexual debuts occur with a respected partner but in a relationship where the male partner has more power than the woman (Table 10.4).

**Table 10. 4 Partner interaction and behaviour at first sexual experience among unmarried sexually experienced girls**

Specified statements	Responses				
	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Intermediate %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I was able to ask him easily what I wanted and what was my own interest.	23.5	15.3	23.5	16.7	21.0
I was able to talk with him about sexual contact and contraception easily	35.0	12.5	17.9	13.9	20.7
I respected him very much	46.7	20.7	20.4	4.9	7.4
In our relationship, I had more power than my partner.	17.7	14.2	28.0	20.2	19.9

The qualitative study added in-depth information to the survey with regard to feelings after sexual relationship. It suggests that in most cases first sexual encounters are accompanied by a feeling of losing purity. Many interviewees described themselves

before first sexual encounter as someone pure with a sense of pride, dignity and self-respect.

### ***IDI 2***

*“...When he came near and held my hand, well I felt sinful, I suffered a lot because he was the first and only person who had entered into my life...and I had always been proud of myself that nobody has entered yet into my life and I am pure ...after that I totally broke down and it affected badly my performance in studying. It was exactly near the university entrance exam.”*

One interviewee even became devastated when her boyfriend kissed her for the first time, because she always thought of intimate relationship as a holy matter which should happen with a special beloved person.

### ***IDI 8***

*Par: I had a specific idea about sex and sexual relationship with the opposite sex. Sex had a holy nature for me according to what I had read about sex and my previous curiosity. I was crying about 7-8 hours when he kissed me for the first time. He was saying that he did not want to hurt me but I felt that all the created things in my consciousness have been broken and destroyed.*

*Facilitator: How was your feeling?*

*Par: A bad feeling. It was not a feeling of committing sin, I felt that until now I have been a holy and pure person, from now, everything has gone ...It did not matter the extent of relationship, it was important that I have my first relationship with a special person ...but unfortunately it did not happen.*

One interviewee (IDI 26) had been forced into sex and lost totally her self-respect. She described herself as a girl who had always adhered to her family's values and virginity. When she lost it, she felt she had ruined her whole life and this made her to not care



anymore about her behaviour and other sexual encounters. This experience indeed made a vicious circle in her life.

### **IDI 26**

*“I thought that I am very different from others ...I thought I am a sinful person and nasty who is very different from other girls. I was depressed and thinking a lot..... my friend were very pure. I thought I am dirty and nasty and still now I think so.”*

The qualitative study also suggests that “*sigheh*” or “*temporary marriage*” is not uncommon among young people particularly those who are religious, while this subject had not been considered in the survey. Two interviewees (IDI 6 and IDI 25) reported that their boyfriends asked for *Sigheh* or a temporary marriage before sex and these men were all religious. It appears that those male partners who are religious, and need sex, can justify having sex before marriage by *Sigheh*. *Sigheh* makes them feel more comfortable emotionally, and free from committing a sin. One interviewee explained about her boyfriend’s request for “*Sigheh*” or “*temporary marriage*” and her own disapproval of it. They verbally asked each other’s willingness for this sexual relationship for a certain period of time and they both accepted. These unmarried or married men probably avoid guilt from premarital or extramarital sex by having *Sigheh*. One interviewee who was offered *Sigheh* strongly opposed it and called it a divine justification for prostitution. She finally accepted it because otherwise the man would not accept to have sex with her.

### **IDI 25**

*Par: In second year of the university, I became acquainted with a man who was very nice and was religious ...He offered me Sigheh...I did not believe in it [sigheh], because I could have sex without it [Sigheh]. Why...I know Sigheh as prostitution, worse than it. That is a divine hat [cover] or justification...it is very*

*obvious. That is my view and I defend it very easily and prove it that it is worthless...Despite my opposition, I accepted because he believed in it and he even would not do anything without that.*

Another interviewee also was offered Sigheh before involvement in a sexual relationship with a religious college student who was married. This suggests that some married men have sexual relationships with unmarried girls.

#### ***Age at first boyfriend and first sexual relationships, a life table analysis***

Figure 10.2 shows results of a life-table analysis of acquiring a boyfriend, experiencing any type of sexual contact and finally vaginal intercourse among unmarried female college students in Tehran.

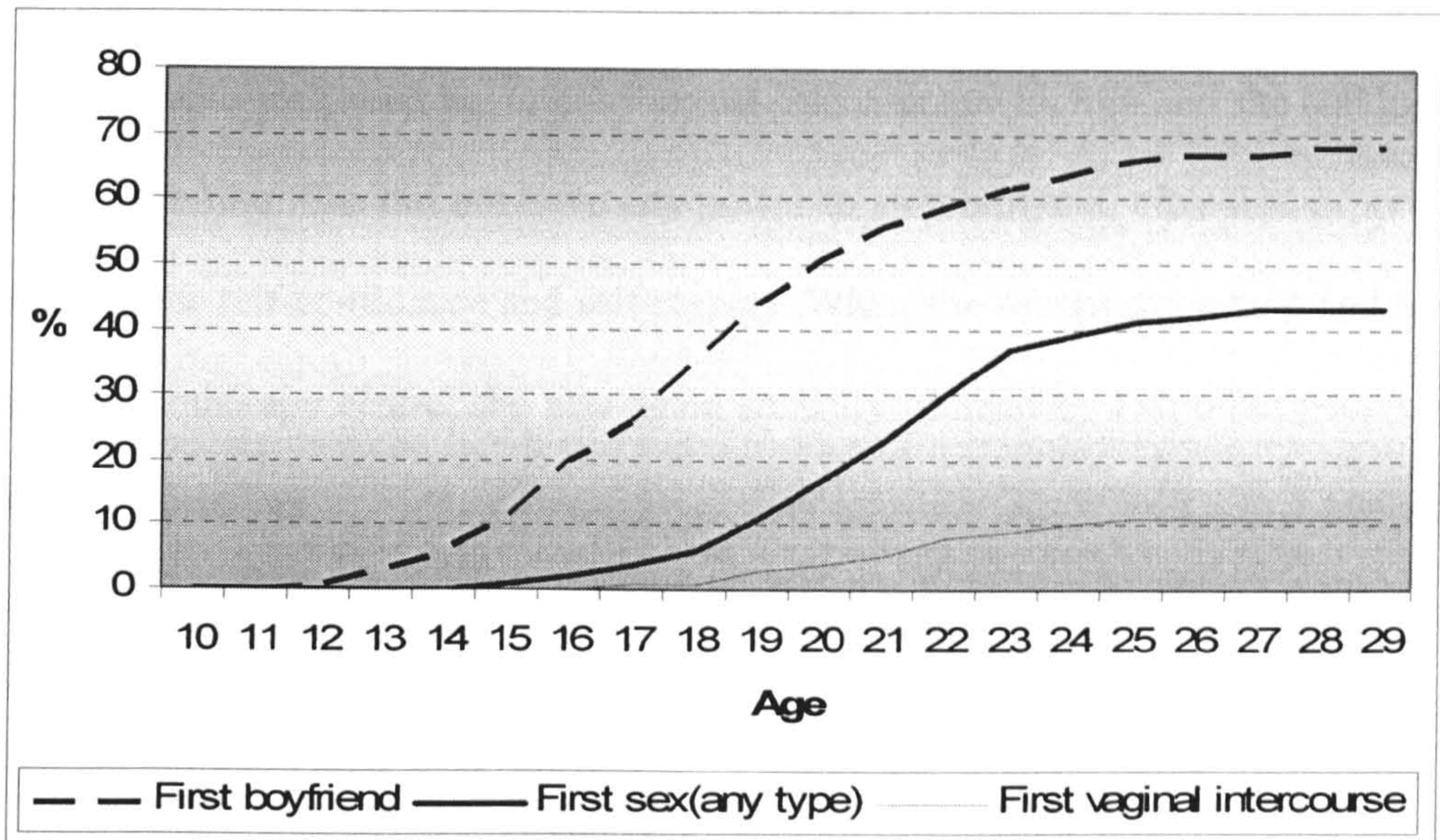
One-fifth of unmarried survey respondents have experienced boyfriends by age 16. This figure increases to 51% by age 20 years old. Although nearly one-fifth of students acquired boyfriends by age 16, less than one-fifth (17%) of respondents experience any sexual contact by age 20. Thus sexual relationships often occur later than first friendships with men, mostly in late adolescence and early twenties. Nearly one-third (30%) of unmarried women have had sexual relationship including any type of sexual contact by age 22 and the figure rises to 40% by age 25. However, vaginal intercourse occurs much later in their life. Only 4% of unmarried females have had vaginal intercourse by age 20 and this level increases to 9% by age 23.

#### ***Non-consensual sex, sexual abuse and coercion at first sex, qualitative finding***

The qualitative study suggests that childhood sexual abuse is not uncommon among young women. Two sexually experienced interviewees (IDI 25 and IDI 9) reported histories of sexual abuse by father, other relatives, neighbours and strangers during their childhood. One interviewee, who was asked to explain about her first sexual encounter, started to disclose sexual abuses that she had experienced during her childhood. She



**Figure 10. 2 Cumulative percentages by age of acquiring first boyfriend, first sex and first vaginal intercourse among unmarried female college students**



even burst into tears when she was trying to remember those terrible moments and devastating influences on her life. She associated her desire for sexual relationships with men to her childhood experiences of sexual abuses. She did not respect her family, specially her father, because she believed her father did not respect her when he abused her sexually.

**IDI 25**

*Par: Well, I think I have had from childhood ...when I go back and see that I was under oppression sexually ...these caused me that now I behave like that[have premarital sexual relationships]....*

*Facilitator: Explain more, how old were you? Who did it?*

*Par: I was nearly 4 years old, I think, as far as I remember, there was not only one case, it was many cases and many people did it[abused me sexually], my neighbour ...the person who was living and working in our home did that ...then even my father did it....my brother's friends who came our home...I was only a small girl and they thought they can easily abuse me.*



Another interviewee reported coercion at her first sexual intercourse. Because of her family's poverty and parental conflict she decided to work during the vacation in a shop. Her employer forced her to have sexual intercourse with him and she had lost her virginity with him. She did not have any power to stop him and, after that experience, totally lost her self-confidence and self-respect. When she sought some help and advice from a hypnotherapy centre, she was again sexually coerced by two other people who were her counsellors.

### **IDI 26**

*Facilitator: How long were you working there?*

*Par: About one month and half ...The shop was an open area, this man was there, his son used to commute there.*

*Facilitator: So he was married?*

*Par: Yes, he was 45 years old, his son was at my age...*

*Facilitator: Explain how did he start?*

*Par: ...He was very religious and had a modest behaviour ...he started to show his fascination with me ...the way that he behaved and talked showed that he likes me .... One day he forced me to have intercourse in his shop at lunch time when he closed the door. ....I lost my self-confidence totally and got depressed after that ...after a while which I was depressed ....when I saw an advertisement about hypnotherapy, I decided to go to get some help and support to overcome my depression when I went there, after 2-3 visits, they realised that I had sex previously.*

*Facilitator: Did you tell them that you had sex?*

*Par: No they themselves understood.*

*Facilitator: How?*



*Par: I do not know, when they told me that I have had sex before, it was not important anymore for me and they [two counsellors] had sexual intercourse with me both at the centre.*

Another sexually experienced interviewee (IDI 10) also reported non-consensual anal intercourse at her sexual debut with two boys in their own shop. She hesitated to disclose this experience at the initial stage of the interview, but after explaining her relationship with the current boyfriend, she revealed that she had such a bad experience at age 15, before all other sexual experiences occurred. She was coerced into anal sex by her short-term boyfriend and his friend in their shop. She explained how badly she suffered from painful anal sex while she only could tell her best friend and get advice because she had been concerned about pregnancy. She had absolutely no knowledge about anal sex; she was only concerned about pregnancy.

#### ***IDI 10***

*Par: My first sex was with coercion and I could not tell anything with someone else...*

*Facilitator: How old were you?*

*Par: 15 years*

*Facilitator: How did you become acquainted with him?*

*Par: In street we met each other and then we talked on phone and then he asked me to go out together and then he told me that I want to see my friend in his shop , let's go to his shop ...I told ok and then we went there ...*

*Facilitator: Did his friend want [sex]?*

*Par: Yes, his friend also wanted.*

*Facilitator: Both had sexual intercourse with you?*

*Par: First he had sexual intercourse from back [anal sex], it was so painful and then his friend came and had also intercourse with me from back.*

### **10.3 Current heterosexual relationships**

About one-third (36%) of unmarried females were involved in an emotional relationship with a man at the time of the survey. One-fifth were involved in important relationship with marriage intention and 13.6% in a serious relationship with no marital intention. Only a few (2.3%) were engaged to be married. Students of government universities were significantly more likely than students of private universities to report no current emotional relationship (73% vs. 60%,  $P < 0.001$ ).

Among those who have ever had a boyfriend ( $n=706$ ), more than two-thirds (67%) have had more than one boyfriend in their lifetime. Students who have had more than four lifetime partners were significantly more common among respondents of private universities than government universities (31% vs. 19%, respectively,  $P < 0.001$ ).

Students of private universities were more likely than those at public universities to initiate their first experience of a boyfriend before 16 years. Almost 28% of students of government universities started their first friendship with a man after age 19 while only 17% of private students did so. The majority of those who had ever had boyfriend dated him at least once (95%). Friends are more frequently told about the dating than parents or siblings: 28% confided a friend only. Nearly 21% of respondents told their parents and friends and 16% their sisters and friends. An additional 17% told their parents only. Nearly 10% communicated to nobody about their date. This shows relatively the low percentage of respondents who communicated with their parents about their dating, while most communicate with their friends.

Nearly two-thirds of those with experience of boyfriends, reported a current boyfriend at the time of the survey (Table 10.5). Considering those respondents with a current



**Table 10. 5 Friendship with the opposite sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran by type of university**

	Type of university			P-value
	Governmental %	Private %	Both %	
<b>Among all unmarried</b>				
Ever had boyfriend	40.3	57.0	51.6	<0.001
<b>Current situation</b>				
Important relationship with marriage intention	16.5	22.1	20.3	<0.001
Serious relationship, no marriage intention	9.0	15.8	13.6	
No emotional relationship with opposite sex	72.4	59.7	63.8	
Engaged to be married	2.2	2.4	2.3	
N	437	930	1368	
<b>Among those who had ever had boyfriend</b>				
<b>Number of boyfriends ever had*</b>				
One	44.5	28.8	32.7	<0.001
Two to four	36.5	40.1	39.2	
More than four	19.0	31.1	28.1	
<b>Age at first boyfriend</b>				
<16	27.1	41.3	37.8	<0.001
16-19	43.5	41.9	42.7	
>19	27.6	16.8	19.5	
Ever dated with boyfriend	93.6	96.2	95.6	0.201
<b>People who were told about dating</b>				
One/ both parents only	17.9	17.3	17.4	0.953
Sister only	5.7	7.6	7.1	
Friends only	28.0	27.8	27.8	
Both parent and friend	20.4	20.9	20.8	
Both sister and friend	17.9	15.5	16.1	
Nobody	9.4	9.7	9.7	
Others	0.7	1.3	1.1	
Had current boyfriend	60.3	60.5	60.5	0.516
N	176	530	706	
<b>Among those with current boyfriend</b>				
<b>How acquainted with current boyfriend</b>				
By chance in the street or park	13.4	24.3	21.6	
In the university	24.4	14.2	16.7	0.021
In a party	5.5	4.5	4.8	
Friends introduced	14.3	19.0	17.9	
Internet chat	17.9	13.6	14.6	
Relatives	13.9	9.5	10.5	
Other	10.7	15.0	13.9	
N	107	333	440	

\*Note: Because of item non-response, the N of different variables differed.

The data quality and item non-response rates and total non response of the study have been discussed in chapter 6. Item non-response rate for ever having boyfriend was 2.3%.

boyfriend, one-fifth (22%) had become acquainted with their boyfriends by chance in the street or in parks. This percentage is significantly higher among students of private

universities than of governmental universities (24% vs. 13%,  $P < 0.05$ ). The second important mode of acquaintance was introduction by friends (18%). While only 17% of students had become acquainted with their boyfriends in the university environment, this percentage was significantly higher among students of government universities than of private universities (24% vs. 14%,  $P < 0.05$ ). Internet chat accounted for 15% of acquaintance with the opposite sex which was significantly more common among students of government universities than students of private universities (18% vs. 14%,  $P < 0.05$ ).

#### ***10.4 Initiation of heterosexual relationships; process, starting age, types, ways of becoming acquainted and stability: Qualitative findings***

Table 10.6 provide a brief description of both basic demographic and relationships and sexual practices of each in-depth interviewee. It comprises age, type of university, the family residence, type and duration of relationships, sexual experiences, age at first sex, number of sexual partners and types of sexual practices. This table is intended to contextualise the specific quotations reported by individual in-depth interviewees.

The qualitative study supplemented the survey data with regard to the initiation of relationship, nature of different relationships and their characteristics. It suggested that early involvement in friendship with the opposite sex is associated with earlier sexual activity. Most in-depth interviewees who were sexually experienced had started their first relationship with a man in early adolescence, at ages 13-15, while sexual inexperienced women mostly had started their first heterosexual friendships in their early twenties. Women who started their first relationships during early adolescence, tended to continue practicing and experiencing many different relationships with men. The qualitative study also suggested two main different phases during the history of



**Table 10. 6 Detailed profiles of in-depth interviewees**

<b>IDs</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Sexual experience</b>	<b>Age at first sex</b>	<b>Number of lifetime sexual partners</b>	<b>Type of relationships</b>	<b>Duration of relationships</b>
IDI 1(Post-survey)	Age : 21, Private university, from Tehran, 2006	Anal, oral, touch	20	1	Regular	One year
IDI 2(Post-survey)	Age: 22, Private university, from other provinces, 2006	Vaginal	18	2	Regular	More than one year
IDI 3(Post-survey)	Age: 23, Private university, From Tehran, 2006	Anal, oral, touch	17	7	Regular and casual	More than one year
IDI 4(Post-survey)	Age : 23, Private university, From Tehran, 2006	Oral, vaginal, touch	17	4	Regular	More than one year
IDI 5(Post-survey)	Age: 23, Government university, From Tehran, 2006	Vaginal, anal, oral , touch	20	1	Regular	More than one year
IDI 6(Post-survey)	Age : 27, Private university, From Tehran, 2006	Vaginal, anal, touch	15-16	6	Regular(divorce/ temporary marriage/casual	More than one year
IDI 7(Post-survey)	Age: 22, Private University, From Tehran, 2006	Touch, anal	15	3	Regular	3 years
IDI 8(Post-survey)	Age: 25, Private university, From Tehran, 2006	Touch, oral	24	1	Regular	9 months



<b>IDIs</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Sexual experience</b>	<b>Age at first sex</b>	<b>Number of lifetime sexual partners</b>	<b>Type of relationships</b>	<b>Duration of relationships</b>
IDI 9(Post-survey)	Age : 23, Government university, From Tehran, 2006	Vaginal, oral, anal, touch	23	2	Regular/casual/childhood sexual abuse	One year/six months
IDI 10(Post-survey)	Age: 21, Private university, From Tehran, 2006	Anal, oral, touch	15	5	Casual. regular/coercive sex	1.5 years, a few weeks,
IDI 11(Post-survey)	Age : 25, Private university, From Tehran, 2006	Touch, oral	21-22	3	Regular	1 year/ 3 months/
IDI 12(Post-survey)	Age: 25, Private university, From Tehran , 2006	Oral, anal, vaginal, touch	18	22	Regular/casual	3 year/two year/ a few days
IDI 13(pre-survey)	Age : 24, Government university, From other provinces , 2005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 14(pre-survey)	Age: 28, Private university, From Tehran, 2005	Vaginal	22	2	Regular	5 years / 6 months
IDI 15(pre-survey)	Age: 22, Government university, From other provinces, 2005	Touch	21	1	Casual	6 months
IDI 16(pre-survey)	Age : 23, Government university, From Tehran, 2005	Touch	19	1	Regular	4 years



IDs	Characteristics	Sexual experience	Age at first sex	Number of lifetime sexual partners	Type of relationships	Duration of relationships
IDI 17(pre-survey)	Age 20, Government university, From other provinces, 20052005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 18(pre-survey)	Age : 24, Government university, From Tehran, 2005	Married/history of premarital sexual contact with men other than her husband	17	6	Casual	4 months/one year/ a few weeks
IDI 19(pre-survey)	Age : 23, Government university, From other provinces, 2005	Married, no premarital sexual contact	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 20(pre-survey)	Age: 19, Private university, From Tehran, 2005	Oral, touch	18	3	Regular/casual	1.5 years/a few days
IDI 21(pre-survey)	Age:20, Private university, From Tehran, 2005	Touch	19	4	Casual	1 months/three months
IDI 22(pre-survey)	Age: 24, Government university, From other provinces, 2005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 23(pre-survey)	Age: 21, Private university, From Tehran, 2005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 24(pre-survey)	Age: 22, Government university, Tehran, 2005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 25(pre-survey)	Age: 22, government university, from other provinces 2005	Anal, oral, touch History of child sexual abuses	19	4	Casual/regular/ Sigheh	7-8 months/ 4 months/ a few weeks



IDs	Characteristics	Sexual experience	Age at first sex	Number of lifetime sexual partners	Type of relationships	Duration of relationships
IDI 26(pre-survey)	Age: 25, Government university, From Tehran, 2005	Sexual coercion, vaginal	21	3	Coerced/casual	3 months
IDI 27(pre-survey)	Age: 22, Private university, From Tehran, 2005	Touch	18	3	Regular/casual	One year/ 3 months/ one months
IDI 28(pre-survey)	Age: 21, Government university, From other provinces, 2006	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 29(pre-survey)	Age: 23, Government university, From other provinces , 2005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA
IDI 30(pre-survey)	Age: 20, private university, from Tehran, 2005	Sexually inexperienced	NA	NA	NA	NA

NA: Not applicable



heterosexual relationships of female students: 1) relationships in early adolescence, 2) relationships in early twenties. Interviewees characterised the first phase differently from the second phase in terms of means of acquaintance, types of partners, duration of relationship, emotional sensitivity, ways of termination, motivations, power, stability and extent of sexual intimacy and involvement in sexual intercourse .

Heterosexual relationships shaped in the early adolescent period were characterised by some special features. These relationships were mainly formed in the street, parks, in neighbourhoods; hence partners are basically boys who lived close by, boys who offer their telephone number in streets and parks, friends of brothers and male private teachers. Partners are mainly of similar age. Most heterosexual relationships are not serious or important and their durations are very short. These relationships may be limited to phone calls and a few visits or dates. The majority of these relationships involve only mild physical intimacy like kissing and hugging. Girls in their early adolescent period are very sensitive emotionally and they become attached easily to their boyfriends. However, interviewees mentioned that most relationships during this period are ended by girls rather than boys. During this phase any failure in a relationship usually leads to a switch to another heterosexual relationship; even sometimes they choose unwisely and rush to substitute another relationship. At this phase, the appearance and politeness of the boy is the most important criterion for attracting attention. Girls have less power than boys in their relationships particularly those with an older partner. Most interviewees believed that their boyfriends chosen at this phase are not suitable for marriage. Girls in early adolescence value friendship with older boys rather than with boys of a similar age.

Heterosexual relationships formed in the early twenties are characterised differently from the former type. Ways of becoming acquainted are introduction by friends,

meeting in the university or university entrance exam preparatory courses, using internet chat and socialising in a group of young people. These relationships are characterised by more stability. Many are ended by men rather than women. They tend to lead to sexual contact including coitus and females at this age are less vulnerable emotionally. Men are mostly older than women in such relationships.

Interviewees mostly believed that internet chat using web-camera has become a common way of becoming acquainted with men. Most interviewees reported chat as a way of becoming acquainted with their boyfriend. They can use it from their home computers, in their dormitory, coffee-net and in the university. Some interviewees continue chat with a man for even one or two years and after that they dated and initiated a more intimate relationship.

#### ***IDI 14***

*Facilitator: Is internet chat common among young people?*

*Par: Nowadays, it has become terrible. Now it is the most important way of acquaintance among university students. Internet chat and chat party are very common among young people ....*

A few students reported a sense of fear of chatting with strangers via the internet. One interviewee reiterated that college students in the university have developed a website for group chat. These websites are mainly used by college students and they are similar to special websites for finding friends.

#### ***IDI 27***

*Par: We got acquainted via internet*

*Facilitator: Did you do chat?*



*Par: I never go to chat room and do not chat with strangers ...this guy told me that I am in your university ....then I continued my chat with him ...there is a special website for college students for finding friends.*

One main theme that emerged from interviewees' accounts was switching of relationships. After the end of one relationship, many women tended to substitute with another heterosexual relationship to be able to cope better with the emotional difficulties. For those who are sexually experienced and whose first relationship started in early adolescence, these substitutions seem to be particularly common.

### ***IDI 9***

*Par: There was a man whom I previously knew, but I have not had any relations with him for a long time. He was a mature man, aged 36 years old, but his situation was very good. Over the last 5-6 years that I knew him, he always showed his interest in me but was not very insistent. Then when my relationship was ended ...I remember I was so upset ....*

*Facilitator: How many months after ending your relationship?*

*Par: About 6 months...I phoned him and told him I want to see him*

Except for one case who reported having relationships with several boys at the same time when she was an adolescent, no other interviewee with previous heterosexual relationships reported parallel important relationships with men. The exception was even proud of herself. She related her behaviour to her desire to annoy men or cheat them. She had a negative view towards men because of her father's strictness and violent behaviour and also witnessing the bad behaviour of her sister's husband and her sister's pain and suffering. This evidence reflects the influence of family experiences on someone's perception and behaviour towards the opposite sex.

The qualitative study suggested contradictory results for marital motivations compared with the survey results. The survey suggested that most current relationships are based on a marital motivation (Table 10.5), while the qualitative study suggested poor marital expectations in heterosexual relationships among most in-depth interviewees. This contrast implies that sexually inexperienced women tend to have a greater marital motivation in their heterosexual friendships rather than sexually experienced women. Owing to the fact that sexually inexperienced girls are not involved in premarital sexual relationships either because of personal choice or respect for social and family values, they may have more hope for a marriage in a relationship. One sexually inexperienced interviewee who had failed in a love relationship showed great interest in a stable relationship preferably marriage, after that failure.

#### ***IDI 17***

*Facilitator: How did you get acquainted?*

*Par: His sister was my roommate, after my previous failed relationship, I told her that I got bored and frustrated and I want to marry, she said why don't you marry?, I said I have not got the right man. Then she said that if I find someone for marriage, would you marry, I said, why not*

While most sexually experienced girls would like to marry, they did not have marital motivation in their relationships and did not expect marriage from their own relationships. Lower marital motives reported by in-depth interviewees compared with the survey respondents might be due to the fact that in-depth interviewees, particularly post-survey interviewees, were highly selective and were mainly sexually experienced, while only about one fourth of survey respondents were sexually experienced.

Many reasons were raised for this poor prediction of marriage. One reason was the incompatibilities between boys' and girls' families or even inappropriateness of their



boyfriend for marriage. Some interviewees clearly stated that their boyfriends are appropriate for a short relationship but they have many characteristics that are not suitable for a lifelong marriage. They believed that suitors often have higher financial and social status than boyfriends. Moreover, lack of marital motive among young men leads young women into relationships that will not end in marriage.

### *IDI 1*

*Facilitator: Did you think of marriage in this relationship?*

*Par: I did not think of marriage at all, however, after having sexual intercourse when my love became more towards him, some times I thought of marriage but I knew that is not possible*

*Facilitator: Why?*

*Par: Because It was not supposed to lead to marriage, he was not the right person that I can marry*

*Facilitator: In what ways?*

*Par: Both from economical perspective and morality, he had some morals that I could tolerate as a friend but not as a husband.*

Another reason was associated with negative views of men's families towards their son's girlfriend. Men's families wish to exert influence on the choice of marital partner for their sons. Hence, families usually hesitate to accept a girlfriend as a bride. They often dismiss this option. Therefore the extent of influence of the family on young men's choice for marital partner determines the probability that a heterosexual relationship will lead to the marriage. A suitable bride from the viewpoint of men and their families is characterised by a girl who has not had premarital relationships, particularly of a sexual nature.

The qualitative study also supplemented the survey with information about motivations for sex before marriage that had not been addressed fully in the survey. Reported motivations by in-depth interviewees for sex were diverse. Interestingly only two in-depth interviewees reported a marital motive in their sexual relationship. Although many sexually experienced women identified their motivation for sex as a strategy to secure their relationship and to satisfy their partner, the majority at the same time admitted that they also enjoyed having sex. Many interviewees who reported their motives as a response to their partner's need thought that men need sex and if they do not receive it from their own girlfriend, they seek it from other women and they do not need to love someone before having sex with her.

#### ***IDI 2***

*I had sex only because of not losing him. 90% it was because I wanted to not make him angry, my beloved man who wanted sex with me. All of them [my boyfriends] according to what I experienced indeed said that "either you do sex with me or I will leave you because I need it [sex]".*

#### ***IDI 4***

*Facilitator: What was your motivation from your first and second relationship?*

*Par: I wanted to enjoy, but I did not.*

*Facilitator: Did you have another motive as well?*

*Par: I did not want him to be with another woman...because generally men can not....maybe a woman can control herself ...because I personally can not have sex with someone unless I like him but apparently in our society, men can have sex easily even with someone who they do not like..*

However, another sexually experienced girl who reported sex only by touch dissented and claimed that women themselves are interested in having sex. They only justify their



sexual relationships as a strategy for securing their relationship. She even thought that forced sexual intercourse will only happen if the woman permits it and desires to have sexual intercourse. She believed that it is very unlikely that men can force women who do not want to have sex with them.

### **IDI 8**

*Facilitator: Some girls said that they had sex with their boyfriend because of not losing their boyfriend, what do you think?*

*Par: That can be true, but I think that those girls themselves wanted sex. If someone does not want sex, it is not possible. I mean when men understand that you do not want sex, they mostly do not use force. Forced sex and coercion and things like that may exist in some special cases or individuals or cultures....I mean if the girl wants, men have sex and if not, they do not. For me, even though I loved my boyfriend very much, when he asked me to have sex with him, I said no, he asked several times and I said no several times.*

Many interviewees openly and bravely mentioned that they wanted to experience sexual intercourse because of their own sexual needs as well as their partners'. Many of those who had sexual relationships with their boyfriends or partners were totally confident that the relationships are very unlikely to end to marriage. Some preferred the nature of love in their relationship irrespective of non-marital motives and tried to prolong their relationships by sex. One interviewee interestingly even stated that sexual intercourse was a sign of her love and she provided sex because she had to give this service in return for love. She viewed sex as a duty in a love relationship.

### **IDI 2**

*Like previous relationships I knew sex as my duty, even when my new boyfriend did not ask sex of me, the first day when we were placed in a intimate situation I*

*thought I should have sex. He only wanted to hug me and kiss me but I thought now my duty is to have sex.*

Another interviewee who loved her boyfriend preferred to have her first sexual intercourse with someone whom she loves despite the lack of marital prospects, because of its importance.

**IDI 9**

*The reason that I had complete penetrative sex with him was because I thought that if this [sex] is supposed to happen to me for the first time, I like it to happen with this person and I thought indeed that even if we do not marry, I love him that much that I prefer to lose my virginity with him. And he did that. I liked to marry him but it was not possible because of his unsuitable situation.*

Some other respondents reported motives such as acquiring sexual experience for marital life. Many stated pleasure as their motive for sexual relationships in their relationships. One interviewee stated that she wanted only to enjoy sex with her boyfriend. One interviewee stressed that she divorced sex from romance. She compared it to going to a restaurant with her new boyfriend and considered sex to be a component of their friendship.

**IDI 12**

*Facilitator: Did you have sex every time you went his home?*

*Par: I went his home only for this [sex]*

*Facilitator: What was your motive for the next partner?*

*Par: It happened and I did not say no to him.*

*Facilitator: Why?*

*Par: I thought that it does not matter at all. It is like that I am going with him to a restaurant. This [sex] is a component of our friendship.*



*Facilitator: When you went to his home, explain whether you started sex on the very first time or not?*

*Par: It was not romantic at all. Once that I went there, there were two other people as well and when we left alone for a short time, that [sex] happened. I did not know what that was because the room was dark and I could not say anything.*

Another interviewee (IDI 25) who had a history of childhood sexual abuse by her father and neighbours reported her motives as pleasure seeking. She explained her involvement in premarital sexual intercourse with different partners as sign of rebellion against her childhood sexual abuses. She even felt like loose girls who only seek pleasure in their relationships.

Only two sexually experienced interviewees reported marital motives for their sexual relationships. One had all different types of sex with her boyfriend and claimed that their relationship improved emotionally after they had sex. The other interviewee experienced only sex by touch and her boyfriend did not insist on penetrative sex because he perceived that if he breaks her hymen he may be forced to marry her and he wanted to choose her for love rather than necessity. Her boyfriend persuaded her to have sex, albeit not penetrative sex, by citing a religious guide book which supported sex between a girl and a boy who love each other but cannot afford to marry.

#### **IDI 16**

*Facilitator: How did you feel after sex?*

*Par: I felt I committed a sin, I was really upset. After that we talked a lot because I pray, I should not do that[sex]. I loved him but I could not accept this relation before marriage. Then he went and brought a religious guide book and showed me that it was written that if two people have marital motives but cannot*

*afford to marry, sex is legitimate. After that I was justified. He told me that I cannot afford marriage at the moment. What should I do? If your father accepts me with this situation, I am ready...*

Therefore, the qualitative study suggested that sexually experienced women might not consider marriage as an important motive in their relationships. Love and romantic nature of relationship and hedonistic motives seem to be their main motives for involvement in sex.

The association between feelings after sex and the motive of the relationship emerged in the qualitative study. Feelings after sex depended very much on the interviewees' motives in that relationship. In the survey, only feeling of regret at first sex was assessed without considering type of relationships, and other feelings were not assessed. The qualitative study showed that those who had sex only to prevent their boyfriend from leaving them reported feelings of regret, sin and guilt. One interviewee even felt very dirty and thought she had to wash herself to make herself clean again. Another interviewee reported two year's depression after her sexual experience as well as feelings of regret and sin. One interviewee who had sex by touch with a mature man reported having nightmares and depression after termination of the relationship. She felt sad because someone had entered her private life and abused her, someone whom she trusted.

Feeling of being humiliated in front of a boyfriend was another feeling reported by one interviewee who had sex with her boyfriend in a unsuitable place, a storage room, when the man's family was at home. One of those interviewees whose boyfriend had marital motive felt ashamed in front of her boyfriend because she was concerned that her boyfriend may become suspicious of her because she had agreed to sex. Most of those who had sex because of love were happy at the time and even after their relationship



had ended. One interviewee reported that not only she did not regret, but she felt that something holy happened to her and she was very happy to have such an experience. Interestingly, most interviewees who had sex for pleasure did not report any feeling of regret, guilt or conscience. They even reported feeling good after sex.

Various reasons and justifications were raised when interviewees discussed the termination of their relationship. These reasons varied between different groups of interviewees, type of relationships and partners. Reasons were also different for those who were sexually experienced compared with those who were sexually inexperienced. Most relationships were ended by one of the partners but there were a few cases in which the girl's family or the boy's family intervened directly to end the relationship.

No prospect of marriage was commonly mentioned as an important reason for ending a relationship. This was due to either lack of inclination of the boy to marry, or no desire for marriage by the girl because of inappropriateness of the boy for marriage in terms of his educational level, his economic situation and his family compatibility with the girl's family.

Over-controlling or over-restriction of the woman by the partner was another rationale for ending the relationship by the girl. Those relationships in which the man tried to severely restrict the woman's behaviour tend to be terminated by the woman. Some men may seduce a girl into a sexual relationship and then use it against her to make her to stay in the relationship. For instance, one interviewee was in a relationship in which the boy threatened to disclose her sexual status to her family and colleagues in the university in order to make her to stay with him or marry him. She finally terminated that relationship.

Increasing expectations of the man from the woman, including asking for more physical intimacy and sex, was mentioned as a reason for terminating the relationship by the

woman. Not surprisingly, this reason was more common among sexually inexperienced women than sexually experienced girls. Young women who could not find a sense of love in their boyfriend tend to terminate the relationship. Those women who felt their boyfriend wanted them only for sex also tend to end the relationship.

One interviewee had lost her virginity in non-consensual sex. When she was offered a new relationship in which her partner had a marital motive, she tried to end the relationship because of fear of disclosure of her previous sexual intercourse and lack of hymen to her boyfriend and her family.

### ***IDI 5***

*Facilitator: After this sexual experience, did you have any other relationships?*

*Par: No, after that [losing virginity] , I had a suitor in the university which of course my father disagreed .....but I had so much fear . I felt that my hands and feet are tied. I did not know whether to go to the doctor or not? What to do? I had all these fears at that time but thank God that my father disapproved of him.*

Reasons for ending the relationship by boys were as follows. Prevention of future commitment or emotional attachment was raised as a reason for ending a relationship by men. A man who has no proper situation for marriage, or no intention for marriage, fears emotional attachment and thus ends the relationship. Sometimes boys end the relationship without a defined reason, but most boys who start another relationship tend to terminate the previous one.

### ***IDI 1***

*“Without any fight, he said that let’s end this relationship. He said that we are getting very attached together and we do not have any marital intention, if we go forward, the ending would be much difficult”*



Ending the relationship by the boy seems to have more adverse emotional and physical influences on the girls than when the girl ends the relationship according to the qualitative study. Sometimes when boys terminate the relationship, the girl feels incompetence and blames herself. One interviewee whose relationships were unstable and were usually ended by boys was very concerned and complained that today's relationships are not sustainable. In her view, providing sex in the relationship lessens the boy's interest in the girl.

#### ***IDI 6***

*"I do not know. Nowadays relationships are not persistent anymore. Many say that when the boy thinks that the girl gets dependent on him, he fears and ends the relation. Many say it is because of sex, if you don't provide sex, the relation is going to be longer because the main aim of men is sex. When they gain sex, they don't want you anymore, they have reached their aim and they tend to end the relationship.*

Almost all interviewees who had experienced termination of a relationship reported moderate to severe post-termination depression. One interviewee even reported a severe weight loss. A few interviewees did not feel regret, but were satisfied because it was their own decision to terminate. One interviewee even considered herself lucky to have had the chance to get involved in sexual contact with an experienced and mature man to learn how to enjoy sex and give pleasure.

#### ***IDI 15***

*".... I believe that I had a chance that this happened to me. If I had my first sex with a inexperienced young boy who did not know how to have sex, I definitely would be a cold person [in sex]. He [my boyfriend] tolerated me so much and taught me how to have a good sexual relationship to be able to enjoy it."*

One interviewee whose boyfriend forced her to have anal sex mentioned that now she feels that her boyfriend was abusing her. He persuaded her to have anal rather than vaginal intercourse to preserve her virginity; he feared vaginal intercourse because of its sense of commitment and consequences. She felt very sorry for girls who know that their boyfriends are seducing them.

### ***IDI 1***

*Par: When I left aside my feeling and thought consciously I realised that he actually he was abusing me ...exactly my feeling was right ....He wanted anal sex and he reached what he wanted*

*Facilitator: Did he not insist on a vaginal intercourse?*

*Par: No, exactly, I feel very sorry for girls like me, why it should be like that? I am seeing that men are seducing us and they are very successful.*

### **10.5 Sexual contact, practices and partners, survey results**

More than one-fifth (23%) of all unmarried young female college students in the survey had experienced any form of sexual contact. The percentage is significantly higher among students of private universities than students of government universities (28% vs. 13%,  $P < 0.001$ ). As was shown earlier in Figure 10.1, 6.8% of unmarried respondents had experienced vaginal intercourse, 4.8% anal intercourse, nearly 11% oral sex and 15% sex by touch (i.e. genital touches or non-penetrative sex). Some respondents only had experienced one type of sex and some a combination of different forms of sexual contact. Almost all different types of sex are preceded by sex by touch. 6.1% had only oral sex, 3.8% had only vaginal intercourse and 1.3% had experienced only anal sex. 1.5% of survey respondents had experienced all four types of sex. Only a small proportion had experienced both anal sex and vaginal sex. This suggests that anal intercourse and vaginal intercourse are substitutes for each other.



About 39% of unmarried sexually experienced survey respondents had only one sexual partner and 14% had two lifetime sexual partners. Almost half (47%) of unmarried sexually experienced respondents (n=282) had three or more lifetime sexual partners. Interestingly, number of lifetime sexual partners was not significantly different by type of university.

One-fifth of sexually experienced females had suffered from pressured or forced sex by their partner (21%). Although forced sex was more common among sexually experienced women of private universities than government universities, the difference was of only borderline statistical significant (Table 10.7).

Nine out of 21 sexually experienced in-depth interviewees reported ever having anal intercourse (nearly half). Eight reported ever having vaginal intercourse and eight reported sex only by touch with or without oral sex. Complete sex occasionally was referred to vaginal intercourse and most interviewees did not even attribute complete sex to anal intercourse. One interviewee did not know the difference between complete sex and incomplete sex, the phrase mostly used by respondents themselves.

Most sexually experienced in-depth interviewees perceived anal sex as a frightening act and they could not believe that it is possible to have sex through anus. They experienced pain and a feeling of guilt and regret after anal sex.

#### ***IDI 5***

*Facilitator: When he suggested anal sex, how did you feel?*

*Par: Well, at first I scared and felt sinful...*

*Facilitator: Didn't you want to have vaginal intercourse or he didn't want?*

*Par: He himself didn't like to go ahead very much [have vaginal intercourse].*

*He was considerate to me to prevent any problem...and we both were shy of each other*

**Table 10. 7 Types of sexual contact and number of sexual partners reported by unmarried female college students in Tehran, by type of university**

Sexual Practices	All unmarried female college students			
	Type of university			P-value
	Governmental	Private	Both	
	%	%	%	
Ever had any form of sex	13.0	27.7	23.1	<0.001
Ever had vaginal sex	3.4	8.3	6.8	<0.001
Ever had anal sex	2.4	5.9	4.8	<0.01
Ever had oral sex	6.5	13.0	10.9	<0.001
Ever had sex by touch	9.7	18.1	15.4	<0.001
Only oral sex	3.9	7.2	6.1	
Only anal sex	0.4	1.6	1.3	
Only vaginal sex	1.8	4.8	3.8	
Oral + anal sex	1.0	2.3	1.9	0.963
Oral +vaginal sex	0.4	1.8	1.3	
Anal sex +vaginal sex	0.0	0.1	0.1	
Oral sex+ anal sex + vaginal sex	1.0	1.7	1.5	
<b>N</b>	<b>414</b>	<b>902</b>	<b>1316</b>	
<b>Sexually experienced respondents</b>				
<b>Lifetime sexual partners</b>				
One partner	39.2	38.3	38.5	0.972
Two partners	13.5	14.6	14.3	
Three and more	47.3	47.1	47.2	
Ever experienced forced sex	12.0	22.4	20.6	0.067
<b>N</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>282</b>	

\*Note : Because of item non- response, the N of different variables differed

*Facilitator: Do you mean that because of virginity, he suggested anal sex?*

*Par: Yes, I always stressed that I don't want to face a problem and he said ok let us do it through back [anus].*



Some girls were propositioned to have anal sex but did not accept because they perceived it as a awful act and painful. Interestingly, an interviewee whom was asked to have anal sex, searched the internet and got useful information about anal sex. She had learned what to do to enjoy anal sex since she wanted to satisfy her boyfriend although she did not like anal sex. Then she had asked her partner to use condom and lubricant for doing anal sex and she felt happy with anal sex afterwards.

### **IDI 3**

*Facilitator: Did he suggest having anal sex?*

*Par: The first time that he suggested, I said no.*

*Facilitator: Did you know about that?*

*Par: Yes, but I did not like ...in the meantime I read some papers from internet and realised that it is not written something bad about anal sex, even it is written good things. If someone is hygienic and don't do something dirty, it is even good. I realised it is very different with what I thought before about anal sex, I thought that it is something that women don't enjoy it and merely men enjoy it , but it was not the case. In those papers it was written that women can enjoy it several times more than men. The next time that he suggested anal sex I told him that you should use condom and I gave some articles about it to read. I told him that is not like what you do with force, you do not know how to do it. After that we had anal sex 4-5 times.*

*Facilitator: Did he want vaginal sex as well?*

*Par: No, he did not want at all. Only a few times he asked me let have vaginal sex but with incomplete penetration, but he did not insist at all. It was interesting for me because even when he was drunk he could control himself and not have vaginal sex.*

The qualitative study appreciably widened the scope of the survey data with regard to the motives for practicing anal sex. It showed that, because of the importance of virginity and intact hymen for marriage, some sexually experienced women prefer anal sex to retain their hymen.

However, most sexual experienced interviewees started non-penetrative acts and anal sex and gradually progressed to anal sex or vaginal intercourse. One interviewee stated that, after anal sex, her willingness to have vaginal sex increased although she knew that she will lose her virginity.

### ***IDI 6***

*Facilitator: How did he suggest anal sex?*

*Par: It gradually happened*

*Facilitator: Didn't he suggest vaginal sex?*

*Par: At first, yes, but I disagreed, little by little that was like ...I myself let him have vaginal sex.*

*Facilitator: How did you feel after anal sex?*

*Par: I did not have a good feeling. I was telling myself that why I did that I would not let him do that*

*Facilitator: Did you have vaginal intercourse?*

*Par: Yes, I liked to have vaginal intercourse after anal sex, I asked him to do that.*

*Facilitator: Did you know that what is happening?*

*Par: I knew that but it seemed that I liked to have vaginal intercourse*

One in-depth interviewee was asked to have anal sex when she was menstruating and found it painful. The other interviewee who had not experienced anal sex said that, although she knows it would be very painful, she was willing to experience anal sex



because vaginal intercourse was out of the question. But after marriage she would not submit to anal sex.

One theme to emerge from the qualitative study was that vaginal intercourse possibly carries a commitment to marriage for boys. It suggests a sense of fear among boys that, by removing a girl's hymen, they are obliged to marry the girl. This shows that young men are well-informed of the legislation that if it is proved that a man has had sex with an adult woman and he accepts to marry her, he will not be guilty of any offence. One interviewee, who was in a committed relationship with marital motivation and had sex by touch, even asked her boyfriend for vaginal intercourse at some point, but the boy hesitated. He stated he did not want to be forced to marry her because of making her lose her virginity; he wanted to choose her because of herself. Therefore for boys, having vaginal intercourse may accompany a feeling that they have to marry the girl because of removing her hymen; hence they often hesitate to have vaginal intercourse.

***IDI 16***

*Facilitator: Didn't he want vaginal intercourse or you did not let him?*

*Par: Only once I myself wanted ...he did not accept...I mean I had such willingness. He said that I love to have it, but this way I am more comfortable. I like to have it when we sleep in our own bedroom, in our own home[after marriage]...he told that I don't want that you think that breaking your hymen made me to marry you...I don't want you feel like that.*

Boys who have sex by touch or anal sex fear vaginal intercourse because it is a heavy responsibility, their conscience suffers and they get pressured to marry the girl.

***IDI 27***

*Facilitator: Did he want to have vaginal intercourse?*

*Par: No because he was scared*

*Facilitator: From what?*

*Par: It is a huge responsibility because I am a girl [virgin]...if my hymen is broken...*

*Facilitator: What responsibility does it have for a boy?*

*Par: I think he will suffer in conscience and if he is a responsible person he has to marry the girl....*

### **10.6 Most recent sexual intercourse**

One-third of sexually experienced respondents had their latest sex within seven days preceding the survey which reflects that these respondents are sexually active at the time of study. More than one-fifth (22%) of unmarried sexually experienced respondents had their latest sex between one to two months before the survey. 23% had their latest sex more than two months before the survey.

The majority of sexually experienced females reported their latest sexual partner as a serious boyfriend either with marital motive (48%) or without marital motive (39%). Only a few reported their last sexual partner as their fiancé (6%), coercive partner (3%) and casual partner (1.5%). Comparison with the evidence in Table 10.2 shows that first sexual intercourse is more likely to be forced by the partner than the most recent sexual intercourse (8% vs. 3%). About two-thirds of sexually experienced respondents did not use any method at their latest sexual intercourse to protect themselves against STDs or HIV/AIDS or pregnancy, because their latest sexual intercourse was not a vaginal intercourse (Table 10.8).

Contraceptive practice of respondents who had vaginal intercourse in their first and most recent coitus is examined in Figure 10.3. Nearly 21% of respondents did not use any contraceptive method in their latest vaginal intercourse. More than one-third of those with vaginal intercourse at latest sex used a condom as contraception and less than



**Table 10. 8 Characteristics of most recent sexual experience among unmarried sexually experienced female college students in Tehran by type of university**

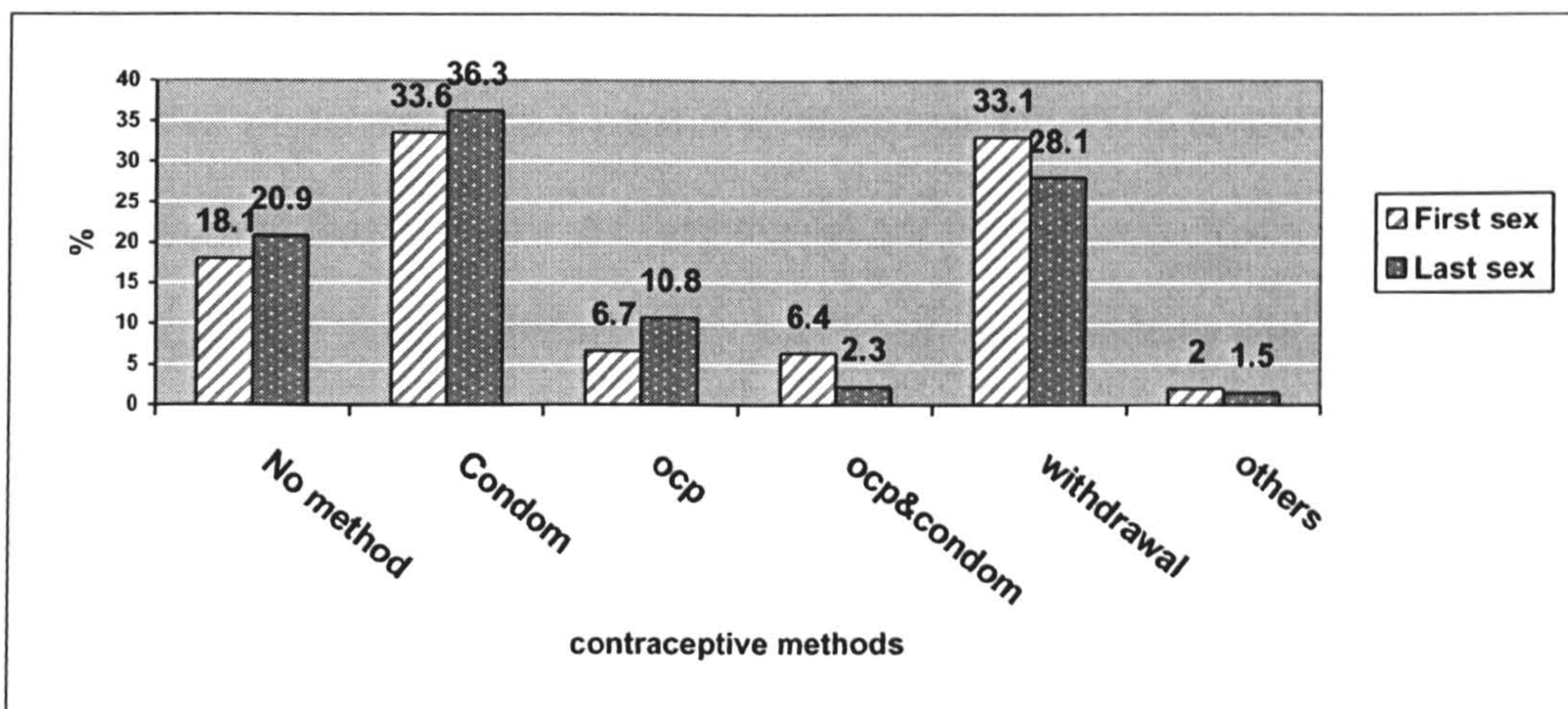
	Type of university			P-value
	Governmental %	Private %	Both %	
<b>How long ago was latest sexual intercourse</b>				
1 week	29.3	33.5	32.7	0.490
2-3 weeks	26.8	21.7	22.8	
1-2 months	14.6	23.0	21.3	
> 2 months	29.3	21.7	23.3	
<b>Latest sexual partner</b>				
Fiancé	7.7	6.0	6.3	0.193
Serious boyfriend with marital prospect	36.5	50.0	47.8	
Serious boyfriend, no marital prospect	42.3	38.4	39.2	
Casual partner	1.9	1.4	1.5	
Coercive partner	5.8	2.3	3.0	
Others	5.8	1.4	2.2	
<b>Protection against STDs/HIV at latest sexual intercourse</b>				
Yes, Condom	27.1	16.2	18.2	0.029
No method, because of incomplete sex*	64.6	64.8	64.7	
No method, although the sex was complete	6.3	19.0	16.7	
Other	2.1	0.0	0.4	
<b>Protection against pregnancy at latest sexual intercourse</b>				
No method, because incomplete sex	59.6	62.6	62.0	0.066
No method, although it was complete	10.6	9.5	9.7	
Condom	23.4	13.7	15.5	
OCP	4.3	3.8	3.9	
Condom and OCP	2.1	0.0	0.4	
Rhythm	0.0	9.0	7.4	
Withdrawal	0.0	1.4	1.2	
N	70	217	287	

Note: Complete sex and incomplete sex were two terminologies identified by pre-survey qualitative study which were frequently used by in-depth interviewees. Complete sex was used for vaginal intercourse and incomplete sex was used for other type of sexual contact except vaginal intercourse such as anal sex, oral sex or sex by touch.

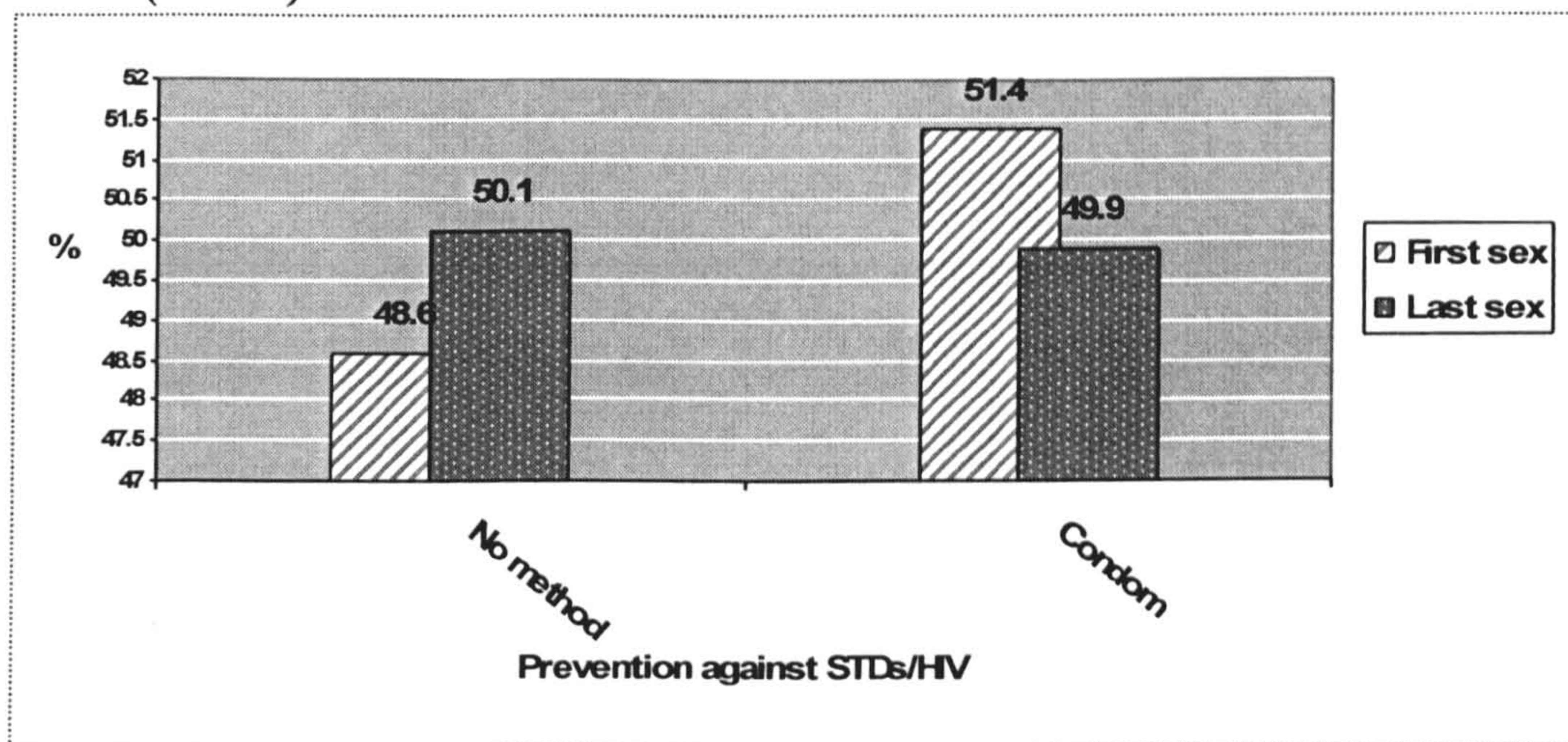
one-third used withdrawal method (28%). Hence withdrawal and condoms were the two common methods used as contraception in last vaginal intercourse. Oral contraceptive pills (OCP) alone was accounted for only 11% of contraception at last vaginal intercourse. Surprisingly, contraceptive prevalence differed little between first and most recent vaginal intercourse. Survey respondents were asked about protection against STDs and HIV/AIDS in their first and latest sexual contact. After excluding those with



**Figure 10. 3 Contraceptive use in first and last vaginal intercourse among unmarried sexually experienced female college students in Tehran (N=169)**



**Figure 10. 4 Prevention against STDs and HIV/AIDS in first and last vaginal intercourse among unmarried sexually experienced female college students in Tehran (N=161)**



non-penetrative sex and non-vaginal intercourse, nearly 50% used a condom at latest sexual intercourse and 51% at first sexual intercourse to protect themselves from STDs and HIV/AIDS (Figure 10.4). Again the difference is trivial.

The qualitative study improved the survey results with regard to rationales for not using condoms and contraception. The qualitative study showed the existence of a misconception among interviewees that condoms are needed only in vaginal



intercourse. Particularly, anal sex was perceived as an incomplete sex which carries no risk of STDs and HIV infection. Moreover, ejaculation of semen outside the anus or vagina was perceived to be a protective behaviour for STDs and HIV infection. The survey showed that condoms and withdrawal are two common methods used at sexual intercourse, but the qualitative study suggested that condoms are mainly used for prevention of pregnancy rather than STDs and HIV infections.

The majority of in-depth interviewees who have had sexual intercourse, either anal, oral and vaginal, did not consistently use condoms in their sexual acts. One reason for condom non-use was because the type of sex was anal rather than vaginal. One interviewee mentioned that she did not even know that it is desirable to use condoms for disease prevention during anal sex. She had anal sex three times and never used condoms.

#### ***IDI 1***

*Facilitator: Did you use condom at your anal sex?*

*Par: No, we did not know it is necessary.*

*Facilitator: Do you mean that you did not know that STDs or HIV/AIDS are transmitted through anal sex?*

*Par: No, we did not know*

One reason for non-use of condoms was lack of preparation for sex. Most first sexual encounters are unplanned and condoms are not available. However, withdrawal method was interchangeably used for condoms. This shows that condoms are seen as a protective method against pregnancy rather than STDs and HIV/AIDS.

#### ***IDI 5***

*Facilitator: What method did you use?*

*Par: Withdrawal method and condom*

*Facilitator: Who did supply condoms?*

*Par: My boyfriend purchased from pharmacist*

*Facilitator: Did he use condom consistently in all sexual acts?*

*Par: No, sometimes, because when he used withdrawal he did not use condoms, when he used condoms, he did not use withdrawal method. By the way I used to take OCP after each sex [emergency contraception].*

Condoms were used when sex happened in the man's place and when the male partner had some available. Condoms in all cases were purchased by men from pharmacies. One interviewee experienced condom rupture, which scared them and from that point they decided to use withdrawal.

#### **IDI 9**

*Facilitator: Did you use ever any contraceptive methods?*

*Par: You know, we used condoms once and it ruptured .I scared a lot and decided not to use it anymore.*

*Facilitator: Did you use pills?*

*Par: No*

*Facilitator: Then how did you prevent pregnancy?*

*Par: What is its name....withdrawal method...he ejaculated outside the vagina.*

Another interviewee mentioned that her partner could not be sexually aroused by condom so they did not use it anymore. One interviewee who had anal sex without a condom mentioned that they did not feel any risk because he ejaculated his semen outside anus , so it should not be a problem.

#### **IDI 25**

*Facilitator: Did you use condoms?*

*Par: No, because it was not supposed to be anal sex?*



*Facilitator: You mean it was unexpected?*

*Par: It was expected but he ejaculated his liquid [semen] outside me.*

*Facilitator: Do you think when the semen is out, there is no risk?*

*Par: Yes.*

One interviewee acknowledged the importance of condom use but she could not persuade her partner to use condom persistently. Another interviewee, who had sex with many different men, explained that some men know what to do and how to protect but some do not have any idea. She explained that one of her partners could not practice withdrawal method properly and made her use emergency contraception. As the qualitative study suggested earlier, emergency contraception seems to be well known to sexually experienced women and was used by a few interviewees after any suspicious sexual intercourse.

#### ***IDI 12***

*Facilitator: Has your partner ever used condom?*

*Par: Only once*

*Facilitator: Who was he?*

*Par: A stranger man who I did not know him at all, I did not even know his name. Before him, my boyfriends knew how to prevent and only one of them did not know what to do and caused me to postpone my menstruation [possible pregnancy]. I used emergency contraception; I had two pills [OCP] with 12 hours gap.*

Only one interviewee reported that her sexual partner consistently used condoms. He was a mature man nearly 36 years old and of high socio-economic status. Indeed, the girl was suspicious because of availability of condoms and thought that he may have many sexual relationships. However, this interviewee mentioned that later in their

sexual relationship, her partner did not use condom anymore but used withdrawal method. This shows that previously he was using condom to prevent pregnancy rather than HIV or STDs.

### **IDI 9**

*Facilitator: Did he use condoms?*

*Par: Yes*

*Facilitator: Always?*

*Par: First occasions he always used condoms*

*Facilitator: How did he supply it?*

*Par: I don't know...at first I thought that I am doing wrong thing, he surely have other sexual relationships because someone whose drawer is full of condoms...it is not meaningless ...you know ...but I did not care because I was so upset*

*Facilitator: Does he still use condoms?*

*Par: Nowadays he doesn't use condoms anymore?*

*Facilitator: So what does he use?*

*Par: Withdrawal method, he ejaculates outside me.*

In conclusion, the qualitative study suggested that condom use mainly depend on the type of male partner, his characteristics, the type of sex, the stage of the relationship and sense of trust, and availability of condoms.

### **10.7 Correlates of premarital heterosexual relationships and sex**

From the whole sample of unmarried respondents, more than half (52%) had ever had boyfriends. The majority of those with a history of boyfriends had ever had physical intimacy with men (67%). Among those who had experienced physical intimacy, more than two-thirds (70%) had sex by touch and finally among those who had sex by touch, only 37% had experienced penetrative sex (vaginal intercourse and anal intercourse).



These findings reveal that heterosexual relationships are very likely to lead to physical intimacy such as kissing and hugging. Similarly, those who experience physical intimacy are more likely to experience sex by touch and oral sex but, in contrast, only a small fraction of those who had experienced sex by touch and oral sex progress to anal and vaginal sex (Table 10.9).

Based on the conceptual framework shown in Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4, the associations between factors presumed to be connected with heterosexual relationships and sexual behaviours before marriage have been examined in the bivariate analysis in this Chapter. The association of factors related to university context such as type of university and discipline with heterosexual relationships and sex before marriage are examined in Table 10.9. The association of individual factors such as age, religiosity, life style, personal attitude, vulnerability, self efficacy and intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse with premarital heterosexual relationship and sex are shown in Table 10.10. Table 10.11 examines the association of factors related to family and parents with premarital heterosexual relationship and sex and, finally, Table 10.12 examines the association between factors related to peers and premarital heterosexual relationships and sex.

All tables comprise four columns; each column has a different denominator. The first column shows the results of bivariate analysis of ever having boyfriends among all unmarried students in the sample. The second column shows the results of bivariate analysis of ever having physical intimacy among those unmarried students who had ever had a boyfriend. The third column shows the results of bivariate analysis of ever having sex by touch or non-penetrative sex among those who had already had an experience of kissing or being kissed by the opposite sex. Finally, the fourth column shows the bivariate results of having penetrative sex among those who had ever had

non-penetrative sex or sex by touch. Penetrative sex in these tables implies either vaginal intercourse, anal intercourse or both.

Factors which have a significant association with premarital sexual behaviour at different levels such as university, family, peers or individual were identified from each table and they are entered into logistic regression model. Multivariate analysis shows the predictors or determinants of premarital heterosexual relationships and sex when the effect of other factors in the model are controlled. Factor analysis is used to reduce the number of variables entered into the model. Based on the results of bivariate and multivariate analysis, a new model for explaining sexual behaviour is subsequently suggested.

### *University Context*

Table 10.9 shows the association between specified university factors and different types of heterosexual relationship and sex before marriage. The prevalence of having boyfriends, physical intimacy and sex by touch was significantly greater among senior students (third and fourth year of the undergraduate course) than junior students (first and second year of the undergraduate course) but not penetrative sex. This finding suggests that progression through university is significantly associated with increasing friendship and physical intimacy with men, while sexual contact, specifically penetrative sex (sexual intercourse), does not increase significantly during later years of the study.

Likewise, academic discipline was strongly associated with premarital friendship with men and physical intimacy, but not sexual experience. Students of the arts, human science and technical and engineering science were significantly more likely to have had boyfriends than their counterparts in basic science and other academic disciplines. Among those students with experience of boyfriends, students of technical and



engineering, and arts reported significantly more experience of physical intimacy with men (82% and 78%) than students of basic science (45%). Discipline was not associated with type of sex among those who had sexual intimacy.

The experience of having a boyfriend among students who studied in mixed-sex universities was significantly greater than their counterparts in single-sex universities. Similarly, among those who had a boyfriend, the experience of physical intimacy was more common among students of mixed-sex universities than other students. Moreover, students in private universities had greater experience of boyfriends and physical intimacy than those studying in government universities. Unexpectedly, academic performance was not associated with ever having boyfriends, while it was significantly related to physical intimacy and non-penetrative sex (sex by touch). Those who were dissatisfied with their academic performance were significantly more involved in premarital physical intimacy than those who were satisfied with their university performance (78% vs. 67%). Similarly, students who were dissatisfied with their university performance were significantly more involved in non-penetrative sex than those who were satisfied with their academic performance (85% vs. 74%)(Table 10.9). However, there is no link that poor academic performance is associated with a progression to penetrative sexual acts.

### ***Background and individual factors***

The associations of specified background and individual factors with different aspects of heterosexual relationships before marriage are shown in Table 10.10. Age was associated with ever having a boyfriend and also ever having physical intimacy before marriage. The older the respondent is, the higher is the prevalence of ever having boyfriend and physical intimacy before marriage while, interestingly, age was not associated with type of sexual contact (penetrative vs. non-penetrative).

**Table 10. 9 Bivariate analysis of ever having boyfriend, physical intimacy, sex by touch, and penetrative sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran by some university factors**

University context	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever kissed a man		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch (non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
All	1369	51.7	598	67.3	271	70.2	190	37.0
Year of the study								
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	593	44.9***	254	54.7***	79	62.0*	49	30.6
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	630	57.6	343	76.7	166	74.4	124	37.1
Academic Discipline								
Medical Sc.	157	38.9***	57	56.1***	14	85.7	12	41.7
Human Sc.	761	55.3	401	65.1	169	65.1	110	35.5
Basic Sc.	179	33.5	56	44.6	14	78.6	11	27.3
Technical & engineering	136	52.9	68	82.4	33	81.8	27	44.4
Arts	136	69.1	92	78.3	41	75.6	31	41.9
Type of university by gender								
Single-sex	190	40.0***	71	40.8***	17	58.8	10	10.0
Mixed (males & females)	1180	53.6	603	69.2	255	71.0	180	38.9
Type of university								
Governmental	437	40.3***	168	56.0**	50	78.0	39	35.9
Private	930	57.0	505	69.7	221	68.3	152	38.2
Academic performance								
Good	623	48.0	288	66.7*	112	74.1**	82	45.1
Moderate	573	54.5	293	61.8	107	60.7	65	30.8
Unsatisfactory	161	54.7	85	77.6	48	85.4	40	35.0

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001



Those students who were involved in a current heterosexual relationship irrespective of their motivation reported more experience of physical intimacy with a man than those with no current heterosexual relationship, but current situation was not statistically associated with sexual experience and type of sexual contact.

The percentage who had experienced having boyfriends and having physical intimacy were significantly higher among students whose father had a high income than those whose father's income was low (58% vs. 45%, and 74% vs. 59%, respectively,  $P < 0.001$ ).

The prevalence of penetrative sex was also significantly higher among students whose father's income was high (44%) than those whose father's income was low (17%). Non-penetrative sex was not associated significantly with father's income.

As expected, the prevalence of premarital friendships and physical intimacy with men among those who were not religious was significantly higher than among religious respondents. Type of sexual contact (penetrative vs. non-penetrative) was not influenced by religiosity.

Smoking was associated with more premarital friendship and physical intimacy with men and also more experience of penetrative intercourse. Students who had ever smoked had significantly more experience of friendship with the opposite sex (82%) than non-smokers (48%) and also had significantly more experience of physical intimacy (88%) than non-smokers (62%). Alcohol consumption was even more strongly associated with friendship and sexual conduct. Students who had ever drunk alcoholic drinks were significantly more likely to report premarital friendships, physical intimacy with a man and experience of penetrative sex than students who had never drunk alcohol, while sex by touch (non-penetrative sex) was not associated with drinking alcohol.

Those who had access to satellite had significantly more experience of male friendships and physical intimacy than those who did not have any access, but type of sexual contact was not associated with access to satellite. However, interestingly, internet access did not show any association with premarital friendship or physical intimacy but it was associated with penetrative sex. Among sexually experienced students who had sex by touch, those with internet access had significantly more experience of penetrative sex than students with no internet access (41% vs. 16%,  $p < 0.05$ ).

The extent of socialising with friends was connected to premarital friendships and physical intimacy but not type of sexual contact. The higher the frequency of socialising with friends, the greater was the experience of premarital friendship and physical intimacy before marriage.

Personal attitudes were significantly associated with all aspects of heterosexual relationships. The more liberal was the attitude of the respondent towards heterosexual relationship, the more common were experiences such as having boyfriends, physical intimacy, sex by touch and even penetrative sex. However, personal attitude towards virginity was associated with premarital friendship, physical intimacy and penetrative sex but not with sex by touch or non-penetrative sex. Those who had a liberal attitude towards virginity reported significantly more experience of penetrative sex than students with a conservative attitude towards virginity. However, the direction of causality is ambiguous. Vulnerability towards STDs and HIV did not show any connection with aspects of premarital heterosexual relationships.

Intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse was significantly associated with premarital heterosexual friendships and physical intimacy. Students with high intention to refrain from sexual intercourse showed significantly lower experience of having a boyfriend and physical intimacy than students with low intention. But intention was not



**Table 10. 10 Bivariate analysis of ever having boyfriend, physical intimacy, sex by touch, and penetrative sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran by some background and individual factors**

Individual characteristics	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch (non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>All</b>	1369	51.7	598	67.3	271	70.2	190	37.0
<b>Age group</b>								
<20	216	37.0***	75	49.3***	19	63.2	12	16.7
20-21	581	47.8	267	62.2	92	76.1	69	46.4
22-23	379	61.5	224	72.8	104	68.3	70	35.7
>23	193	60.1	93	75.3	56	67.9	38	28.9
<b>Current situation</b>								
Important relationship with marriage intention/engaged to be married	224	100.0***	240	74.2***	110	72.7	80	33.8
Serious relationship but with no marriage intention	157	100.0	157	80.3	84	66.7	56	48.2
No emotional relationship	776	32.0	230	53.9	66	66.7	44	31.8
<b>Father's income</b>								
Low	257	45.1***	109	58.7**	48	60.4	29	17.2*
Average	547	48.3	248	61.3	95	65.3	61	37.7
High	527	58.1	299	73.9	127	76.4	97	44.3
<b>Religiosity</b>								
Religious	353	27.8***	93	40.9***	25	84.0	20	25.0
Somewhat	752	54.3	385	63.4	139	69.1	96	34.4
Not religious	247	77.7	188	83.5	101	70.3	71	46.5
<b>Ever smoked</b>								
Yes	134	82.1***	109	88.1***	68	73.5	51	49.0*
No	1215	48.4	557	61.9	201	68.7	137	33.6

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

Individual characteristics	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch (non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>All</b>	1369	51.7	598	67.3	271	70.2	190	37.0
<b>Ever drunk alcohol</b>								
Yes	137	90.5***	121	93.4***	88	69.3	61	57.4***
No	1231	47.4	552	60.1	184	70.7	129	27.9
<b>Access to satellite</b>								
Yes	762	63.1***	460	73.7***	220	70.0	154	38.3
No	590	37.1	207	49.3	49	69.4	34	35.5
<b>Access to internet</b>								
Yes	1150	52.5	577	66.9	235	71.1	167	40.7*
No	186	48.4	86	60.5	32	59.4	19	15.8
<b>Socialising with friends<sup>8</sup></b>								
Never/rarely	503	33.4***	154	50.0***	47	78.7	37	21.6
Average	475	55.2	255	59.2	96	65.6	62	40.3
Frequently	364	73.6	257	82.9	127	70.1	89	41.6
<b>Personal attitude on relationship with opposite sex</b>								
Conservative	449	26.1***	115	49.6***	36	52.8*	19	10.5**
Moderate	447	55.5	234	53.8	64	67.2	43	30.2
Liberal	410	75.6	294	79.9	157	73.9	116	46.6
<b>Personal attitude toward female virginity</b>								
Conservative	509	30.8***	151	33.8***	18	44.4	8	0.0*
Moderate	378	48.4	172	54.7	46	67.4	31	25.8
Liberal	420	79.8	323	85.1	193	71.5	138	44.2

<sup>8</sup> Outgoing with friends for leisure is actually a scale variable which has been collapsed into three categories in this table. Outgoing with friends implies to "going to cinema, going to restaurant/hotels and night parties where young people dance". Its range varies from 3 to 15. The higher the score is, the more often involved in going out with friends for leisure and vice versa.



Individual characteristics	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch (non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>All</b>	1369	51.7	598	67.3	271	70.2	190	37.0
<b>Vulnerability towards STD/HIV</b>								
<b>/Pregnancy</b>								
Low	407	54.5	215	67.9	97	67.0	64	31.3
Average	288	55.9	157	66.2	63	77.8	49	40.8
Much	595	51.8	287	65.2	108	70.4	76	40.8
<b>Intention to refrain pre-marital sexual intercourse<sup>9</sup></b>								
Low	372	73.7***	267	80.1*	157	68.2	107	42.1
Average	120	58.3	66	75.8	21	81.0	17	35.3
High	677	38.1	252	52.8	59	72.9	43	32.6
<b>Self-efficacy (say no to premarital sexual contact)</b>								
High	574	32.4***	178	42.7***	25	84.0	21	14.3*
Average	251	55.4	132	67.4	40	75.0	30	46.7
Low	404	73.5	289	79.6	167	69.5	116	38.8

<sup>9</sup> Intention to refrain premarital sex is a scale variable which its scores vary from 2 to 10. This variable in this table has been collapsed into three categories as high intention, average intention and low intention. The lower the score, the lower the intention to abstain sex before marriage and the higher the score, the more intention for abstain sex before marriage.

associated significantly with premarital sexual intercourse irrespective of type of sexual contact (penetrative vs. non-penetrative) .

As expected, self-efficacy to say no to unwanted acts was significantly associated with premarital friendship with the opposite sex, physical intimacy and finally experiencing penetrative sex. The lower the level of self-efficacy, the higher was the prevalence of friendship with a man, ever experiencing physical intimacy and also having penetrative sex while sex by touch was not associated with self-efficacy (Table 10.10).

According to associations shown in Table 10.10, many individual and background factors are associated with different extent of premarital heterosexual relationships, but father's income, life style factors such as smoking and drinking, media factors such as access to internet, personal attitude on relationships and virginity and self-efficacy appear to be the most important potential influences on the type of sex in terms of penetrative versus non-penetrative sex.

#### ***Family factors and premarital heterosexual relationships***

Table 10.11 shows the relationships between specified family factors and aspects of heterosexual relationships. Parental survival status was significantly associated with ever having boyfriend, physical intimacy and ever experienced penetrative sex. Students whose parents are alive but live apart reported more experience of having a boyfriend and penetrative sex than those whose parents live together or their parents (both or one) have died. Since the number of students whose parents are separated are very small, this finding is not of great substantive importance.

Parents' education was also significantly associated with premarital friendships, physical intimacy and experience of penetrative sex. Those students whose parents were better educated reported significantly more experience of having boyfriends and physical intimacy before marriage. Moreover, the prevalence of penetrative sex among



students with better educated parents was significantly higher than students with less educated parents. Furthermore, father's education was more closely associated than mother's education with premarital penetrative sex. Father's education was also associated with the experience of non-penetrative sex while mother's education was not.

Interestingly, family residence was only associated with premarital friendships but not with other advanced intimate relationships such as physical intimacy and sexual contact. Premarital friendship with a man was significantly more common among students whose family lived in Tehran than among students whose families live in other cities (54% vs. 40%). Having older siblings was not associated with premarital heterosexual relationships. However, students who did not have an older sister showed significantly more experience of penetrative sex (45%) than those with an older sister (28%). Having a younger brother and sister was not related significantly with most aspects of premarital heterosexual relationships.

Family atmosphere and relationship was strongly linked with premarital heterosexual relationships and physical intimacy but not type of sexual contact. Students who suffered from a poor atmosphere in their family reported significantly more premarital friendships with men (about 59%) than those with a good family atmosphere (45%). Likewise students with a moderate and poor family atmosphere reported significantly more premarital physical intimacy (72% and 70.5%) than those with good family atmosphere (57%). Modernity and religiosity were also strongly related to heterosexual relationships and moderately to penetrative sex before marriage. Those with modern and secular families reported more experience of having boyfriends and physical intimacy before marriage. They also tend to have more experience of penetrative sex than those with traditional and religious families.

The extent of parental control during adolescent times was only associated with the experience of a boyfriend. Interestingly, those respondents whose parents were moderate in controlling during adolescent times reported the least experience of having boyfriend (47%). Both very permissive parents and very strict parents were associated with increased experience of boyfriends among respondents.

A strong association was found between parents' attitude towards premarital heterosexual relationships and respondents' experience of boyfriends and physical intimacy. Those students whose parents approved of such relationships tended to have more experience of boyfriends and physical intimacy than those whose parents were opposed to such relationships.

Parent-child communication about morals and family values was also associated with experience of having a boyfriend among respondents but not with physical intimacy. Students whose parents never or rarely communicated about family moral and values showed significantly more experience of having boyfriend than to those whose parents frequently discussed these issues.

Perception of students of their parents' reaction also was strongly associated with premarital friendships with men and physical intimacy. Students who perceived a relaxed reaction of their parents when informed of such relationships were more likely to have experience of boyfriends than those who thought their parents would react in a hostile manner (67.5% vs. 37%). Similarly, having relaxed parents rather than hostile parents was related to greater experience of physical intimacy before marriage (77% vs. 51%). Those with poor mother-daughter communication about sexual relationships were more likely to have experience of boyfriends than those with a good mother-daughter communication. In summary, having separated parents, having educated parents, not having an older sister, and having a modern and non-religious family were



**Table 10. 11 Bivariate analysis of ever having boyfriend, physical intimacy, sex by touch, and penetrative sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran by selected family factors**

Family characteristics & type	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch(non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriend %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>All</b>	1369	51.7	598	67.3	271	70.2	190	37.0
<b>Parents</b>								
Both alive, live together	1202	51.2*	588	65.1	233	71.2	166	34.3*
Both alive, do no live together	43	71.2	31	64.5	14	64.3	9	77.9
One/both dead	111	49.5	51	76.5	21	61.9	13	46.2
<b>Mother's education</b>								
Illiterate/primary school	231	37.7***	81	50.6***	29	58.6	18	11.1*
Middle/high school	723	51.5	355	64.5	136	68.4	93	40.9
University graduate	399	60.9	230	74.8	104	75.0	77	39.0
<b>Father's education</b>								
Illiterate/primary school	142	42.3***	56	50.0***	21	66.7*	14	14.3**
Middle/high school	567	49.0	265	61.5	103	62.1	64	26.6
University graduate	626	56.2	338	72.8	143	76.9	110	46.4
<b>Family residence</b>								
Tehran	1092	53.6**	563	67.0	232	70.7	164	37.8
Other provinces	166	40.4	62	62.9	21	66.7	14	35.7
<b>Having older brother</b>								
Yes	672	50.9	325	62.8*	127	66.9	85	35.3
No	696	52.4	348	69.3	145	73.1	105	39.0
<b>Having older sister</b>								
Yes	643	49.1*	300	65.0	118	72.9	85	28.2*
No	726	53.9	373	67.0	154	68.2	104	45.2

Family characteristics & type	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch (non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
All	1369	51.7	598	67.3	271	70.2	190	37.0
Having younger brother								
Yes	595	49.2	277	67.1	113	68.1	77	37.7
No	774	53.6	396	65.4	159	71.7	113	37.2
Having younger sister								
Yes	487	49.5	227	60.4*	73	71.2	51	41.2
No	881	52.9	447	69.1	199	69.8	139	36.0
Family relationship & Atmosphere <sup>10</sup>								
Good	514	44.7***	220	56.8**	64	65.6	41	31.7
Moderate	416	52.9	211	71.6	89	75.3	67	35.8
Poor	403	58.8	224	70.5	111	70.3	79	39.2
Family endorsement to tradition & religion <sup>11</sup>								
Religious, traditional	440	36.6***	158	51.3***	55	65.5	37	24.3*
Moderate	558	51.6	264	64.4	98	76.5	74	31.1
Modern, not religious	331	71.9	231	78.8	107	67.3	73	49.3
Parental control during adolescence								
Very strict/strict	508	56.5**	273	68.9	120	70.0	84	33.3
Moderate	671	47.2	299	64.5	108	66.7	72	36.1
Very permissive/permissive	169	53.8	88	65.9	39	82.1	32	43.8

<sup>10</sup> Family relationship and atmosphere is a scale variable and it is a variable representing some aspects of family relationship in the questionnaire which showed a high correlation. These family factors included "open communication, kindness, low conflict, happiness, understanding, and time spending with respondent at adolescent times". In this table family relationship and atmosphere has been shown as a collapsed version of the scale. To do this, frequency distribution of transformed scale was obtained and, using the cumulative percentage column for each scale, the distribution of each scale was collapsed into third. Because the items had previously been recoded for instance low scores for family relationship indicated good relationship, therefore, the bottom third of distribution was categorised as a good family relationship, the middle third was moderate and the top third indicated a poor family relationship and atmosphere.

<sup>11</sup> Family endorsement to tradition and religion is also a scale variable and in this table a collapsed version has been shown. The method of collapsing the scale variables is the same.



Family characteristics & type	Denominator											
	All unmarried students in the sample	Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend	Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex	Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch(non-penetrative sex)	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>All</b>	1369	598	271	190		51.7	67.3	70.2	37.0			
<b>Parents' attitude toward relationship with opposite sex</b>												
Disapprove	460	127	37	29		30.2***	49.6***	75.7	27.6			
No idea	500	243	97	69		51.0	63.4	73.4	34.8			
Approve	387	294	136	90		78.0	75.2	66.2	42.2			
<b>Parent's communication about family morals and values</b>												
Much/very much	866	402	153	104		49.0**	64.9	68.0	34.6			
Moderate	334	177	72	52		55.1	64.4	73.6	44.2			
Rarely/not at all	155	90	45	32		61.3	74.4	71.1	31.3			
<b>Parent's reaction to different types of relationship with opposite sex</b>												
Hostile	484	168	51	35		37.0***	50.6***	68.6	37.1			
Moderate	391	202	83	65		54.2	64.9	78.3	35.4			
Relaxed	391	257	119	80		67.5	77.0	67.2	38.8			
<b>Communication of mother about reproductive health and sexual relationship</b>												
Very little	470	260	122	91		58.3**	71.2	74.6	36.3			
Average	462	213	85	57		48.5	61.0	68.2	29.8			
Very much	417	190	61	40		48.0	63.7	65.6	47.5			

\*P<0.05, \*\* P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

**Table 10. 12 Bivariate analysis of ever having boyfriend, physical intimacy, sex by touch, and penetrative sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran by peer interaction and communication**

Peers attitude and practice	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever kissed a man		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch(non-penetrative sex)	
	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>Perception of peer's risky behaviours (smoking, alcohol)<sup>12</sup></b>								
None/a few	938	38.8***	348	48.3***	87	63.2	55	32.7*
Average	147	68.7	97	83.5	45	75.6	34	20.6
Most/all	266	87.2	221	86.4	138	71.7	98	44.9
<b>Perception of peers' friendship and sexual intercourse with men<sup>13</sup></b>								
None/a few	593	23.8***	135	35.6***	18	61.1	11	0.0*
Average	343	60.6	198	56.6	55	61.8	34	26.5
Most/all	401	85.0	327	84.4	193	72.5	140	41.4
<b>Proportion of peers perceived to be religious</b>								
None/a few	619	70.0***	106	74.8***	23	82.6	19	31.6
Average	355	43.4	151	58.9	55	70.9	39	23.1
Most/all	379	29.3	412	43.4	192	68.2	131	42.0
<b>Perception of peer norms on relationship with men</b>								
Conservative	470	25.1*	116	45.7***	28	64.3	18	11.1*
Moderate	584	62.5	344	63.1	135	68.1	42	31.0
Liberal	264	76.1	193	83.4	101	74.3	113	45.1

\*P<0.05 , \*\* P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

<sup>12</sup> Perception of peers' involvement in risky behaviours such as smoking and alcohol is a scale variable and it has been collapsed into 3 categories in this table. Its range varies from 2 to 10. The bottom third of distribution indicates those who perceive none or only a few of their friends smoke or use alcoholic drink , the middle third indicate those who perceive average number of their friends do such behaviours and the highest third indicates those who perceive most or all of their friends smoke or use alcoholic drink.

<sup>13</sup> This is a collapsed version of a scale variable on perception of proportion of peers involved in friendships and sexual relationships. Its range varies between 2 to 10.



	Denominator							
	All unmarried students in the sample		Unmarried female students who had ever had boyfriend		Unmarried female students who had ever had kissing with opposite sex		Unmarried female students in the sample who had ever had sex by touch (non-penetrative sex)	
Peers attitude and practice	N	Ever had boyfriends %	N	Ever had physical intimacy %	N	Ever had sex by touch %	N	Ever had penetrative sex %
<b>Perception of peer norms on virginity</b>								
Conservative	489	32.1***	154	39.0***	29	55.2	16	25.0*
Moderate	383	51.4	180	54.4	56	76.8	43	23.3
Liberal	446	74.0	318	85.5	178	70.2	125	43.2
<b>Communication and interaction with peers</b>								
Much	580	64.5***	358	67.3	138	73.2	102	45.1*
Moderate	435	46.0	192	64.1	82	65.9	54	22.2
Poor	343	37.6	120	66.7	52	67.3	35	40.0

\*P<0.05, \*\* P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

among family factors which were associated with experience of penetrative sex (Table 10.11).

***Peer interaction and communication and premarital heterosexual relationships***

Students who perceived all or a majority of their peers to be involved in risky behaviours such as smoking and alcohol consumption reported significantly more experience of having a boyfriend (87%) and physical intimacy (86%) than those who perceived none or a few of their peers to be involved in such behaviours (39% and 48%). Likewise, these students have experienced significantly more penetrative sex (45%) than those who perceive none or few of their peers to be involved in such behaviours (33%).

Those who perceived none or a few peers to be irreligious reported significantly more experience of friendship (70%) and physical intimacy (75%) than those who perceived that most of their peers are religious (29%, 43%, respectively). Notably, perception of peers' attitude towards premarital relationships and sexual intercourse was significantly associated with ever having boyfriends, physical intimacy and penetrative sex. The more liberal was their perceived peers' attitude towards heterosexual relationships, the more was their experience of friendships, physical intimacy and penetrative sex. Finally, communication and interaction with friends was positively associated with ever having boyfriends and ever experience of penetrative sex (Table 10.12).

One-third of the in-depth interviewees, mostly sexually experienced students, reported types of peer pressure to have heterosexual relationships and sex before marriage. Only a few, mainly sexually inexperienced girls stated a peer pressure against such relationships. A few did not feel any pressure from their peers in this regard. The influence and forces was reported to be both indirect and direct. Most interviewees



claimed that they were most likely to become influenced by their peers during early adolescence and these pressures waned with age.

Indirect pressures were reported by some interviewees when they were witnessing their friends who are involved in heterosexual relationships, go out with their boyfriends and enjoy themselves.

Some in-depth interviewees in the qualitative study perceived students who are originally from other cities and live in dormitories in Tehran are much influenced by their peers, because they feel lonely and they witness other girls with boyfriends who talk about their affairs in the dormitory.

### ***IDI 13***

*These girls [who come from other cities] are like a compressed spring coil, come here in the dormitory from other cities, in a room with five other students. Her roommate is very fresh and happy, go with her boyfriend and come at 9 pm to the dormitory and start explaining that "I did that and that..." and how did they enjoy together and says that "tomorrow I should go to a party with him, what to wear" ....this cause the girl to get influenced indirectly and they may get interested to find a boyfriend.*

### ***IDI 15***

*Facilitator: Do you think that there was a pressure from your peers?*

*Par: Exactly, when I came to Tehran, I was alone.*

*Facilitator: Do you mean that they bullied you or yourself liked to have boyfriend because the others have?*

*Par: Somehow they bullied me...but I did not care about that ...for instance when I used to tell them[my female friends in the dormitory] that let's go out , they used to tell me that "are you a boy or want to spend on us ?" and such*

*things ...it was very strange for me. ...It was also very strange for them that why I think differently from them although I am older than them and they even thought that I am not a traditional girl .....but when I started such relationships I thought that I can't do anything else, otherwise I would be left alone.*

Direct peer pressure was reported by a few other interviewees. One interviewee, who had a boyfriend for two years but did not have sexual intercourse with him, was bullied by her friends for not having sex. She also mentioned that some sexually experienced girls talk with their friends in a group about details of their sex lives and they are proud of their number of sexual acts on one occasion.

#### **IDI 14**

*Par: We were friends for two years and did not have sexual intercourse, all friends bullied us ....*

*Facilitator: Do you think that this peer pressure exists among college students?*

*Par: Yes, severely, absolutely, it is a matter of honour that they have more sexual acts in a night, and they talk in a group about their sexual abilities as fun.*

It should be noted that these women who talk easily with their friends about their sexual activities in a group are atypical. Only a few girls discuss easily about their own sexual experiences with their friends. Women who are modern and not religious tend to talk about their sexual activities with their friends in a group.

#### **IDI 20**

*"My friends always used to say that you are 18 years old and you have not kissed even a boy ...[laugh] ... they bullied me and used to say that you do not know how to do it."*



#### **IDI 24**

*“My friends have direct influence on me. One of my intimate friends used to tell me that it is very abnormal that you have had only one boyfriend with a very short duration ...that is not normal”*

Interestingly, one interviewee reported that her friends who had boyfriends were concerned that their female friends without a boyfriend might attract their own boyfriend's attention. Hence they tried with a selfish motive to encourage their female friends to acquire a boyfriend. This led them to introduce their boyfriend's friends to their own female friends.

#### **IDI 20**

*“...My friends had become very sensitive towards their boyfriends and they thought that when I do not have any boyfriend , I may attract their boyfriend's attention and their boyfriends may get fascinated in me .... ”*

Peer pressure for discouraging heterosexual relationships was reported by only one out of eight sexually inexperienced interviewees. One interviewee reported that their friends were religious and were not involved in relationships with men and they would abandon any friend became involved in such affairs. Sometimes those friends who had experienced boyfriends warned other friends in the group of the disadvantages and adverse effect of such relationships and discouraged their friends.

### **10.8 Multivariate analysis of ever having a boyfriend, any type of sex and penetrative sex**

Multivariate analysis was conducted to identify the most important and influential predictors of different types of premarital heterosexual relationships among unmarried young women. The correlation matrix was used for reducing numbers of correlated factors entered into the model. For instance, family factors such as family atmosphere

and relationship, family values, or endorsement of tradition and religion, and parents' attitude and reactions were highly correlated but family attitude was found to be highly correlated with both family values or endorsement of tradition and religion (coeff=0.509) and parents' reactions (coeff=0.606). Therefore parents' attitude was considered as the most representative family factor to be entered into the logistic model. Because of the influence of personal heterosexual experiences such as having boyfriend and sex on personal attitudes towards such behaviours, personal attitudes were excluded as a predictor in all multivariate analysis of these behaviours in Table 10.13, Table 10.14 and Table 10.15.

Table 10.13 shows the crude and adjusted odds ratios for factors associated with ever having boyfriend using logistic regression. Unlike earlier tables in this chapter, the denominator is the entire sample of unmarried respondents. Type of university by sector, age, religiosity, self-efficacy, mother's education, family atmosphere, parents' attitude and peer norm on relationships with the opposite sex are predictors of experiencing premarital friendship with a man, after adjustment for other factors. The probability of having a boyfriend among students whose parents approved of premarital relationship was four times higher than among students whose parents disapproved of such relationships (reference group). This suggests that the attitude of parents exerts the most important influence on acquisition of a boyfriend among elite young females. Self-efficacy to say no was the second most important predictor of experiencing boyfriends. The probability of experiencing boyfriend among students with low self-efficacy was nearly 3.4 times higher than students with high self-efficacy. Students who perceived their peers' attitudes are liberal, were also 3.4 times more likely to have had experienced boyfriends than those who perceived their peers to have conservative attitudes towards heterosexual relationships. The other significant predictors were, older age, religiosity



**Table 10. 13 Crude and adjusted odds ratio of factors associated with ever having boyfriend among unmarried female college students in Tehran**

Associated factors	Ever having boyfriend			
	Crude OR	95%CI	Adjusted OR	95% CI
<b>Type of university</b>				
Governmental	1.00		1.00	
Private	2.17***	1.72-2.73	1.62*	1.06-2.47
<b>Type of university by gender</b>				
Single-sex	1.00		1.00	
Mixed- sex	1.55**	1.13- 2.13	0.65	0.38-1.13
<b>Academic discipline</b>				
Medical Sc.	1.00		1.00	
Human Sc.	1.96***	1.42- 2.71	1.11	0.65-1.97
Basic Sc.	0.79	0.49- 1.28	0.63	0.31-1.29
Technical Sc.	1.77*	1.03- 3.07	0.76	0.33-1.74
Arts	3.58***	2.52- 5.08	0.95	0.53-1.72
<b>Age</b>				
<20	1.00		1.00	
20-21	1.56**	1.13-2.14	1.81**	1.17-2.79
22-23	2.70***	1.91-3.82	3.09***	1.94-4.91
>23	2.56***	1.72-3.81	3.18***	1.83-5.54
<b>Father's income</b>				
Low	1.00		1.00	
Average	1.13	0.84-1.52	1.43	0.93-2.23
High	1.68**	1.25-2.27	1.326	0.79-1.99
<b>Religiosity</b>				
Religious	1.00		1.00	
Somewhat	3.09***	2.35-4.07	1.59*	1.08-2.36
Not religious	9.19***	6.28-13.44	2.32**	1.41-3.84
<b>Self-efficacy (saying no to premarital sexual contact )<sup>14</sup></b>				
High	1.00		1.00	
Average	2.59***	1.91-3.51	1.73**	1.18-2.52
Low	5.81***	4.38-7.70	3.44***	2.42-4.89
<b>Mother's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	1.00		1.00	
Middle/high school	1.76***	1.30-2.39	1.42	0.85-2.38
University graduate	2.58***	1.85-3.61	2.38*	1.29-4.04
<b>Father's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	1.00		1.00	
Middle/high school	1.30	0.90-1.89	1.09	0.59-2.04
University graduate	1.74**	1.21-2.52	0.80	0.40-1.60

<sup>14</sup> Self-efficacy to say no in this table is a categorical variable which has been made from a scale variable. Three questions were asked of survey respondents to assess their self-efficacy to say no to premarital sex. These questions included: a) ability to refuse premarital sex with an attractive man (b) ability to refuse sex with someone whom you care, (c) ability to refuse sex with someone who wants to marry you. Answers were based on 5 point Likert scale. The answers to three questions have been added to make a scale variable ranged from 3 to 15. The scale variable was collapsed into three equal groups by cumulative percentage as low, average and high self-efficacy. High self-efficacy has been considered here as reference category.

<b>Family relationship &amp; atmosphere</b>				
Good	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	1.39*	1.07-1.80	1.15	0.80-1.64
Poor	1.76***	1.35-2.30	1.86**	1.28-2.70
<b>Parental control during adolescence(strictness)</b>				
Very permissive/permissive	1.00**		1.00	
Moderate	0.77	0.55-.1.08	0.65*	0.47-0.90
Very strict/strict	1.12	0.79-1.59	0.69	0.42-1.13
<b>Parents' attitude toward relationship with men</b>				
Disapprove	1.00		1.00	
No idea	2.40***	1.84-3.12	1.85**	1.27-2.68
Approve	8.59***	6.27-11.77	4.11***	2.64-6.39
<b>Perception of peer norms on relationship with men</b>				
Conservative	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	4.96***	3.79-6.48	2.34***	1.64-3.35
Liberal	9.50***	6.68-13.49	3.43***	2.17-5.43
Constant			0.32***	

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

and mother's education and family atmosphere, studying in private university and having permissive parents, respectively.

Table 10.14 presents the crude and adjusted odds ratio of ever having any type of sexual contact in relation with selected factors. Sex in this table applies to any type of sex including ever having vaginal intercourse, anal sex, oral sex and sex by touch. Factors associated with ever having any type of sex in bivariate analysis were entered into the logistic model and the influence of each factor was assessed controlling for other factors. Since the predictors of premarital sexual intercourse in a voluntary situation are considered, those who reported their sexual debut to be coercive were excluded from the analysis and no significant change was observed.

Self-efficacy was the most important predictor of ever having premarital sexual experience. Students with low self-efficacy were nearly eight times more likely to be sexually experienced than students with high self-efficacy (Adjusted OR=7.87, p<0.001). However, it should be noted that those who have not experienced sexual contact with the opposite sex, might overestimate their ability to refuse premarital



**Table 10. 14 Crude and adjusted odds ratios of factors associated with ever having any type of sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran**

Associated factors	Ever having sex (any type)(N=1250)			
	Crude OR	95%CI	Adjusted OR	95% CI
<b>Type of university</b>				
Governmental	1.00		1.00	
Private	2.83***	2.05-3.91	1.63	0.92-2.86
<b>Type of university by gender</b>				
Single-sex	1.00		1.00	
Mixed- sex	2.18**	1.39-3.42	1.49	0.70-3.18
<b>Academic discipline</b>				
Medical Sc.	1.00		1.00	
Human Sc.	2.86***	1.75-4.67	1.94	0.91-4.15
Basic Sc.	0.81	0.37-1.80	1.21	0.40-3.66
Technical Sc.	2.57**	1.26-5.23	1.33	0.48-3.67
Arts	3.70***	2.25-6.10	1.10	0.49-2.47
<b>Age</b>				
<20	1.00		1.00	
20-21	2.10**	1.27-3.46	1.47	0.81-2.65
22-23	3.87***	2.34-6.40	2.13*	1.17-3.87
>23	4.96***	2.88-8.54	3.53***	1.79-6.99
<b>Father's income</b>				
Low	1.00		1.00	
Average	0.85	0.59-1.23	1.04	0.59-1.83
High	1.19	0.84-1.70	1.16	0.65-2.05
<b>Religiosity</b>				
Religious	1.00		1.00	
Somewhat	2.71***	1.80-4.09	1.06	0.45-1.40
Not religious	8.55***	5.45-13.41	1.84	0.76-2.67
<b>Self-efficacy( saying no to premarital sexual contact)</b>				
High	1.00		1.00	
Average	4.16***	2.58-6.70	2.12**	1.23-3.66
Low	13.37***	8.86-20.15	7.87***	4.93-12.46
<b>Mother's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	1.00		1.00	
Middle/high school	1.28	0.87-1.89	0.84	0.44-1.62
University graduate	1.90**	1.26-2.87	1.07	0.50-2.31
<b>Father's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	1.00		1.00	
Middle/high school	0.99	0.63-1.57	1.06	0.48-2.35
University graduate	1.24	0.79-1.95	0.88	0.37-2.12
<b>Family relationship &amp; atmosphere</b>				
Good	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	2.02***	1.44-2.84	1.53	0.99-2.38
Poor	2.77***	1.99-3.86	2.20**	1.41-3.44
<b>Parental control during adolescence(strictness)</b>				
Very permissive/permissive	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	0.65*	0.44-.98	0.56**	0.38-0.83
Very strict/strict	1.09	0.73-1.63	0.71	0.41-1.23

<b>Parents' attitude toward relationship with men</b>				
Disapprove	1.00		1.00	
No idea	2.16***	1.49-3.12	1.91*	1.14-3.21
Approve	4.96***	3.45-7.13	3.04***	1.75-5.28
<b>Perception of peer norms on virginity</b>				
Conservative	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	2.66***	1.74-4.07	2.25**	1.29-3.94
Liberal	9.08***	6.17-13.36	4.33***	2.36-7.95
Constant			0.003***	

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

sexual contact or their self-efficacy compared to sexually experienced students. Because these associations have been found in a cross-sectional study, some caution should be taken into consideration in interpretation of such associations. The other most important predictor was the perception of peers' liberal attitude on virginity with an adjusted odds ratio of 3.53.

Students who perceive their peers are liberal in their attitude on virginity were 4.33 times more likely to be sexually experienced than the reference group. Perception of parents' liberal attitude towards relationship with the opposite sex and poor family atmosphere were also predictors of ever having sexual contact after controlling for other factors (Adjusted OR=3.04 and 2.20, respectively).

Crude and adjusted odds ratios, of ever having penetrative sex in relation to selected factors are shown in Table 10.15. Penetrative sex in this table applies to ever having either anal sex or vaginal intercourse or both. Crude Odds Ratios show that most factors shown in Table 10.15 are predictors of ever having penetrative sex, but when effects are adjusted for other factors, the only predictors remaining in the model are older age (Adjusted OR=5.95), low self-efficacy (Adjusted OR=10.86), poor family atmosphere (Adjusted OR=2.96), liberal parental attitude (Adjusted OR=4.29) and liberal peer norms on virginity (Adjusted OR=4.90). Students with low self-efficacy were about eleven times more likely to have experienced penetrative sex than students with high self-efficacy when all other factors are controlled (p<0.001). Likewise, the strong



**Table 10. 15 Crude and adjusted odds ratios of factors associated with ever having penetrative sex among unmarried female college students in Tehran**

Associated factors	Ever having penetrative sex (anal sex or vaginal intercourse or both) (N=1273)			
	Crude OR	95%CI	Adjusted OR	95% CI
<b>Type of university</b>				
Governmental	1.00		1.00	
Private	3.26***	2.02-5.25	2.10	0.85-5.22
<b>Type of university by gender</b>				
Single-sex	1.00		1.00	
Mixed- sex	2.70**	1.35-5.41	1.57	0.44-5.55
<b>Academic discipline</b>				
Medical sc.	1.00		1.00	
Human sc.	2.63**	1.32-5.22	1.94	0.61-6.1
Basic sc.	0.33	0.07-1.58	0.60	0.09-4.16
Technical sc.	2.79*	1.05-7.43	0.95	0.22-4.04
Arts	4.11***	2.07-8.20	0.91	0.28-2.97
<b>Age</b>				
<20	1.00		1.00	
20-21	5.02**	1.72-14.68	1.99	0.69-5.70
22-23	8.81***	3.02-25.73	3.69*	1.27-10.67
>23	11.78***	3.93-35.32	5.95**	1.90-18.66
<b>Father's income</b>				
Low	1.00		1.00	
Average	1.11	0.64-1.92	1.01	0.41-2.52
High	1.75*	1.04-2.96	1.59	0.65-3.88
<b>Religiosity</b>				
Religious	1.00		1.00	
Somewhat	3.18**	1.62-6.21	1.24	0.45-3.41
Not religious	9.32***	4.67-18.58	2.35	0.82-6.73
<b>Self-efficacy (saying no to premarital sexual contact)</b>				
High	1.00		1.00	
Average	7.53***	3.16-17.95	2.32	0.88-6.16
Low	19.98***	9.11-43.83	10.86***	4.70-25.08
<b>Mother's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	1.00		1.00	
Middle/high school	2.08*	1.09-3.95	1.28	0.45-3.65
University graduate	2.56**	1.32-4.98	2.08	0.62-7.03
<b>Father's education</b>				
Illiterate/primary school	1.00		1.00	
Middle/high school	1.04	0.52-2.10	1.54	0.39-6.10
University graduate	1.66	0.85-3.24	1.32	0.30-5.75
<b>Family relationship &amp; Atmosphere</b>				
Good	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	1.73*	1.05-2.87	1.57	0.81-3.07
Poor	2.87***	1.79-4.59	2.96**	1.53-5.75
<b>Parental control during adolescence</b>				
Very permissive/permissive	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	1.01	0.58-1.76	0.58	0.33-0.92
Very strict/strict	0.74	0.42-1.28	0.96	0.44-2.07

<b>Parents' attitude toward relationship with men</b>				
Disapprove	1.00		1.00	
No idea	2.36**	1.32-4.20	3.72**	1.45-9.54
Approve	5.61***	3.24-9.70	4.29**	1.63-11.28
<b>Perception of peer norms on virginity</b>				
Conservative	1.00		1.00	
Moderate	2.45*	1.17-5.11	1.55	0.54-4.47
Liberal	11.53***	6.11-21.74	4.90**	1.90-12.68
Constant			0.00***	

\*P<0.05, \*\*P<0.01, \*\*\*P<0.001

association between low self-efficacy and penetrative sex should be interpreted with caution. There is one possibility that sexually inexperienced women overestimate their self-efficacy or ability to refuse penetrative sex before marriage compared with those who have experienced sex before marriage. Even there is a possibility that sexually experienced women lose their self-efficacy because of involvement in premarital sexual intercourse.

### ***10.9 Intention to abstain from pre-marital sexual intercourse and its correlates***

In this study it is assumed that intention is one of the predictors of behaviour and a change in intention may lead to a change in the corresponding behaviour. However, sexual behaviours are strongly influenced by immediate situational factors and therefore people do not anticipate accurately their exact behaviour in many situations. Thus intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse may not be a strong determinant of sexual behaviour. Self-efficacy concerns the skills and motivations for carrying through the intention. Self-efficacy influences intention directly and also it influences the relationships between the intention and behaviour.

Two questions were posed to both sexually experienced and inexperienced unmarried respondents in the survey. They were asked to think about a hypothetical situation and identify how sure they are in refraining from sexual intercourse in each situation. The



statement for hypothetical situations was “Imagine you were in a premarital relationship with a man who both of you are very attracted to each other, if he wants to have sexual intercourse with you, how sure are you that you could keep from having sexual intercourse in that relationship”. This question was asked under two different conditions. One when the partner has marital motive and the other when he has not marital motive (Table 10.16). Sexually experienced respondents were asked to think back to before their sexual experience and respond to the intention questions. The majority of sexually inexperienced girls were sure, partly or totally, that they are able to abstain from premarital sexual intercourse in the hypothetical encounter irrespective of the intention of the partner (marital vs. non-marital) (85.3% and 92%). Sexually experienced women were asked about their ability to refrain from sexual intercourse before they got involved in sexual relationship. Only 47% certainly would refrain from sexual intercourse if their partner had a marital motivation. Nearly one-third (30%) of sexually experienced women were uncertain about their intention to refrain from sexual intercourse, while uncertainty was very uncommon among sexually inexperienced women. Uncertainty with regard to intention to refrain from sexual intercourse among sexually experienced females and higher certainty among sexually inexperienced females may reflect the fact that sexually experienced females are more realistic about their intention. Perhaps their involvement in sex has influenced their intention. The findings show that partner’s motivation had an influence on sexually experienced girl’s intention to refrain from sexual intercourse (Table 10.16). It appears that the partner’s motivation has an influence on intention to have sexual intercourse in all unmarried survey respondents irrespective to their sexual experience. Once the partner’s motivation is marriage, the tendency for having sexual intercourse is greater than when the partner’s motivation is not marriage. However, these responses are theoretical. In

**Table 10. 16 Responses to intentional statements on refraining premarital sexual intercourse by type of hypothetical relationships and sexual experience of respondents**

Imagine you were in a premarital relationship with a man and both of you are very attracted to each other. If he wants to have sexual intercourse with you, how sure are you that you could keep from having sexual intercourse in the following circumstances:		Not at all	Not sure	Intermediate	Sure	Totally sure
		%	%	%	%	%
Sexually experienced N=349	No marriage intention	4.7	6.6	16.7	17.0	54.9
	Marriage intention	9.1	13.8	30.2	15.7	31.2
Sexually inexperienced N=963	No marriage intention	2.0	1.3	5.0	11.5	80.3
	Marriage intention	2.2	5.2	7.3	17.2	68.1

practice, from in-depth interviewees' account, it seems that women may behave more conservatively and tend to refuse vaginal intercourse, or even non-penetrative sex, if their male partner has marital motives.

In-depth interviewees widely believed that having premarital sexual contact with a partner who intends marriage may induce a negative view towards the girl's chastity and change the partner's intention for marriage.

Specified elements were considered to be responsible for intention to refrain from sex such as personal attitude, behavioural beliefs such as outcome expectancy, subjective norms such as peer norms weighted by their importance to the respondents and parents' attitude also weighted by its importance to the respondents and finally self-efficacy to say no to premarital sexual contact. Correlations were examined across three main groups; sexually inexperienced unmarried respondents, sexually experienced unmarried respondents and all unmarried respondents (Table 10.17).



**Table 10. 17 Correlation between intention to refrain pre-marital sexual intercourse and independent factors (and components) among unmarried female college students in Tehran, 2005**

Variables	Correlation coefficient		
	Unmarried sexually inexperienced	Unmarried sexually experienced	All unmarried
<b>Attitude</b>			
Personal attitude on importance of virginity	-0.287***	-0.212**	-0.390***
<b>Behavioural belief</b>			
Outcome expectancy (risk of STDs, HIV, pregnancy)	0.074*	0.082	0.113*
<b>Subjective norms</b>			
Peer norms on virginity weighted by the importance of complying with peers belief	-0.188***	-0.054	-0.261***
Parents' attitude on relationship with opposite sex weighted by the importance of complying with parents' belief	-0.174***	-0.113	-0.260***
<b>Self-efficacy</b>			
Individual perception of ability to say no to premarital sexual contact	0.450***	0.206**	0.478***

\* P<0.05, \*\*P<0.001, \*\*\*P<0.001

Note: Results are from Spearman correlation, applied to mean value of the variable

Higher self-efficacy, or a self-perceived ability to control behaviour to say no, had the strongest correlation with intention to refrain sexual intercourse in all different groups. Particularly among all unmarried respondents, it was shown that the higher the self-efficacy, the greater is the intention to refrain from sexual intercourse. Among unmarried sexually inexperienced and all unmarried respondents, liberal attitude and liberal subjective norms were related to intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse as well but among sexually experienced females only liberal attitude and high self-efficacy were significantly associated with intention to refrain from sexual intercourse.

In all groups, outcome expectancy or perception of vulnerability towards risk of STDs and HIV or pregnancy had the lowest correlation with intention to refrain from sex. This

implies that perceived vulnerability to adverse biological outcomes among unmarried youth is not responsible for abstinence.

### **10.10 Sexual experiences of married female college students**

Survey questionnaires were administered to both married and unmarried female college students. 15.8% of the whole sample were married. The mean age of married respondents was significantly higher than the mean age of unmarried respondents (23.80 vs. 21.48,  $p < 0.001$ ). Married women answered all background and attitudinal questions and they also answered specific questions about their premarital relationships and sexual contact with other men and with their own husband. The Table 10.18 presents selected individual, university and background characteristics of married women in the sample.

Only 3% of survey respondents younger than 20 were married while 34% of those older than 23 years were married. The proportion of married survey respondents increases steadily with age. The proportion of married respondents was also significantly greater among senior female college students (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year) than junior female college students (22% vs. 11%,  $p < 0.001$ ). The proportions of married students were significantly higher in specific disciplines such as human science and basic science than other disciplines. There is no significant difference between the percentage of married women in single-sex universities than mixed-sex universities (19% vs. 17%), while the percentage of married students are significantly higher in private universities than government universities (19% vs. 15%,  $P = 0.02$ ). The proportion of religious students who are married is greater than irreligious students who are married (23% vs. 14%,  $p = 0.003$ ) (Table 10.18).

One-third of married respondents reported ever having a boyfriend apart from their husband before marriage, while nearly half of unmarried women reported ever having a



**Table 10. 18 Percentage of married respondents by selected characteristics of the sample**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Married %</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>Age group</b>		
<20	3.2	<0.001
20-21	11.7	
22-23	20.5	
>23	34.3	
<b>Year of the study</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup>	10.9	<0.001
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup>	21.9	
<b>Academic Discipline</b>		
Medical Sc.	10.0	<0.001
Human Sc.	23.5	
Basic Sc.	18.5	
Technical & engineering	15.7	
Arts	11.0	
<b>Type of university</b>		
Single-sex	18.7	0.338
Mixed-sex	17.3	
<b>Type of university by sector</b>		
Government	14.6	0.023
Private	18.7	
<b>Religiosity</b>		
Religious	22.7	0.003
Somewhat	16.4	
Not religious	14.0	
<b>N</b>	<b>1744</b>	

boyfriend. Among these married women who had ever had boyfriends, only 26% reported one boyfriend and 32% reported two to four boyfriends and 43% more than four boyfriends (Table 10.19). Number of lifetime boyfriends among married women is comparably higher than unmarried women. For instance, about 42% of married women reported ever had more than four boyfriends, while this figure was only 28% among unmarried women. Among those married women who reported any type of premarital sexual contact, 59% reported one partner, 17% reported two partners and 24% had three or more sexual partners before their marriage. 6% had experienced forced sex before marriage.

**Table 10. 19 Premarital relationships among married students**

<b>Premarital heterosexual relationships</b>	<b>%</b>
Ever had a boyfriend before marriage	33.1
Ever dated with boyfriend	30.8
<b>N</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>Among those who had ever had boyfriends</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Number of boyfriends ever had</b>	
One	25.7
Two to four	31.7
More than four	41.6
<b>N</b>	<b>101</b>

Twenty eight percent of married respondents reported premarital sexual contact (any type) with men other than their own husband which reflect that a higher premarital sexual relationships among married women than unmarried women (23%). Premarital vaginal intercourse also is comparably higher among married women compared with the unmarried women (14% vs. 6.8%), while other type of sexual contact are approximately identical between married and unmarried women (Table 10.20).

The majority of married women (70%) lived with their husband at the time of the survey. About 57% described their marriage as an arranged marriage. One-third defined their marriage as a love-match and 10% reported other types of marriage. Nearly half (47%) reported sexual intercourse with their husband before marriage formal ceremony. This implies both having sexual intercourse during fiancé period or after registration of marriage. Marriage in Iran is to be sanctioned by law, religion and customs. Fiancé period is mainly identified by performing special customs and informing intimate family, the next stage is legal registration of marriage and finally marriage ceremony applies to the stage that marriage is registered, religiously sanctioned and publicized to the whole family and couples usually start living together. 80% of married women have had sexual intercourse in the preceding week of the survey. The majority did not use any contraceptive method at their first sexual intercourse with their husband (41.5%)



**Table 10. 20 Premarital sexual relationships and its type with men other than husband among married respondents**

Type of sex	%
Ever had any form of sex	28.2
Ever had vaginal sex	13.8
Ever had anal sex	3.9
Ever had oral sex	9.8
Ever had sex by touch	15.4
<b>N</b>	<b>305</b>

because their first sexual intercourse was not a vaginal intercourse. Among those who reported using contraceptive methods, withdrawal and condoms were the most common methods used (18% and 17%). More than two thirds reported consistent contraceptive use and 31% reported consistent condom use with their husband (Table 10.21).

**Table 10. 21 Circumstances of sexual relationships with husband among married respondents**

Sexual relationships with husband	%
<b>How long ago was last sexual intercourse with your husband</b>	
=<1 week	79.7
2 weeks	10.2
>2 weeks	10.1
<b>Protection against pregnancy at first sexual intercourse with husband</b>	
No method, because incomplete sex	41.5
No method, although it was complete	5.4
Condom	16.6
OCP	14.4
Condom and OCP	2.5
Rhythm	1.1
Withdrawal	18.1
Other	0.4
<b>Consistent contraceptive use</b>	<b>70.4</b>
<b>Consistent condom use</b>	<b>30.6</b>
<b>N</b>	<b>277</b>

Among the married women, 1.6% of married students (5 cases) experienced premarital conception with their husband. Four cases of pregnancy before marriage were aborted, two cases spontaneously and two cases by induction.

Table 10.22 shows that married women who had an arranged marriage were significantly less likely to report premarital friendships with men other than their husband, than those with a romantic marriage (22% vs. 52.5%) ( $p < 0.001$ ). Having premarital sexual contact is significantly associated with type of marriage; those with arranged marriages reported significantly less premarital sexual experience than those with a romantic marriage (22.2% vs. 40.4%,  $p < 0.001$ ). Examining these differences by type of sexual contact revealed that only premarital vaginal intercourse has a significant association with type of marriage. Premarital vaginal intercourse was significantly more common among women with a romantic marriage than women with an arranged marriage (24.2 % vs. 9.4%,  $p = 0.001$ ), while other types of sexual contact before

**Table 10. 22 The association between type of marriage and premarital relationships and sex**

	Type of marriage			Total %	p-value
	Arranged %	Romantic %	Other* %		
Ever had boyfriend before marriage	21.6	52.5	32.3	32.9	<0.001
<b>Premarital sexual contact with other than husband /husband</b>					
Any type of sexual contact	22.2	40.4	22.6	28.2	0.005
Vaginal intercourse	9.4	24.2	3.2	13.6	0.001
Anal sex	2.3	5.1	6.5	3.7	0.354
Oral sex	8.2	14.1	3.2	9.6	0.123
Sex by touch	12.3	20.2	16.1	15.3	0.217
<b>Among those who had premarital relationships(n=75)</b>					
Multiple sexual partners before marriage	9.4	11.1	12.9	10.3	0.794
N	171	99	31	301	

\* Note : Other type of marriage includes those marriages that did not have the characteristics of romantic marriage or arranged marriage such as consanguineous marriage



marriage were not linked with type of marriage. This finding confirms the importance of intact hymen for an arranged marriage as the in-depth interviewees and FGDs participants stressed.

### **Summary**

About half of unmarried female college student have been involved in premarital heterosexual friendship and dating (52% and 49%). Multiple partners were common among those who reported a history of having boyfriends (67%). More than one-third (38%) of those with history of boyfriends had their first boyfriend before age 16. Students of private universities appeared to acquire their first boyfriend earlier than students of government universities. About 40% of unmarried women reported physical intimacy with men and a significant minority (23%) reported premarital sexual contact including both non-penetrative sex and penetrative sex. Almost half (47.2%) of unmarried sexually experienced women had three or more lifetime sexual partners.

The qualitative study identified two different periods in initiation of heterosexual relationships; 1) relationships shaped during adolescence and 2) relationships shaped in early twenties. Means of acquaintance, type of partner, duration and stability of the relationship and motivations and power and extent of sexual relationship are different in each stage. According to the survey, one-fifth of unmarried young women have experienced boyfriends by age 16 and about half by age 20, however less than one-fifth (17%) have experienced any type of sex by age 20. Vaginal intercourse occurs much later than other types of sexual intimacy or contact. About half (47%) of sexually experienced women reported that their first sexual intercourse happened before university entrance, and this percentage was significantly greater among students of private than government universities. Hence heterosexual relationships among students of government universities are more likely to be shaped within the university than

among students of private universities. The first partner in nearly one-third of cases was 1-3 years older and in one-fifth of cases was eight years older than the respondent. The majority of respondents had their first sexual experience with their boyfriend. Most sexually experienced women regretted their first sexual encounter. Owing to the fact that the first sexual intercourse was not vaginal intercourse in the majority of cases, they did not use any method to prevent STDs or pregnancy. However, 66% did not use condoms at first vaginal intercourse. Withdrawal and condoms were the two most frequently used methods at first vaginal intercourse. Nearly half of sexually experienced survey respondents reported that their first sexual intercourse was based on mutual willingness (45.3%), 35% were persuaded and 19% were forced by their male partner. Forced first sexual intercourse among sexually experienced women of private universities appears to be significantly more common than among students of government universities ( $P=0.059$ ). One-fifth of sexually experienced females had suffered from pressured or forced sexual intercourse by partner ever in their lifetime. Most sexual debuts occur with a respected partner but in a relationship where the partner has more power than the woman. The qualitative study widened the scope of the study with regard to feeling at first sex, temporary marriage and childhood sexual abuse. A sense of losing purity was frequently reported by in-depth interviewees who described their feeling at first sexual experience. Particularly if the woman loses her virginity, this feeling was reported as being more devastating. Temporary marriage or *Sigheh* was reported by two sexually experienced in-depth interviewees. Sexual abuse during childhood (IDI 25, IDI 9) and sexual coercion at first sex (IDI 10 and IDI 26) was reported by a few in-depth interviewees (four IDIs out of 30 IDIs). About one-third (36%) of unmarried survey respondents had a current heterosexual relationship at the time of the survey. 15% of those with current relationship became



acquainted through internet chat with their current boyfriends. The majority of survey respondents had marital motives for their current relationships. However, the qualitative study showed that most in-depth interviewees denied a marital prospect for their relationships and sex because of the inappropriateness of the partner for marriage or his lack of marital motives or the unacceptability of the girlfriend by the men's family. Different motives for sexual involvement were reported such as securing their relationships, proving love and gaining sexual experience for marriage. Interestingly, pleasure seeking or hedonistic motives among in-depth interviewees were commonly reported while marital motives were rare. These results suggest that those who have marital motives are less likely to accept having sex because of the belief that men would think negatively about their chastity. More sexually inexperienced girls tended to have marital motives in their relationships than sexually experienced women. The qualitative study suggested that, owing to the fact that men and their families mostly define a "suitable bride" as a girl who is virgin, it appears that sexually experienced women may have lower intention to refrain from further premarital sexual intercourse, particularly if their partner intends marriage, than sexually inexperienced women. The survey showed that the most important determinant of intention to refrain from sexual intercourse is high self-efficacy. However, self-efficacy may be influenced by intention and behaviour as well. The qualitative study also improved the survey results with regard to feelings after sex. Feelings after termination of a relationship which involved sex varied from being disappointed and feeling guilty to feeling depressed and humiliated, feelings of embarrassment and even happiness and joy depending on the motives in the relationship.

Although 23% of all unmarried women had experienced any form of sex, only 6.8% reported having had vaginal intercourse and the rest either experienced anal sex, oral

sex or sex by touch or a combination of different types of sex. The qualitative study suggested that anal sex particularly was a substitute for vaginal intercourse in most circumstances due to the importance of hymen and retaining virginity for marriage and the huge responsibility and commitment for men who break a woman's hymen. Anal sex was frequently referred to as a painful and frightening act.

One-third (33%) of sexually experienced women were involved in a current sexual relationship at the time of the survey. The majority of sexually experienced females reported their last partner as a serious boyfriend with or without marital motive. The majority of respondents did not use any contraceptive method or condom in their latest sexual intercourse because it was not vaginal intercourse. Amongst those whose last sex was vaginal intercourse, 21% did not use any method to protect against pregnancy. Condoms and withdrawal were also two main contraception methods used by respondents at last vaginal intercourse. The qualitative study suggested that "using withdrawal method", "practicing non-vaginal type of sex", "lack of preparedness for sex" and "lack of motivation", "condom unavailability" and "fear of failure in penile arousal among male partners" can be reasons for condom non-use.

About 16% of the whole sample were married, of whom one-third had a romantic rather than arranged marriage. One-third of them reported premarital heterosexual relationships with men other than their husband. According to results of life table analysis shown in Figure 10.2 among unmarried women, and the prevalence of premarital sexual contact with other than husband among married women shown in Table 10.20, between 10-15% of young women in Iran experience vaginal intercourse before marriage. Married women who had an arranged marriage reported significantly lower percentage of premarital friendships and premarital sexual contact than those with a romantic marriage. Interestingly, premarital vaginal intercourse was significantly



more common among women with a romantic marriage than women with an arranged marriage (24.2 % vs. 9.4%), but not other types of sex.

Multivariate analysis showed that having liberal and permissive parents, low self-efficacy, older age, less religious conviction, higher mother's education, poor family atmosphere, and liberal peer norms on heterosexual relationships and studying in private university are significant predictors of experiencing premarital friendship with a man after adjustment for other factors. Although, self-efficacy was the most important predictor of ever having any type of sex (Adjusted OR=7.87,  $p<0.001$ ), but it should be emphasised that sexually inexperienced females may overestimate their self-efficacy compared to sexually experienced women. Even involvement in premarital sexual contact may negatively influence the women's perception of their self-efficacy. The other most important predictors in order of importance include: peers' liberal norms on virginity, older age, parents' liberal attitudes and poor family atmosphere. Older age, low self-efficacy, poor family atmosphere, liberal parental attitude and liberal peer norms were also predictors of penetrative sex when adjusted for other factors.

## 11 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

This chapter portrays the main research findings from the study and their interpretation according to the conceptual framework and the study aims and objectives. It will show how sexual behaviour among female college students in Tehran is shaped by social context, norms and circumstances. Firstly, it elaborates perceived sexual norms and personal attitudes. Sexual norms in this chapter comprise societal norms, parents' attitude and peer norms. Secondly, the process and circumstances of sexual behaviour among young people are discussed using both qualitative and quantitative findings. Thirdly, sources of variations in perceived sexual norms, personal attitudes toward sexuality and also sexual behaviours are analysed and a new model of factors associated with premarital sexual intercourse has been developed. These findings are compared with other relevant literature where appropriate. Methodological strengths and limitations of the study are identified and the final section outlines the implications for research, policy and practice in Iran.

This thesis aimed to show the extent to which elite young women in Tehran, the capital city of Iran, endorse, reject or modify societal norms related to sexuality. To achieve this aim, three main objectives were followed: 1) an exploration of sexual norms and personal attitudes towards premarital relationships and sex, 2) an exploration of the process and circumstances of premarital relationships and sexual behaviours, 3) an assessment of social and individual factors underlying variations in perceived societal norms, personal attitudes, and sexual behaviour. Social factors included institutional factors, factors related to family, peers and partner. This chapter draws a comprehensive picture of the social context in which sexual behaviours of young people are shaped in Tehran and the features of such relationships.



Empirical findings were presented in Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10. Chapter 7 provided a description of the sample for both the quantitative and qualitative study. Chapter 8 described perceived societal and peer norms and parents' attitudes towards premarital relationships and sex and framed the societal context which conditions sexual behaviours of young people in Tehran. Chapter 9 examined reproductive health knowledge and personal attitudes and compared the discrepancies between perceived norms and personal attitudes. It explored the nature of these differences by using the results of the qualitative study (FGDs and IDIs). Chapter 10 provided a comprehensive picture of the process and circumstances of sexual behaviours of young people. It also described correlates of premarital heterosexual relationships based on the conceptual framework. The qualitative findings enriched the quantitative results with in-depth information both about behaviour and the subjective rationales and motives attributed to relationships and sexual conduct. This chapter synthesises and interprets the evidence presented in earlier chapters. The main findings of the thesis are discussed with reference to main aims and objectives, as well as the broader literature.

### ***11.1 Sexual norms and personal attitudes***

Explicit, socially standardised prescriptions that individuals report when they are asked "what to do and what not to do" are norms (Ferrand and Snijders 2003). The expected and appropriate regulation of behaviours as well as the positive and negative sanctions, or costs and benefits, associated with attachment to, or deviation from, those rules and regulations are norms (Focus on Young Adults 2001). This study revealed a marked heterogeneity in perceived societal norms towards premarital heterosexual relationships and intimacy in Tehran, but a uniform perception of restrictive norms towards all forms of premarital sexual contact. Perceived societal norms towards premarital relationships, but not sexual contact, varied from socially acceptable to socially unacceptable with a

high degree of uncertainty. This diversity may reflect disruptions in values and norms in the Iranian society. It may also imply an identity crisis among young people. Young people are observers of both advantages and disadvantages of heterosexual relationships. They receive contradictory messages from different groups in their social network. On the one hand, their parents, religion and state institutions tend to regulate and restrict them in terms of relationship with men but, on the other hand, they are directly or indirectly encouraged to seek relationships with men due to the rise of marriage age, peer pressures, boyfriends and mass media such as satellite and internet. Contradictory messages always put young women at risk. Social prohibition against premarital sexual intercourse has been shown in other settings to make it impossible for those who do have premarital sexual intercourse, to admit it, seek contraceptive services or negotiate condom use with sex partners (Joan, Thompson et al. 1994).

An earlier study by the National Youth Organisation in 28 provinces of Iran about values showed that young people were also uncertain with regard to social norms and values. The majority of respondents did not know what was morally right or wrong and believed that people tend to hide socially unacceptable behaviours. Sociologists call this situation an anomic stage or a society with interruption of values. People face abundant paradoxical evidence. This is a characteristic of a community which is in transition (Khoshnamak 2006). Societies with traditional cultures, such as China and the Philippines, are also facing such challenges between modernity and traditional values surrounding gender, relationships and sexuality (Zhang, Gao et al. 2002; Laguna 2007).

Despite this diversity in perceived societal norms about heterosexual relationships among both survey respondents and FGDs participants, premarital sexual intercourse was perceived as a socially unacceptable and rejected behaviour for females. Families, particularly parents, are perceived to disapprove strongly of premarital heterosexual



relationships. Parental disagreements and reactions become even more severe when more intimate relationships and sex before marriage are considered. Peers, however, are perceived to be more liberal in their sexual attitudes and behaviours. Hence, young people appear to be placed in an uncertainty and ambiguity in terms of social acceptability of such behaviours and the consequences of these relationships. Their society and families have restrictive rules against premarital relationships and their peers are perceived to be increasingly involved in such relationships and they are under indirect peer pressures for such relationships.

Personal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships were more liberal than perceived societal norms but more conservative than perceived peer norms. The survey revealed a weak, but significant, linear relationship between perceived societal norms and personal attitudes on relationships and virginity, and showed a moderate correlation between parents' attitude and personal attitude and also between peer norms and personal attitude. In fact societal norms have a higher correlation with parents' attitude than personal attitudes on relationships. Young women's personal attitudes seem to be influenced by their parents and peers directly, but not by societal norms, while, in the perception of respondents, parents appear to reflect societal norms. Parents were perceived to be concerned for their daughter's reputation and chastity because of social sanctions and adverse gossip. The only criticism that may cast doubt on the relationship between peer norms and personal attitude is that peers are chosen by individuals, and individuals who hold liberal attitudes towards premarital relationships are often surrounded by similar peers with liberal norms. Therefore, in cross-sectional studies in which both personal attitudes and perceptions of peer norms are elicited on one occasion, it is difficult to assign a causal direction.

Since personal attitudes are not socially visible and individuals will not be sanctioned socially for their liberal attitudes, it seems that people openly and freely report their liberal attitudes and can deviate from what they perceive as societal norms, while they are less likely to contravene perceived social norms in their own behaviours. Table 9.3 in Chapter 9 reveals a relatively liberal personal attitude towards varying degrees of premarital heterosexual intimacy compared with perceived societal norms. Only 29% and 37% of survey respondents perceived that society would approve socialising and dating with men respectively, while 47.5% and 51% personally approved such relationships. Only 6.5% of respondents perceived that society would approve any type of premarital sexual contact while nearly 22% personally approved premarital sexual intercourse. The majority of unmarried women (77%) in this study were sexually inexperienced and about 23% reported sexual experience. This aggregate correspondence between personal attitudes and behaviours suggest that the behaviour of sexually experienced women may stem from their personal attitude as far as it does not jeopardise their social reputation and status with regard to virginity. Only 6.8% had vaginal intercourse and the rest had anal intercourse, oral sex or sex by touch, which are not detectable by their family and future husband. Therefore, although the majority of unmarried women were not involved in premarital sexual contact, a minority behaves according to their personal attitudes and become involved in sexual contact but they are also concerned about social consequences of their behaviours such as losing hymen and adverse consequences on their marital prospects. However, this interpretation should also take into consideration that involvement in any type of premarital sexual relationships may cause personal attitudes to become more liberal.

Many sexually experienced interviewees reported that, because of the need to preserve virginity (intact hymen), they practice non-vaginal sex. They have recognised the



importance of physical hymen or bleeding hymen for their future success in marriage; therefore, within the restrictive social context, the majority of sexually experienced young women preserve their virginity and only 6.8% took the risk of losing it. These minorities of young women may face moderate to severe psycho-social problems such as depression, more social and sexual vulnerability such as multiple partners and abortion. A few sexually experienced in-depth interviewees reported their engagement in premarital sexual intercourse as voluntary. Females who reported multiple life-time sexual partners and also those who reported histories of childhood sexual abuse tended to have voluntary premarital sexual intercourse. Women with voluntary involvement in premarital sexual intercourse reported lower degrees of psycho-social problems following their sexual intercourse than women with involuntary engagement in premarital sexual intercourse.

Principally, an individual's behaviour which is not consistent with his or her feeling and personal beliefs and cognitions may lead to identity crisis in the person. Similarly, when social norms are inconsistent with people's feeling and personal attitude towards certain behaviour, conflicts in values and crisis in identity may occur. The result of a qualitative study among young people in Iran in 2001 is consistent with our finding about divergence between personal attitudes and norms (National Youth Organisation in Iran 2001). Some of the most relevant areas of tension identified in both studies were restrictions of heterosexual relationships before marriage, gender discrimination, inappropriate parental attention to young people's needs and parent-child relationships and generational conflicts within families. Some young people have opposite attitudes towards such issues to their parents, society and institutions. Behaving according to familial and societal expectations, rather than according to their personal attitude, may have consequences for the person and the society. Some of these consequences are:

resistance against restrictive social and cultural norms, promotion of self-created values or modifications of values, aversion to social norms, negative perspectives towards family and institutions and the society, promotion of affectation and anti-social behaviours, tendency to other permissive cultures, depression and low self-esteem, hidden relationships, pessimistic views towards opposite sex, absconding from home and finally uncertainty and contradiction of values (National Youth Organisation in Iran 2001).

In contradictory cultures people adapt and modify the scripts and norms provided by their cultures to suit their own needs (Laumann, Gagnon et al. 1994). This study also revealed that young women did not accept or reject their societal norms totally; they conditionalise or redefine premarital relationships in order to increase their social acceptability. In focus group discussions, the concept of “*healthy and unhealthy relationships*” emerged. Healthy relationships were characterised by FGD participants as those relationships which are based on romance, have a prospect for marriage, carry mutual support, and with parental awareness. Relationships lacking these features are characterised as unhealthy. One possible explanation for uncertainty about social acceptability or unacceptability of premarital relationships reported by survey respondents stems from this distinction. The qualitative study helped to reach this explanation because many FGDs participants, when asked about social acceptability of such relationships, said that “it depends”. A study in 2006 among 300 college students in Birjand, one of the provinces of Iran, also revealed that respondents recognised two conditions for an acceptable relationship before marriage; having honourable motivations which included acquaintance for marriage and awareness of parents of the relationship (Khorshidzadeh and Zangoee 2006).



To answer the study question “In what ways do perceived societal norms differ from personal attitudes in terms of premarital relationships and sex?” accounts expressed in in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were compared. Assuming that FGDs elicit societal norms and IDIs extract personal attitudes (Cleland, Ingham et al. 2005), it appeared that personal attitudes are more liberal than perceived societal norms, as noted earlier. Owing to the importance of complying with societal norms, parental attitudes and family’s values, however female students were conservative in their personal attitudes towards virginity. In-depth interviewees were more likely to approve rationales based on women’s sexual desires than FGD participants. Women in group discussions depict women’s motivations for sex as a strategy for securing their relationships while, in in-depth interviews, they tend to emphasis sexual pleasure in a romantic relationship and women’s need for sexual fulfillment because of the elevated marriage age. However, it should be noted that all post survey in-depth interviewees were intentionally selected to be sexually experienced and since all IDIs (post-survey and pre-survey) were analysed together, the majority of interviewees (21 out of 28 unmarried interviewees) were sexually experienced. Hence, it is dangerous to generalise from the IDI material.

Another qualitative study among youth in Iran in 2001 also revealed gender discrimination in terms of sexual needs in Iran (National Youth Organisation in Iran 2001). Societal norms were perceived to value an intact hymen as a sign of virginity while young women personally did not consider an intact hymen as an appropriate criterion for chastity and virginity. In fact, in-depth interviewees differentiated the physical presence of an intact hymen from purity and chastity. An unmarried woman with an intact hymen who has had anal sex or sex by touch was not considered virginal or pure by most sexually experienced women. They personally believed that virginity

should not be important for men and families anymore owing to widely available repair services for hymen and the common practice of non-vaginal sex among today's young people. In fact, virginity or having an intact hymen originally represented purity and chastity, but with practices such as non-vaginal sex and repair of hymen, the concept of virginity has become extremely complex in Iran.

Another important theme was that societal norms support gender double-standards while women personally supported gender equity in terms of premarital relationships and sex. Men were perceived to exploit their privileges to have premarital relationships and sex while women always encountered boundaries in premarital relationships and sex. Similar gender-based double-standards on premarital sexual behaviours were shown in earlier studies in Jamaica (Eggleston, Jackson et al. 1999). Young men are even expected by society to be entitled to marry a virgin woman after they themselves have had several premarital sexual relationships. FGD participants believed that parents often apply different standards to their daughters and sons. Indeed, parents rear their sons in such a way that they are allowed to have premarital relationships with girls while restricting their daughters. There was also a dilemma among FGD participants regarding the biological nature of higher sexual desires and lower sexual controls among men than women. A few respondents believed that men are biologically different from women in terms of controlling sexual drives. They attempted to justify the acceptability of premarital sexual relationships for men but not for women. The opposite group called it as a male-created justification and connected it to their culture which has granted men this freedom which is continually endorsed by religion, families and social norms. Although biological factors may affect sexual behaviour, they play at most only a small role in determining what those specific behaviours will be and the way these behaviours are understood (Laumann, Gagnon et al. 1994).



Low inclination for marriage among young men may stem from existing gender double-standards. Gender differences and double-standards appear to encourage young men to practice multiple relationships and premarital sexual contact and postpone their marriage until later twenties and even thirties. In-depth interviewees reported a widespread disinclination for marriage among young men these days, despite immense fascination for marriage among young women. A study in 2006 in one of the provinces of Iran (Mazandaran) showed that the rate of preparedness for marriage among female students was significantly greater than that of male students in medical colleges (45% vs. 15%, respectively) (Saaleme, Yaghoobi et al. 2006). Marriage still conveys social status for young women. The possibilities of premarital relationships for men might account in part for their diminished interest in marriage and opportunities of marriage for females are thereby minimised.

This study also showed that commitment to gender equality was significantly greater among religious students who had religious and traditional families than irreligious students with modern families (Table 9.5 and Table 9.6 in Chapter 9). Since religiosity is also connected with conservative attitudes towards heterosexual relationships, it can be concluded that modern families, with liberal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships, apply a gender double-standard in dealing with their daughters and sons while religious families, with traditional values, are more likely to apply similar strict standards to their daughters and sons in terms of premarital heterosexual relationships. They may also encourage their offspring to marry earlier than modern and irreligious parents. In support of this speculation, it was found that married students were more religious than unmarried ones. Beliefs in gender equity were also more common among married respondents than unmarried respondents. It seems that by redressing gender norms regarding premarital relationships, particularly among liberal families, it will be

possible to increase the inclination and opportunities for marriage for both females and males.

Personal attitudes towards a specified behaviour are the product of interactions between perceived social and individual consequences of certain behaviour and the expectations of other influential people in a social network. Influential people include parents, partners, and peers. In addition, the motivation to comply with the expectations of parents, peers and partners is another important factor which influences personal attitude and intention. The qualitative component showed that interviewees who considered their parents' attitude important and preferred to comply with their parents' expectations with regard to premarital relationships were more likely to refrain from premarital relationships, and particularly from sexual activity. Relationships are most likely to be hidden from parents because they are perceived to be against such relationships. In-depth interviewees who were involved in premarital relationships and also sexual contact with men and had recognised the disapproval of their parents, tended to hide their relationships from their parents. One sexually experienced interviewee even attempted to mislead her parents and behaved in a way that implied she disliked men. As mentioned earlier, hiding relationships and sexual behaviour and pretending to be a social desirable person is one of the consequences of conflict between parents' and social expectations and personal attitudes (National Youth Organisation in Iran 2001).

The Pearson correlations between parents' attitudes and personal attitudes towards premarital relationships and virginity (shown in table 9.10) are moderate (coefficient: 0.42 and 0.57), but when the influence of societal norms is controlled in partial correlation analysis (Table 9.11), these correlations are considerably reduced (coefficient: 0.14 and 0.26). This finding suggests that societal norms influence personal attitudes through parents. Parents have a significant role in transmitting norms to their



offspring, particularly norms about virginity. Qualitative findings confirmed that parents are particularly concerned about social sanctions. If parents fail to transfer effectively their social norms and values to their children, their children are less likely to conform to cultural and social norms and are more prone to accept new ideas (Elmi 2006). Since religion is one of the most powerful channels of intergenerational transmission of values (Cohen and Hubert 1997), it seems that the transmission of values and norms to the next generation through religion is particularly effective.

Parents may hold liberal attitudes or they may suffer from poor communication skills. Survey respondents whose parents had liberal attitudes reported significantly more liberal personal attitudes towards both premarital relationships and virginity than those whose parents held conservative attitudes (Table 9.6). However, perceived parental reactions to hypothetical situations was only significantly associated with personal attitudes towards virginity, not towards premarital relationships. This finding suggests that young women are more concerned about their parents' hostile reaction to losing their virginity rather than involvement in premarital relationships.

Another important social influence on personal attitude in a social network is the perception of peer norms. This study showed that women are more certain about peer norms than about societal norms with regard to heterosexual relationships. They perceive that peers hold moderate to liberal attitudes towards heterosexual relationships while societal norms were perceived to be more conservative. With regard to premarital sexual intercourse the majority of women perceived that their peers would not approve, except when the relationship is based on love. However, the qualitative study showed that young women are largely ignorant of their peers' involvement in physical intimacy and sexual intercourse because they rarely communicate about such matters with their friends. The survey showed that young women's perceptions of peer norms on virginity

are more uniform and less diverse than their perception of peer norms on heterosexual relationships. This evidence reflects the fact that the importance of virginity is recognised by both society and peers.

A few interviewees, who believed that a significant proportion of young women has premarital sexual contact, claimed that this perception is based on young men's statements. Young men were perceived to have a better idea about the prevalence of sexual behaviours among females than women themselves. One may doubt this perception on the grounds that men use this strategy to pretend that premarital sexual contact is a normative behaviour among today's women to persuade their girlfriend into sex, but in fact these interviewees were in casual friendships, not in intimate relationships, with their male informants. The reported views and perspectives of young men towards female sexuality and the importance of a virgin bride for marriage, all together creates a difficult situation for marriage. Men may develop pessimistic or negative views of girls' chastity which will lessen their tendency for marriage. Men who are witnessing girls' involvement in heterosexual relationships and sex, particularly non-vaginal sex, may change their views towards the importance of an intact hymen as a sign of virginity. This shows that societal norms shape the type of sexual practice by young people (non-vaginal sex) and how this practice among unmarried young people may consequently shape societal norms about virginity. Indeed, the importance attached to virginity may be weakened in the viewpoints of both men and families and society in future. This possibility reflects the reciprocal interaction between actual behaviours and social norms. Indeed, norms are flexible and are not rigid. Individuals adjust social expectations to their constraints, needs, desires and information available to them. Although addressing hidden sexual activities is important for prevention programmes,



wider knowledge of women's clandestine sexual activities also may have negative effects on social perceptions and norms (Ferrand and Snijders 2003).

### ***11.2 Process and circumstances of heterosexual relationships and sexual behaviour***

Given the ambiguity and diversity in perception about societal norms towards premarital relationships, but not sex, among young women in Iran, half of unmarried young women have experienced premarital friendship and dating with men. Multiple lifetime partners were common (67%) among those who ever had boyfriends. A significant proportion of those who had already experienced boyfriends acquired their first boyfriends at ages younger than 16 years old. As was mentioned earlier, due to disapproval of parents, only a small proportion of women informed either one or both parents of their dates (17%); in contrast, nearly 28% had told their friends about their dates.

The life table analysis (Figure 10.2) shows that nearly one-fifth of students acquire their first boyfriend by age 16 and more than half by age 20. However, less than one-fifth of respondents had experienced any type of sexual contact by age 20. Thus, sexual relationships occur much later than friendships with young men. Early involvement in friendship with men was associated with younger age at sexual debut. Most women who had started their heterosexual relationships from their early adolescence tended to be more sexually experienced and report more lifetime partners than those who started in later adolescence or early twenties. Other clinical and behavioural research also has found strong link between age at first sexual intercourse and subsequent sexual health. As other studies have shown, earlier age at first sex is connected with an increased lifetime number of sexual partners (Norris and Ford 1999) and also an increased chance

of STDs and HIV/AIDS (Konings, Blattner et al. 1994) and pregnancy (Odimegwu, Solanke et al. 2002).

Qualitative findings showed the significant role of the internet as a way of acquaintance with the opposite sex among elite young people in Iran. Owing to laws against pornographic material in Iran, the government-sponsored providers of the internet are filtered, but pornographic materials are still accessible (Honarparvaran 2005), particularly through special websites using special key substitute words for sex. The role of the internet in communication of young people with a member of opposite sex is also becoming significant in the conservative society of Iran with its constraints on heterosexual socialisation. Internet chat often leads to dates and friendships and there are divergent views towards the appropriateness of this form of social contact.

The qualitative study suggested that young women who initiate a relationship with a man and subsequently end the relationships are likely to switch into another relationship. Interestingly, in their earlier relationships, the man is the party who often asks for more intimate physical intimacy and even sex while, in the subsequent relationships, women are more prepared to have more physical intimacy. After the end of a relationship, only a few women decided to abandon any further involvement with men and to wait for an arranged marriage. Young women appear to become uninhibited once they lose their innocence by involvement in a relationship with a man. Once a youth is involved in her or his first socially deviant behaviour, the influence of inhibitors of such behaviours will be diminished and the probability of recurrence of the behaviour or involvement in other socially unacceptable behaviours increases (Robins and Wish 1977).

Only 4% of students had vaginal intercourse by age 20 and 9% by age 23. The study finding also shows that the first sexual act is rarely vaginal intercourse. Vaginal



intercourse is rare and is initiated much later than other types of sexual act. Some women reported their own willingness to have vaginal intercourse after a period of non-penetrative sex (sex by touch) or non-vaginal penetrative sex (anal sex). It seems that their sexual needs increase and thus they are prepared to ignore the importance of the hymen.

Owing to a relatively clear perception about societal disapproval of premarital sexual contact only 6.8% reported lifetime experience of vaginal intercourse, although 23% reported any type of sex before marriage. 16.2% had been involved in other types of sex; anal sex (4.8%), oral sex (10.9%) or sex by touch (15.4%) or a combination of different types of sexual contact. The prevalence of premarital sexual contact and sexual intercourse among Iranian female college students is similar to societies with traditional cultural norms and restrictions surrounding premarital sexuality such as India, China and the Philippines. In China, a study revealed a similar percentage (12%) of college students have experienced vaginal intercourse before marriage (Zhang, Gao et al. 2002); in India, 3% of female college students reported premarital sexual intercourse in a survey in 1997 (Abraham and Kumar 1999). In the Philippines only 7% of female college students reported experience of sexual intercourse (Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997).

The qualitative findings suggested that, owing to the importance of virginity, those who had vaginal intercourse and lost their hymen experienced psycho-social problems. Other women with non-vaginal sexual experience reported less psycho-social problems because they have retained their intact hymen. Perceived negative individual and social consequences of losing virginity and the woman's hope for a successful marriage were suggested to be two important reasons to refrain from vaginal intercourse, commonly expressed in the in-depth interviews.

One interesting finding of this study concerned women's motives for sex in heterosexual relationships. In addition to reasons such as securing the relationship, proving love and gaining sexual experience for marriage, pleasure-seeking was a motive reported frequently by in-depth interviewees in subsequent heterosexual relationships, but not in the first relationship. Motivations diverged in different relationships and tended to alter over time, from securing a relationship to seeking gratification, but it appeared that young women may agree to have sex to secure their first relationship but in subsequent relationships they tend to be willing to seek personal gratification. A marital motive was rarely reported. More sexually inexperienced girls reported marital motives in their relationships than sexually experienced women. Particularly those women who perceive a poor marital prospect ahead, such as those with poor family environment and atmosphere, and those who have already lost their virginity, tend to become involved in sexual relationships.

Despite the facts that: (a) nearly 12% of unmarried women have ever had either vaginal intercourse or anal sex; (b) more than half of those with sexual experiences reported multiple sexual partners; and (c) one-fifth of sexually experienced women reported sexual coercion, there was relatively little risk perception of STDs and HIV/AIDS in those sexual relationships. About 78% of sexually experienced women did not perceive risk of STDs and HIV/AIDS at first sexual intercourse. Sexually experienced interviewees who were not concerned about STDs and HIV/AIDS reported reasons, such as their awareness of the partner's previous relationships for lack of susceptibility. They identified their partner's previous female friends as clean. Clean and unclean partners was also an important theme that emerged in a recent systematic review of qualitative studies about sexual behaviours of young people worldwide (Marston and King 2006). A few in-depth interviewees, who reported some concerns about STDs and



HIV/AIDS, admitted that they did not have such concern at the time, but they started to become anxious after the termination of the relationship. However, one explanation for low risk perception was reported as non-vaginal or non-penetrative sex. One HIV prevention strategy is practicing non-penetrative sex but retaining virginity can only reduce the risk of STDs and HIV/AIDS if it is substituted by sex by touch, not oral and anal intercourse.

One important contribution of the qualitative study to the survey data was that condoms are principally used for prevention of pregnancy not prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS at vaginal intercourse. Anal sex was not associated with risk of STDs and HIV/AIDS. This finding suggests a poor knowledge and misperceptions about type of sex and transmission of STDs and HIV/AIDS. The belief that only homosexual couples are involved in anal sex hampers HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, because in many societies heterosexuals practice anal sex as a form of birth control, sexual pleasure and rite of passage (Cohen 2003). According to this study, the major reason for anal sex among heterosexuals is preserving virginity.

Nearly 16% of female college students were married. One-third of them reported premarital friendships with men other than their husband and multiple partners were common among those with histories of premarital relationships. Twenty eight percent of married students reported premarital sexual contact (any type), while nearly 14% had had premarital vaginal intercourse. More than half of married students had an arranged marriage (57%), and one-third defined their marriage as a romantic marriage and 10% had other types of marriage (i.e. marriage with relatives). The estimated probability of premarital sexual intercourse among unmarried women in this study is only based on the report of unmarried female college students in a narrow age range (the majority between ages 18-24). It will be definitely increased with age if they remain unmarried

for a few years. The estimation of premarital sexual intercourse based on the reports of married women (14%) can also be subject to underestimation, because married students are atypical in at least two regards: they have a young age at marriage (and thus less exposure to the possibility of sexual intercourse) and they are particularly religious (and therefore less inclined to premarital sexual relationships). Hence the 14% figure should be regarded as a lower bound estimate.

Examining premarital sexual experiences among married students and also motivations and feelings of unmarried students reflects the fact that marriage is a central pillar in all such relationships. Marital intention of the woman and the man can determine the type and the extent of the premarital heterosexual relationship. Indeed young women in FGDs stressed the importance of marital motivation in societal approval of a heterosexual relationship. However, most sexually experienced in-depth interviewees reported their motivations for relationships and sex as romance and love making and also pleasure-seeking, irrespective of the final outcome of the relationship. In the view of sexually experienced interviewees, having sex with someone whom they love was valuable even if they would not marry. These sexually experienced women are likely to resist an arranged marriage. Premarital relationships among married students with arranged marriages were much less common than those with romantic marriages (22% vs. 52.5%). Similarly, premarital sexual relationships among those with arranged marriages were significantly lower than among those with romantic marriages (22% vs. 40%). Another interesting finding is that only premarital vaginal intercourse was significantly associated with type of marriage, while other types of sex did not show any significant association with type of marriage. This finding suggests that those who were involved in vaginal intercourse attempt to marry romantically rather than accept an arranged marriage. One in-depth interviewee who had lost her virginity was trying to



resist any arranged marriage due to fears of disclosure of her sexual relationships to her future husband and her family. Another in-depth interviewee, who had lost her virginity and accepted an arranged marriage, reported that her broken hymen had adversely affected her marriage and led to her divorce. One explanation is that a sexually experienced woman who has lost her virginity (broken hymen) may believe that a man who loves her will ignore her previous relationships and even her sexual behaviours when he realises that she is not a virgin.

The importance attached to virginity as a social norm implies loss of self-respect when virginity is lost. These girls tend to believe that they have nothing valuable anymore for their husband and in their marriage. One in-depth interviewee, who had many premarital sexual relationships and was engaged to be married to her suitor, did not ask for even a modest bride price because she believed she did not retain anything valuable for her husband. This finding is consistent with other findings which show, in societies in which bride price is payable by the husband, premarital sexual intercourse is forbidden and virginity is important. In India, with strong social endorsement of virginity, female college students also considered virginity as the most valuable possession of girls and, due to its adverse influence on marriage, they tended to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse (Abraham and Kumar 1999) . In fact, bride price is payable because of the purity of the girl before marriage. A cross-cultural study showed that virginity is highly valued in societies where women are considered as property of their husband and women are paid bride price for being a virgin girl at marriage (Broude 1975).

The qualitative study also suggested that sexually experienced women with an intact hymen who initiate a relationship in which the partner has a marital motive, tend to behave in a way that suggests that they are sexually naïve. They tend to refrain from sexual intercourse in that relationship in order to prevent jeopardizing their partners'

positive view of them. Because a suitable bride is socially defined as a girl with no premarital relationships, women may be willing to postpone sexual relationship with a prospective husband until the marriage is confirmed. This tentative finding is based on the qualitative study but it is in contradiction with the finding of a study in Indonesia. In the Indonesian study, the more committed a heterosexual relationship is towards marriage, the more intensive is the level of premarital sexual involvement (Utomo and McDonald 2007). One explanation for this difference might be due to the fact that in-depth interviewees in Tehran who reported a marital motive in premarital relationships were not wholly confident about marriage and their families even might not be aware of the relationship. Only 2.3% of unmarried women were officially engaged. Hence women were uncertain about marital motive of their partner. In the Indonesian study it seems that the pathway to marriage is more clearly signaled.

Despite the fact that nearly half of unmarried female college students reported premarital friendships with men and 20% experience vaginal intercourse before marriage, it seems that most premarital heterosexual relationships are not destined for marriage, not least because the majority of marriages are arranged. This finding suggests that, although educated young people have broken with tradition by involvement in heterosexual relationships before marriage, traditions and the influences of families still strongly influence their choice of husband in Iran.

### ***11.3 Sources of variations in perceived sexual norms, personal attitudes and sexual behaviours***

Students of private universities held more liberal attitudes towards premarital relationships and virginity and more liberal perception of peer norms than their counterparts in government universities. Premarital sexual experience was also significantly greater among students of private universities than students of government



universities. Such differences between students of private and government universities may be either due to different socio-economic characteristics of the two groups or due to the different context of private and government universities. On the other hand, since 49% of sexually experienced students of private universities had their first sex before university entrance compared to 36% of their counterparts in government universities, the former explanation appears to be more justified. To examine these possibilities, the association between university context and personal attitudes, premarital relationships and sexual contact were assessed after controlling for the socio-economic and family characteristics using multivariate analysis. It was shown that type of university is not significantly associated with personal attitudes on relationships and virginity after controlling for socio-economic and family characteristics (Table 9.9). This implies that such differences in attitudes between students of private universities and government universities are more likely due to their differences in socio-economic and family background than the university context itself. Moreover, multivariate analysis showed that type of university is only predictive of ever having a boyfriend but not of sexual contact and penetrative sex after controlling for socio-economic and family characteristics (Table 10.13, Table 10.14, and Table 10.15).

The qualitative study indeed suggested different disciplinary rules for female-male socialisation between private and government universities which were not detected in the survey. Government universities seem to apply more relaxed rules for mixed-sex socialisation in the university than private universities. The atmosphere of government universities was therefore perceived to provide greater opportunities for healthy heterosexual socialisation and relationships than private universities. Students of private universities are perceived to be more involved in premarital relationships with men from outside, not within, the universities, because of the strict disciplinary rules within

the university. In addition, multivariate analysis showed that students who study in private universities are 1.6 times more likely to have had boyfriends than those who study in government universities. They initiate their relationships earlier and are more likely to have multiple partners than students of government universities. Students of private universities who can afford the university expenses come from higher socio-economic background with more liberal and less religious families (Table 7.3) and they might have poor academic performance or are less qualified than students who are accepted in a highly competitive university examination for the government universities. Poor academic performance is also shown as an influence on involvement in premarital physical intimacy and sexual contact in this study. Young women with poor academic performance tend to initiate their premarital relationships and sex earlier, even before university entrance.

Type of university by gender and discipline was associated with personal attitudes, perceived societal and peer norms and premarital relationships and sexual behaviour. Students who study in mixed-sex universities held significantly more liberal perceptions about societal and peer norms and were involved more in premarital relationships and sex than those in single-sex universities. Students who study in certain disciplines, such as arts revealed more liberal attitudes about virginity and liberal perceptions of societal and peer norms. They were more likely to report premarital relationships than students of other disciplines such as basic science. Multivariate analysis showed that after controlling for socio-economic and family characteristics, discipline does not have any significant association with premarital relationships and sexual behaviour. This result implies that students who, for instance, choose arts have different characteristics with those who choose to study basic science. Moreover, students who study arts and technical-engineering have more mixed-sex classes with higher interaction with male



classmates, while other students who study in basic science are more likely to study in female-sex classes, or with a few men in the class, with minimal interactions between men and women. It is also possible that the discipline itself erodes traditional boundaries. The association between studying in arts and greater involvement in premarital sexual relationships was shown among Indian college students; they were perceived to be involved in a relatively undemanding academic schedule (Abraham and Kumar 1999).

Family atmosphere and relationships and parents' characteristics are also associated with perceived norms, attitude and sexual behaviours of unmarried women. Young women whose parents are divorced or live separately were more likely to report premarital relationships than other women. Similar findings have been obtained in other studies among adolescents which revealed the importance of the presence of both parents in the family and associated parental control and monitoring in postponing premarital sexual relationships (Odimegwu, Solanke et al. 2002). Many studies suggested that living with both parents is a protective factor for premarital sex among young people (Kiragu 1993; Magnani, Karim et al. 2002). The absence of father was shown to have the most adverse influence in early initiation of premarital sex, particularly for females (Murray and Zabin 1998).

This study found that students whose parents, particularly mothers, are educated, hold relatively liberal attitudes and are relaxed towards hypothetical relationships. Students who live in Tehran, and are more modern and less religious are more likely to have premarital friendship with men. Residency of parents in Tehran strongly suggests that the young woman has grown up in Tehran and vice versa. Different studies have shown different associations between the place of residence (rural, urban) and involvement in premarital sex among adolescent. Some showed a link between residence in urban areas

and involvement in premarital sex among adolescents (Meekers 1994; Park, Sneed et al. 2002), while other studies did not find any such relationship (Gupta 2000; Slap, Lot et al. 2003). Our study showed that those women whose families live in other cities are more conservative in both sexual attitude and behaviour. Some studies showed a direct association between living away from home during adolescence and increased sexual behaviour (Han, Choe et al. 2001), but the fact that young women in our study are originally from cities which are probably more traditional than Tehran, and that they left home in their early twenties and not during their adolescent years, may account for the inverse association in this study.

This study also observed that premarital friendships with men are associated with poor family relationship and atmosphere, and having strict parents, poor parent-child communication about morals and poor mother-daughter communication about sexual relationship and reproductive health.

According to the survey and the qualitative findings, two different types of unmarried women in Tehran experience premarital friendships. One group comprises modern unmarried women with high social class, high father's income and educated parents who are surrounded by sexually experienced peers and are less religious and less supportive of societal norms. They may socialise frequently with friends and are involved in other risk taking behaviours such as smoking and drinking as a sign of attachment to modern life. The second group consists of unmarried women who are disadvantaged both economically and socially. They may have separated parents, or very strict parents or poor family atmosphere and communication with parents about morals and norms. They are also likely to have low self-efficacy to resist men's sexual advances due to their poor family background and family support. Poor family atmosphere is connected with poor parent-child communication. Proper parent-child



communication about family life issues and sexual and reproductive health was shown to be associated with healthier sexual behaviour of adolescents in a study in Nigeria (Odimegwu, Solanke et al. 2002). The qualitative component of our study revealed that young women with poor economical status, histories of child abuse, poor parental relationships, and strict parents, particularly fathers, tend to become involved at young ages in premarital relationships and sex. These women may be more vulnerable in their heterosexual relationships because they do not benefit from family and parental support. A recent study revealed a significant association between higher family support and lower risk-taking behaviours such as smoking and drinking (Viner, Haines et al. 2006).

In accordance with the conceptual framework, lifestyle and leisure activities were associated with personal attitude. Smoking, alcohol consumption, internet and satellite access and socialising with peers in bivariate analysis were all associated with more liberal attitudes towards both relationships and virginity, but in multivariate analysis, religiosity, family atmosphere and peer norms emerged as stronger predictors of personal attitudes. Students who are less religious are more likely to acquire boyfriends than their counterparts. Our findings revealed that religiosity acts at the level of premarital heterosexual friendship but, when it comes to penetrative sex among those who have friendships, religiosity does not exert any influence on behaviour. This suggests that religious young women who become involved in premarital heterosexual relationships will be similar to irreligious people in the progression to physical intimacy. However, religiosity has been shown in many studies to be linked to a lower tendency to premarital sex (Kiragu 1993; Lacson, Theocharis et al. 1997; Gupta 2000; Nonnemaker, McNeely et al. 2003; Rew and Wong 2006). A study among ethnic minority early adolescents in London in 2006 revealed that religiosity is also associated with lower risk of smoking and drinking, but not drug use (Viner, Haines et al. 2006). In

Iran, religious people are less likely to get involved in premarital friendships and dating and their opportunities for involvement in sex are therefore limited. Hence, religious convictions appear to play a protective role in sexual behaviours of adolescents and young people.

Smoking, and drinking alcohol, access to satellite and frequently socialisation with peers tend to be associated with liberal attitudes and more premarital friendships with men. Peer connectedness has been shown to be associated with increased risk of drug use (Viner, Haines et al. 2006). Young women who exhibit such behaviours have lower intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse and have low self-efficacy. However, reverse causation is possible; the influence of sexual behaviour on perception of self-efficacy and intention should not be ignored. The link between sexual activity before marriage and alcohol use has been documented in earlier studies (Mott and Haurin 1988; Ohene, Ireland et al. 2005; Weden and Zabin 2005; Takakura, Wake et al. 2007). These results are consistent with the Jessor's cluster of risk behaviours among adolescents (Jessor 1991). Other evidence also suggests that, when a youth commits his or her first social deviant act, the personal and social factors that used to inhibit deviant behaviour lose their influence and there is a correlation between different types of deviant behaviour, which is called syndrome of deviance (Robins and Wish 1977).

Peer norms, peers' involvement in any type of premarital sex and other risky behaviours were all shown to be associated strongly with liberal attitudes and also premarital relationships and physical intimacy and sex. However, these associations may simply reflect the fact that "*Birds of a feather flock together*". Hence, identification of the direction of causality is difficult. Earlier studies have also shown a link between involvement in premarital sex and the perception of peers' involvement in sex (Sack, Keller et al. 1984).



Low self-efficacy is the most influential factor for both having any sexual practice and particularly penetrative sex. Self-efficacy represents the skills and motivations for carrying through the intention (Ingham and Zessen 1997). The protective role of self-efficacy in young people's sexual behaviour was found in earlier studies (Stanton, Fitzgerald et al. 1999; Laguna 2007). As Table 10.13 revealed there is a strong correlation between intention and the individual perception of ability to say no to premarital sex, or self-efficacy, among both sexually experienced and inexperienced young women. However, the strong correlation shown between low self-efficacy and involvement in sex and penetrative sex should be interpreted with caution. Other previous cross-sectional studies also revealed mixed results about self-efficacy and initiation of sex before marriage (Mmari and Blum 2004). There is a possibility that sexually inexperienced students overestimate and sexually experienced females underestimate their self-efficacy to say no to premarital sexual contact.

Sexually inexperienced women are more certain about their intention to refrain from premarital sexual intercourse than sexually experienced women. Sexually experienced women were asked to think back to the time before their sexual involvement and respond to questions about intention. They were less sure about their propensity or intention to refrain from sexual intercourse if their partner has a marital motive; of course, their involvement in sex may have influenced their supposed intention and self-efficacy. But the finding may also reflect lower self-efficacy among sexually experienced women to abstain from premarital sexual contact. In the qualitative study it was suggested that if a partner has a marital motive in a relationship, a young woman is more likely to delay a sexual relationship than with other types of partner. These contradictory findings reveal the likelihood that young women's behaviour may not reflect their intention. Rather, situational factors, partner's expectations and intimate

partner-dynamics may determine sexual behaviour. Due to the dyadic nature of sexuality and the interactions between man and woman, anticipation of partner's reactions and expectations have an important influence on expression. A partner's expectation is based on contextual social knowledge, norms and personal experiences (Ferrand and Snijders 2003). Therefore the type of partner, motivation and immediate situation of a relationship are important in determining the extent and type of sexual relationships.

Figure 11.1 is a new model derived from the survey analyses. This model graphically shows the associations between various factors at different levels with dependent variables of the survey (personal attitude, intention and sexual behaviour) resulting from multivariate analysis.

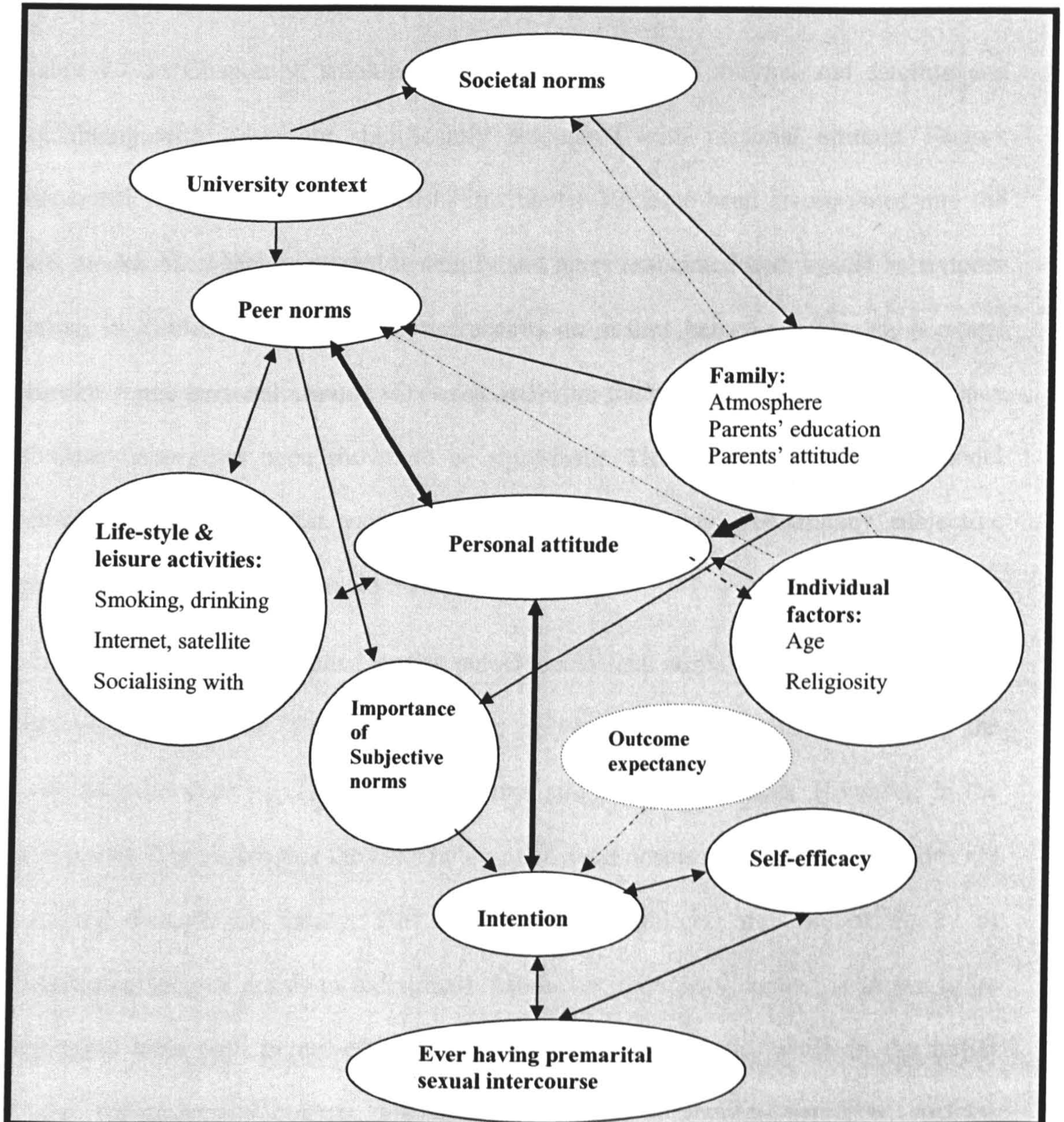
The upper section of the new model shows the associations between different factors and perception of societal norms and peer norms based on Table 8.4 in Chapter 8. It revealed that type of university and disciplines are associated with societal norms. From among individual factors, age and from family factors, father's education were associated with societal norms. Table 8.4 also showed that factors related to family, university and also individual factors are associated with peer norms. Moreover, the network of correlations between societal norms, parents' attitude, peer norms and personal attitude shown in Figure 9.1 in Chapter 9 has been incorporated into the new model (Figure 11.1).

The middle section of the model is concerned with predictors of personal attitudes. The multivariate regression analysis of factors associated with personal attitudes on premarital heterosexual relationships and virginity shown in Table 9.9 identified some individual factors associated with personal attitude such as age and religiosity. Family



atmosphere, mother's education and parent's attitude also were identified as predictors of personal attitude at family level and, finally, peer norms on relationships were

**Figure 11. 1 New model for factors associated with premarital sexual activity among female college students based on the survey data**



Note: Dotted arrows indicates a weak association and bold arrows indicates more strong association based on multivariate analysis.



recognised as another social predictor of personal attitude. Owing to the fact that religiosity and peer norms can also be influenced by personal attitudes, the arrows showing their associations are two-headed.

According to the associations between life-style factors and personal attitudes shown in Table 9.1 in Chapter 9, smoking, alcohol use, access to internet and satellite and socialising with peers are significantly associated with personal attitude. Factors associated with intention (Table 10.17 in Chapter 10) have been incorporated into the new model. Most factors related to family and peers associated with sexual behaviours shown in Table 10.15 exert their influences on sexual behaviour through personal attitude. Since personal attitude was excluded from the regression model, the influence of these factors has been shown to be significant. The lower section of the model illustrates how and in what ways personal attitudes, intention, self-efficacy, subjective norms are associated with sexual behaviour.

Based on the initial conceptual model, perceived societal norms had a direct association with personal attitude. Family, peers and university were assumed to mediate the association between perceived societal norms and personal attitudes. However, in the new model, it is shown that the association of societal norms with personal attitudes are mediated through the family. This model indeed highlights the role of family in transferring societal norms to individuals. Moreover, university context is shown to be associated with both perceived societal norms and peer norms, while in the initial model, the university context mediated the association between perceived societal norms and personal attitude and its role in relation with family and peers was not specified. In the new model, it is also shown that the association between university context and personal attitudes is through peer norms in contrast to a direct association assumed in the initial model.



The association of subjective norms with dependent variables in the new model is shown as a distinct factor, while in the initial model it was integrated into the personal attitudes. The new model identifies the association between subjective norms and factors related to family and peers and also its influence on intention, unlike the initial model.

The influence of individual characteristics and life-style and leisure activities on personal attitude in the new model is the same as in the initial model except for the influence of peer norms on life style which is only shown in the new model. Furthermore, in the initial model the association between personal attitudes and intention was shown to be mediated by self-efficacy, while in the new model, self-efficacy has a direct and bi-directional association with intention itself. Unlike the first model, outcome expectancy and subjective norms in the new model are associated with intention as well. The mutual interaction between sexual behaviour and self-efficacy, personal attitudes and peer norms are also highlighted by two-headed arrows in the new model, while, in the initial conceptual framework, the mutual interaction between behaviour and self-efficacy was not shown.

#### **11.4 Strengths and limitations**

Specified limitations of the current study are as follows. Full analysis of the pre-survey IDIs and FGDs before the survey was not conducted due to time constraints. Therefore, the pre-survey qualitative study which aimed to inform the survey could only partially fulfill its potential based on a simple analysis of interviews and group discussions such as the most common terminologies used by interviewees for sex (complete vs. incomplete). However, some main themes emerged in preliminary work and those were incorporated into the survey. Examples include sex by touch, importance of marital motivation of the partner in evaluation of intention to refrain from premarital sexual

intercourse, using internet chat rooms as a way of becoming acquaintance with the opposite sex, compliance with family values as a rationale for abstinence, and condom non-use or contraceptive non-use because of having incomplete sex. Some important themes such as healthy relationships versus unhealthy relationships or importance of physical hymen versus virginity were not identified before the survey and they could not be incorporated into the questionnaire before the survey.

Another limitation was that post-survey in-depth interviewees were highly selective because of the need to recruit sexually experienced students or information-rich cases to be able to elicit detailed information about the process and circumstances of sexual relationships. Since full analysis of both pre-survey and post-survey IDIs were conducted together after the survey (30 IDIs), the majority of interviewees were sexually experienced (21 out of 28 unmarried interviewees). As a result, the attitudes, motivations, feeling and rationales reported in IDIs for relationships and sex tended to be more liberal than FGDs.

Owing to the fact that some women were involved in several relationships, it was not possible to elicit information in the survey about each individual heterosexual relationship because of time constraints and the need to avoid complexity in the self-administered instrument. This curtailed our understanding of sexual behaviours based on different types of partnership. Only limited information about first and last sex act was elicited and information about other relationships in-between was lost. The qualitative study showed how relationships differ according to the age of initiation, the type of partner, means of acquaintance and stage of relationship. In-depth interviewees reported different feelings and motivations in different relationships. Hence a full interpretation of results should take into account this diversity in an individual's heterosexual relationships.



Type of sex act was not explored in first and last sex; only their overall experiences of different types of sex were elicited. Because the majority of women did not use contraception or condoms at their first or the most recent sex act due to the fact that these acts did not involve vaginal intercourse, and the wide perception that protection is only needed in vaginal intercourse, it was possible to estimate the rate of vaginal intercourse at first and last sex; but it was not possible to estimate the percentage of women who had anal sex on these occasions.

Since both married and unmarried students completed the same questionnaire, specific skips were used to lead the married women to report their premarital relationships and sex with men other than their husband. If they were not involved in such relationships, they needed to skip to the section for married women and answer questions about their sexual relationship with their husband after their engagement or marriage. Accordingly, some information was obtained about premarital relationships and sex among married women with men other than their husband, but we failed to ask more details about their relationship and sexual behaviours with their own husband before engagement. Sexual relationships with husband were explored only during engagement or after the legal and religious sanction of marriage. More detailed questions about means of acquaintance, duration of premarital friendship, type of sexual relationship with their husband during their friendships were not elicited. More complete information would help us to assess better the association between sexual relationships and marital prospects.

As this study has been focused only on women, it is not possible to compare gender differences in attitudes, perceptions, motivations, feeling and behaviours, so gender-based differences in correlates of sexual behaviours remain unexplored. This study has focused only on undergraduate female college students with a narrow age range. The majority were between age 20 to 23 (78%); hence post-graduate females at older ages

were out of scope of our study. In addition, young people who are not enrolled in a university, and normally do not receive any formal education about sexual and reproductive health, are out of scope of our study. Therefore, these results can be generalisable only to female college students in Tehran who are in their early twenties.

Owing to the fact that the sample is drawn from the most modern and metropolitan point in the country, the capital, these results may not represent the sexual norms and practices in smaller cities with more traditional and religious culture and norms. Social control in Tehran is likely to be much lower than in other small cities.

The most important limitation of this study is its cross-sectional nature. The direction of causality in observed statistical associations should be considered with care and caution. Only longitudinal studies can draw conclusions on the causal effects of social and individual factors on sexual attitude, intention and behaviour, while cross-sectional studies can only detect associations. In this study many explanatory variables in the various multivariate analyses are “endogenous”. This means that the factors that explain variance or differences of one variable are likely to explain differences in the other variables as well. In assessing the determinants of a behaviour, there are often interrelations between the determinants of the behaviour.

The study also had several strengths. It applied both quantitative and qualitative methods, and is a pioneering effort in a country where very few studies on sexuality and sexual behaviour have been conducted. Details of sexual behaviours such as type of sex and contraceptive methods were elicited. No previous study has explored such detailed issues about sexual behaviours and circumstances of unmarried people in Iran.



### **11.5 Recommendations and policy implications**

Owing to numerous political and social constraints on the realisation of sexual and reproductive health policies and programmes for youth in Iran as a conservative society, suggesting appropriate policy for improvement of sexual health and wellbeing of young people is not easy. In this context, 57% of marriages among educated young women are still arranged and 77% of unmarried undergraduate female college student have not yet had any sexual experience. However, those who are involved in such relationships suffer from misconceptions and coercion and the possibility of STDs. Programmes and policies certainly should take into consideration both young people who are involved in sexual activity and those who are not involved in such behaviours. Ignoring the first group may have long term adverse social and individual consequences. Both groups should be empowered with appropriate information and skills.

1- One important implication of this research for policy will be a greater recognition of changing sexual norms and actual sexual behaviour of young people. These results can help to convince Iranian policy makers and all stakeholders of the necessity of equipping young people with reproductive health knowledge and appropriate skills. This aim can be achieved by running seminars and workshops with participation of all relevant organisations and stakeholders such as parents, young people, religious leaders, youth organisations, educational authorities, university and school counsellors, health workers, midwives, gynaecologists and policy makers.

2- Current sexual and reproductive health programmes for young people should incorporate the issue of gender equality and should be tailored to the changing needs of young people in different groups and based on young people's needs in different cities. Current educational programmes about sexual health and family planning should include accurate knowledge about type of sex and transmission of STDs and HIV/AIDS

and should aim to boost self-efficacy among young people. Family planning courses in the universities should be tailored to young people's needs and should address accurate knowledge about the importance of condom use as means of prevention of STDs and HIV/AIDS in all types of penetrative sex, including anal sex

3- Promotion of gender equality in the community, particularly within families and among parents, is recommended in order to bring about changes in the community or society to help create an environment that promotes gender equality in premarital relationship and sex. The media can be encouraged to address this issue in their programmes. It is particularly important to work with parents and young men in the community. Men often fear an emphasis on gender equality because they believe that it will destabilise family and community solidity or result in women's resistance. Men need to be helped to think about the status of women in their communities and about the benefits to men of changing male and female roles and relationships.

4- Specified reliable counselling services for reproductive health should be created outside university campuses but with easy access in terms of location. All confidentiality issues also need to be considered. These services can also act as a referral system for HIV test and counselling. Young, qualified and non-judgmental staff need to be employed for better effectiveness. Psychologists, both females and males, for counselling with similar gender clients are to be preferred. They can provide a supportive environment to make young people improve their self-respect and increase their life skills, particularly self-efficacy, in order to minimise further risks such as being abused by other men and involvement in unwanted relationships. Beside such services, hot line telephones are also suggested to be set up to answer the questions of young people about sexual and reproductive health.



## Further research

Another study with mixed methods is recommended to be conducted among male college students and those out of university which explores men's motivations for premarital relationships and sex and their views towards virginity and the suitable bride. The study should investigate their reactions to, and expectations of, different sexual behaviours of women and their preferred partner for marriage and main reasons for postponing marriage. It is also suggested to assess the relationship between premarital relationship and the intention for marriage. Since most adolescent reproductive health programmes encounter some extent of disapproval by religious leaders, parents and policy makers, it is important to explore their rationales for negative views and their perception of the adolescent and young people's sexual behaviour. Hence another study is suggested to be conducted among all stakeholders such as university authorities, health workers, parents, religious leaders and policy makers. These results will complement the findings of this study.

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Code of the university:

## Survey questionnaire

Female/mixed sex: female  male

Entry year: .....

Type of university: Governmental  Private

Student: Native  Non-native<sup>1</sup>

**PLEASE READ ALL THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BEFORE COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Your correct answers are very important. Please answer each question carefully and honestly.  
Please tick boxes to record your answers**

### SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1 How old are you (Age in completed years)?

1.2 With whom do you live, most of the time in Tehran?(Tick one only)

- Both parents
- Mother only
- Father only
- My fiancé or husband
- Other relatives
- In university dormitory
- With friends in private accommodation
- Alone in owned /rented residence
- I travel to my city
- Other, specify.....

1.3 In the past 12 months, have you earned money by working full-time or part time?

- Yes , for earning money
- Yes, not merely for earning money
- No

1.4 How would you evaluate your current financial situation compared with other peers?

- Very wealthy
- Wealthy
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor

1.5 How much is the monthly income of your father or guardian?

- Under 3000000 Rials
- Between 3000000 Rials and 5000000 Rials
- Over 5000000 Rials

1.6 How many meters is your father's home substructure (or your husband's if you are married )?

- smaller than 100 meters
- Between 100meters and 200 meters
- larger than 200 meters



1.7 How religious do you consider yourself to be?

- Highly religious
- Religious
- Average
- Somewhat
- Not at all religious

1.8 How you evaluate your general academic performance in your university so far?

- Very good
- Good
- Moderate
- Unsatisfactory
- Very unsatisfactory

## **SECTION 2. MOTIVATION AND GOALS**

2.1 If you are unmarried please answer that : If you find appropriate person for marriage within next 2 years, whether you are willing to marry?

- Yes
- No

**How would you grade the following options as the most important goal for the next 4 years in your life?**

2.2 Having either a successful marriage

Not important                          Very important

2.3 Doing higher education

Not important                          Very important

2.4 Having a successful job

Not important                          Very important

2.5 Enjoying life in a relaxed way without too many responsibilities

Not important                          Very important

## **SECTION 3. FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS**

3.1 Are your father and mother:

- Both alive and living together
- Both alive, but divorced/live apart
- Father dead, mother alive
- Mother dead, father alive
- Both Dead

3.2 What is your mother's education?

- No Education
- Primary School (1-5 years)
- Middle School (6-8 years)
- High School (9-12 years)
- University graduate

3.3 What is your father's education?

- No Education
- Primary School (1-5 years)
- Middle School (6-8 years)
- High School (9-12 years)
- University graduate

- Do you have :

- 3.4 Any older brother yes No
- 3.5 Any older sister yes No
- 3.6 Any younger brother yes No
- 3.7 Any younger sister yes No

**There are different types of families. I would like you to tell me, in your opinion, your family type lies in which box between two extreme:**

- 3.8 Very religious      Not at all religious
- 3.9 Very traditional      Very modern
- 3.10 Very rich      Very poor
- 3.11 Very open Communication      No Communication
- 3.12 Full of kindness      No kindness
- 3.13 Without any conflict      with much conflict
- 3.14 Very happy      Very unhappy

**When you was 16-18 years old, were your parents:**

- 3.15 Very Strict in controlling me      Very permissive in controlling me
- 3.16 Very understanding of me      Not understanding me at all
- 3.17 Spent very little time with me      Spent lots of time with me

PARENTS' VALUE

**-How would you describe your parent's attitudes on:**

3.18 premarital friendship with opposite sex( having boyfriend)

- Strongly disapprove      Strongly approve



3.19 Going to mixed parties of young people

Strongly disapprove      Strongly approve

3.20 Dating with a boyfriend

Strongly disapprove      Strongly approve

3.21 My parents have talked to me about family values and norms.

Very much      not at all

3.22 I have a lot of respect for my parents' views about relationships and sex.

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

3.23 My sexual values and beliefs are consistent with those of my parents.

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

3.24 I am very dependent to my family emotionally.

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

3.25 How important is it to your parent that you continue your education?

Not at all important      Very important

3.26 How important is it to your parent that you marry not late(on time) ?

Not at all important      Very important

3.27 If you are unmarried (or if married thinking back to the time before you get married),  
How do/did your parents influence the choice of your marriage partner?

Determine my marriage partner       Have no say in my marriage partner

Imagine you had an intimate relationship with a man, and your parents find out, what would be their reaction with you in the following situations?

situations	Parents' reaction
<b>Dating with him</b>	3.28 father : Breaking off with me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ignore it 3.29 mother : Breaking off with me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ignore it
<b>Physical contact such as handholding, kissing</b>	3.30 father : Breaking off with me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ignore it 3.31 mother : Breaking off with me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ignore it
<b>Sexual contact</b>	3.32 father : Breaking off with me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ignore it 3.33 mother : Breaking off with me <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> ignore it

**COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

3.34 I feel that I can talk to my mother about private and important issues in my life

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

3.35 I feel that I can talk to my mother about sex.

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

**- How much did you learn from your mother about following issues?**

3.36 The way in which boy's and girls' bodies change during the teenage years?

Nothing      A lot

3.37 Menstruation

Nothing      A lot

3.38 The sexual and reproductive systems of men and women

Nothing      A lot

3.39 Contraception, the means by which one can prevent pregnancy?

Nothing      A lot

3.40 About male- female relationships that is, sexual relationship between men and women?

Nothing      A lot

**SECTION 4. LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND SOCIALIZATION**

4.1 Do you have access to satellite TV?

Yes

No

→ Go to question 4.3



4.2 If yes, How many days in the last 4 weeks did you watch satellite TV? .....days  
(If none write "0")

4.3 Do you have access to internet in where you live ?

Yes

No

4.4 If yes, Do you usually use chat system?

Yes

No



-Over the last 3 months, how many times did you do the following things?

	Never (1)	1-2 times (2)	3-4 times (3)	5 times and more (4)
4.5 Go to Cinema	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.6 Go to Coffee net	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.7 Go to Hotels/Restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.8 Go to late night Parties where people dance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.9 Go to clubs (sports/health)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.10 Go on picnics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.11 Do you smoke cigarettes?

Yes  No → Go to question 4.13



4.12 How many in last 7 days? .....  
(If none write "0")

4.13 Do you drink alcohol?

Yes  No → Go to question 4.15



4.14 .How often have you seen blue films(pornography) in your entire life?

- Never
- 1-2 times
- 3-4 times
- 5 times and more

### SECTION 5. PEER INTERACTION

*If you are married, think back to the time before you were married.*

Think about your closest female friends:

	None	A few	About half	Most	All
5.1 How many smoke?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2 How many drink alcohol?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3 How many have boy fiends?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4 How many are religious?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.5 How many have pre-marital sexual contact(any type)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*What do you say about yourself with regard to the following statement?*

5.6 I am a type of person who can freely discuss personal matters with my female friends.

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree



5.7 Do you go out with your female friends?

- Never
- Rarely
- At least once a month
- At least once a week
- Daily

5.8 Do/did your friends encourage you to having boyfriend or relationship with opposite sex directly or indirectly?

- very much
- much
- moderate
- a little
- Not at all

5.9 Do/did you have male friends without emotional involvement? (if you are married think back to the time before marriage?)

- Yes
- No

**SECTION 6. REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE**

Whether you think the following statements are true, or false, or whether you don't know.

	True	Do not know	False
6.1 A woman can get pregnant on the very first time that she has sexual intercourse.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2 Condom is an effective method against HIV?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3 Oral pill is an effective method against pregnancy?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4 HIV infected people may have healthy appearance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6.5 Have you ever attended any family planning courses as part of compulsory programme in your university?

- Yes
- No

6.6 If unmarried people have sexual intercourse, and do not use condom, what are the risks of HIV?

- None
- 
- 
- 
- very great

6.7 If unmarried people have sexual intercourse, and do not use any contraception, what are the risks of pregnancy?

- None
- 
- 
- 
- very great

6.8 I am really concern about the risk of getting HIV infection from my future sexual partner.

- None
- 
- 
- 
- very great



**SECTION 7. NORMS, PERSONAL ATTITUDE AND PEERS NORMS TOWARDS SEXUALITY & GENDER**

SEXUAL NORMS: How socially acceptable is it these days if:	Completely unacceptable	Unacceptable	No idea	Acceptable	Completely acceptable
7.1 Unmarried young people socialize with opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2 Unmarried females have boyfriends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.3 Unmarried females date with a boyfriend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.4 Unmarried females have physical contact with opposite sex such as hand holding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.5 Unmarried females have sexual contact (any type) with opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Personal attitude: Young people have various views about relationship, please identify what is your personal opinion about the following statements:	Strongly agree	agree	No idea	Disagree	Strongly disagree
7.6 It is alright for unmarried young people socialize with opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.7 It is <b>wrong</b> for unmarried <b>boys</b> to have girl friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.8 It is <b>wrong</b> for unmarried <b>girls</b> to have boy friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.9 It is <b>wrong</b> for unmarried people to have dates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.10 It is <b>wrong</b> for boys and girls to have physical intimacy such as touching, kissing and hugging with opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.11 It is <b>wrong</b> with unmarried boys and girls having sexual intercourse even if they love each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.12 A boy will not respect a girl who agrees to have sexual intercourse with him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.13 Most girls who have sexual intercourse before marriage regret it afterwards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.14 Girls should remain virgins until they marry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.15 Unmarried girls should hesitate from any sexual contact before marriage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.16 My religious beliefs prohibit me from premarital sexual intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



7.17 My family values prohibit me from premarital sexual intercourse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.18 It is okay for boys to have sexual intercourse before marriage but not so for girls.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PEER NORMS: Most of my friends believe that :</b>	<b>Very true</b>	<b>true</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>false</b>	<b>Very false</b>
7.19 It is wrong for unmarried boys to have girl friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.20 It is wrong for unmarried girls to have boy friend.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.21 It is wrong for unmarried people to have date.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.22 it is wrong for boys and girls to have physical intimacy such as touching, kissing and hugging with opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.23 It is wrong with unmarried boys and girls having sexual intercourse even if they love each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.24 It is alright for boys and girls to have sexual intercourse before marriage if they use methods to stop pregnancy					
7.25 Girls who have sexual intercourse before marriage regret it afterwards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.26 Girls should remain virgins until they marry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.27 It is okay for boys to have sexual intercourse before marriage but not so for girls.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>- You are that kind of person who cares about what THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE think, and expect of you:</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Not sure</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
7.28 Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.29 Peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.30 Society (other people)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SECTION 8. SEXUAL INTENTION AND EXPERIENCES

If unmarried, answer the following questions, or if married and have premarital sexual experiences with someone other than your husband, back to the time before marriage and answer the following

If married or are registered your marriage and except your husband you had not any pre marital sex go to the Q 8.44

8.1 Have you ever had a boy friend ( a person who likes you or you like him or both and go out with each other) ?

Yes       No      → Go to the question No. 8.8

↓  
8.2 If yes, how many :



8.3 How old were you when you had your first boy friend?  year old

8.4 Have you ever dated with a boyfriend( it means going together out or in a house alone )  
Yes No

8.5 If yes, to whom did you tell about your dating ?

- one of my parent or both
- my sister
- my friends
- both parents and friends
- both sister and friends
- nobody
- other

8.6 Do you have any boyfriend at the moment?

- Yes No

8.7 If yes, how did you get to know him?

- accidentally in the street or park
- in the university
- in a party
- my friend introduced
- through internet chat
- he is one of my relative
- other, specify

8.8 How describe your current situation(tick only one):

- Important and emotional relationship with a boy friend with marriage intention
- Serious relationship with boyfriend but no marriage intention
- No emotional relationship with opposite sex
- engaged to be married
- married or registered for marriage

**Given below are a few behaviours pertaining to sex. Please answer them by choosing the appropriate option.**

How often have you experienced the following with a man?

	Frequently	Sometimes	Once	Never
8.9 Hand holding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.10 Kissing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.11 Hugging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.12 Touching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8.13 Have you ever had sexual contact (any type)?

- Yes No Go to Q 8.42

- If yes, what of the following options did you experience with a man?

8.14 Sexual intercourse through vagina (Vaginal intercourse)  Yes  No

8.15 Sexual intercourse through anus (Anal intercourse)  Yes  No

8.16 Sexual intercourse through mouth (Oral sex)  Yes  No

8.17 Incomplete sex by touching (no penetration)  Yes  No



8.18 How long ago did your first sexual intercourse happen? .....(months)

8.19 How old were you at your first sexual intercourse?  Years

8.20 Did you regret having sexual intercourse that first time?

- Yes  No

8.21 How would you describe your partner at first sexual intercourse?

- Fiancé  
 Serious boyfriend with marriage intention  
 Serious boyfriend but no marriage intention  
 a person without relationship  
 a person who forced me  
 Other (specify).....

8.22 How old was your partner at that time?

- Years old  
 Do not know

8.23 What did you or your partner use to prevent HIV/STD infection the first time you had sex?

- Condom  
 No method, because it was not complete sexual intercourse  
 No method, although it was complete sexual intercourse  
 Others Please Specify.....

8.24 What did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy the first time you had sex?

- No method, because it was not complete sexual intercourse  
 No method, although it was complete sexual intercourse  
 Condom  
 Birth Control pills  
 Condom & Birth Control Pills  
 Had sex during safe time of the month (rhythm)  
 Pulled out before sperm came out (Withdrawal)  
 others, specify

8.25 Think back to the first time that you had sexual intercourse, which of the following option applies to your first sex:

- I was forced against my will  
 I forced my partner against his will  
 I was persuaded to have sexual intercourse  
 I persuaded my partner to have sexual intercourse  
 We were both equally willing

8.26 Where did it take place?

- My residence  
 my partner's residence  
 Friend's residence  
 Park  
 car  
 Any other, specify.....

8.27 Would you say your first sexual intercourse was planned or unexpected?

- unplanned  
 planned



- How do you describe your behaviour with your first sexual partner ?

8.28 I was able to ask him easily what I wanted and what was my interest.

Completely agree      completely disagree

8.29 I was able to talk with him about sexual contact and contraception easily

Completely agree      completely disagree

8.30 I respected him very much

Completely agree      completely disagree

8.31 In our relationship, I had more power than my partner .

Completely agree      completely disagree

8.32 Were not you concern of HIV/AIDS at your first sexual intercourse ?

Very much      not at all

8.33 Have you ever been pressurised into having sexual intercourse with any one?

Yes  No

8.34 If yes, who forced you to have sex with you ?

- Fiancé
- Serious boyfriend with marriage intention
- Serious boyfriend but no marriage intention
- a person without relationship
- a person who forced me
- Other (specify).....

8.35 How many weeks ago did you have your last sexual intercourse? .....in weeks

8.36 How would you describe your partner at last sexual intercourse?(Tick one only)

- Fiancé
- Serious boyfriend with marriage intention
- Serious boyfriend but no marriage intention
- Casual partner
- Coercive partner
- other, specify

8.37 What did you or your partner use to prevent HIV/STD infection the last time you had sex?

- Condom
- No method, because it was not complete sexual intercourse
- No method, although it was complete sexual intercourse
- Others Please Specify

8.38 What did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy the last time you had sex?

- No method, because it was not complete sexual intercourse
- No method, although it was complete sexual intercourse
- Condom
- Birth Control pills
- Condom & Birth Control Pills
- Had sex during safe time of the month (rhythm)

- Pulled out before sperm came out (Withdrawal)
- others, specify

8.39 How many sexual partners have you ever had in your life time?

*-Before you have sexual intercourse, which of these statements best describes your intention and plans for having sex?*

8.40 Imagine you were in a premarital relationship with a man who both of you are very attracted to each other, if he wants to have sexual contact with you without any marriage intention, how sure are you that you could keep from having sexual intercourse?

None      very much

8.41 Imagine you were in a premarital relationship with a man who both of you are very attracted to each other, if he wants to have sexual contact with you with marriage intention, how sure are you that you could keep from having sexual intercourse?

None      very much

**IF UNMARRIED & NON-SEXUALLY EXPERIENCED ANSWER THE FOLLOWING , IF MARRIED GO TO THE Q 8.44**

8.42 Imagine you are in a premarital relationship with a man who both of you are very attracted to each other, if he wants to have sexual contact with you without any marriage intention, how sure are you that you could keep from having sexual intercourse?

None      very much

8.43 Imagine you are in a premarital relationship with a man who both of you are very attracted to each other, if he wants to have sexual contact with you with marriage intention, how sure are you that you could keep from having sex sexual intercourse?

None      very much

**If married , or registered your marriage(Aghd), answer the following questions ,**

**if unmarried go to section 9(question9.1)**

8.44 Do you live with your husband?  
 Yes  Not yet



8.45 How did you select your current husband?

- It was an arranged marriage
- It was based on friendship and romantic relationship before marriage
- Other(specify).....

8.46 Did you have sexual intercourse with your husband before marriage ceremony?

- Yes ↓
- No

8.47 Have you become pregnant before marriage?

- Yes
- No

8.48 If yes, what did you do?

- Continued pregnancy and had a rapid marriage ceremony
- Managed to induced abortion
- It was aborted spontaneously
- Other, specify.....

8.49 What contraceptive methods did you use at your first sexual intercourse with your husband?

- No method, because it was not complete sexual intercourse
- No method, although it was complete sexual intercourse
- Condom
- Birth Control pills
- Condom & Birth Control Pills
- Had sex during safe time of the month (rhythm)
- Pulled out before sperm came out (Withdrawal)
- others, specify

8.50 Did your husband use condom at first sexual intercourse with you?

- Yes
- No

8.51 How long ago did you have sexual intercourse with your husband?..... (Weeks)

8.52 Do you use any contraception method consistently at your sexual intercourse?

- Yes
- No

8.53 Does your husband use condom consistently at sexual intercourse?

- Yes
- No

## SECTION 9. SELF- EFFICACY

In the following hypothetical situations, indicate how confident are you that you can:

9.1 Discuss STD/HIV/AIDS with an adult or reproductive health provider?

Definitely could not      definitely could

9.2 Visit a reproductive health clinic or gynaecologist?

Definitely could not      definitely could

**Answer the following questions indicating how confident you think you would feel in the following hypothetical situations:**

**9.3 You would be able to avoid situations that can lead to unwanted sex?**

Very comfortable      Not at all comfortable

**9.4 Asking your FUTURE PARTNER about his previous sexual experience**

Very comfortable      Not at all comfortable

**If you did not want to have pre-marital sex, how confident are you that you would be able to refuse pre-marital sexual contact (any type) with:**

**9.5 A person who you are attracted to him?**

Definitely could not      definitely could

**9.6 A person you care about deeply?**

Definitely could not      definitely could

**9.7 A person who intended to marry you?**

Definitely could not      definitely could



**SECTION 10:**

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is true or false as it pertains to you Personally.

	Yes	No
10.1 Have you ever done all your promises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.2 Is it possible that you lose your calm sometimes and get angry ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.3 Do you prefer your benefits than other's benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.4 Do you think that all your habits are appropriate and approved?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.5 Do you sometimes talk about others when they are absent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.6 Do you sometimes feel jealous toward your friend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.7 Do you sometimes become angry with your friends?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.8 Do you hate one or two members of your relatives?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.9 Do you hide sometimes your weaknesses from others?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Code

Dear college students

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE. YOUR HELP IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED.**

As part of this study, some volunteer students who are willing to be re-interviewed by the researcher about their experiences will be invited. The principal researcher intends to do some In-depth interviews with those volunteers in a confidential situation. This also will be an opportunity for volunteers to ask any question related sexual health from principal researcher. If you are willing to participate, please introduce your self to the researcher or alternatively identify your self with a false or true name and give your contact details .

This interview would be strongly confidential and will take place in an appropriate and comfortable place.

Name :.....

Contact telephone or, e-mail address:.....

**You can detach this page from the rest of the questionnaire**

If you have any suggestion or other concern in this regard please feel free to state here.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



## Appendix 2

### CONSENT FORM FOR THE SURVEY

#### TITLE: NORMS, ATTITUDES AND SEXUAL CONDUCTS OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN TEHRAN

*Principle Investigator: Farideh Khalaj Abadi Farahani*

*Address: Family Research Institute , Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran*

#### *Dear college students*

- This questionnaire contains a set of questions, intended to assess sexual norms, attitudes and behaviours of female college students. The results will inform the programs and policies designed for enhancing young people reproductive health in Iran.
- You are one among the students who have been selected from this university for this study.
- Your response as well as identity will be kept highly confidential.
- In fact you need not write your name and address in the questionnaire.
- Needless to emphasize that your frank and honest response will be highly valuable for a study of this importance.
- It is important that you do not leave any question unanswered.
- Use tick (✓) mark to record your response.

This questionnaire will take approximately 20-25 minutes.

#### **Risks and benefits of the study:**

By participating in this study and answering our questions, you will have the opportunity to ask any question about sexual health from principal investigator. Your participation will also assist to increase our understanding of the needs of the female college students in terms of sexual and reproductive health. We hope that the results of the study inform the programmes designed for improving your health. Your participation in this study will not involve any risks to you.

#### **Rights:**

You are completely free to take part in this study or to refuse to do so. The decision to not participate or to withdraw will not affect any other benefits to which you would be entitled. Your grades in this class will not be affected in any way for not participating in this study. All the answers are confidential. And no one will know how you answered the questions.

Do you have any questions about what I have just told you?

.....

Now, please tell me, do you clearly understand the purpose of this study?

.....

Do you agree to take part in this study?.....

#### **Declaration of the volunteer:**

- ✓ I have understood that the purpose of the study is to examine the sexual norms, attitude and experiences of female college students and its determinants.
- ✓ I have read the above information,
- ✓ I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
- ✓ I consent voluntarily to participate as a subject in this study and understand that have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature of volunteer:..... Signature of investigator:.....

Date:..... Date:.....

## Appendix 2

### Informed Consent Form for FGD

#### TITLE : NORMS, ATTITUDES AND SEXUAL CONDUCTS OF FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN TEHRAN

*Principle Investigator: Farideh Khalaj Abadi Farahani*

*Address: Family Research Institute , Shaheed Beheshti University, Tehran*

#### **Purpose of the study:**

We are doing a study to understand social norms towards relationship with opposite sex and sexuality among unmarried young females.

#### **Procedures:**

As part of this study, we are going to bring together small groups of female college students to discuss relevant issues and to inform us on these matters. You are among the group of people who have been chosen for this purpose. We have chosen you because we think you would be in a position to discuss these matters with other members of the group and thus describe to us the relevant attitudes within your community.

The discussion group you may join will consist of 8-10 of female college students like yourself plus two people from our research team. One of the latter will act as the organiser of the group, explain the purpose and procedure of group discussion, keep time and make sure that the group discusses the critical points and that everybody gets a chance to express their views. The second researcher will write down the main points of the discussion and, if the group agrees, to record the proceeding on an audiotape. The audiotapes will be only kept until they have been transcribed by the researchers involved in this study and will then be destroyed. In the time that it takes to transcribe them they will only be accessible by the researchers involved in this study and will be treated as strictly confidential and kept under lock. Each group discussion session may take about two hours of your time, and may include issues that you find sensitive.

Please note that in these group discussions you are not expected to talk about yourself or anyone you know. You are instead expected to talk about people in general, or about a typical young female from your community. We will advise you and other members of each discussion group to avoid open references to any known individual and to know that the process and outcome of your discussion will be treated as confidential.

#### **Risks and benefits of the study:**

By participating in this study and answering our questions, you will have the opportunity to ask any question about sexual health from principal investigator. Your participation will also assist to increase our understanding of the needs of the female college students in the community in terms of sexual and reproductive health.



We hope that the results of the study inform the programmes for improving your health. Your participation in this study will not involve any risks to you.

**Rights:**

You are completely free to take part in this study or to refuse to do so. Even after you agree o participate in the study, you will be free to leave the discussion at anytime you wish and/or to refuse to participate on any topic that you are uncomfortable with. The decision to not participate or to withdraw will not affect any other benefits to which you would be entitled.

Do you have any questions about what I have just told you?

.....

Now, please tell me, do you clearly understand the purpose of the group discussion sessions I have just described?

.....

Do you agree to take part in the group session and share your views with other members of the group?

.....

**Declaration of the volunteer:**

- ✓ I have understood that the purpose of the study is to examine sexual norms of female college students.
- ✓ I have read the above information
- ✓ I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
- ✓ I consent voluntarily to participate as a subject in this study and
- ✓ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without in any way affecting my future.

**Signature of volunteer:.....      Signature of investigator:.....**

**Date:.....      Date:.....**

## Appendix 2

### **Informed Consent Form IDI** **TITLE: NORMS, ATTITUDES AND SEXUAL CONDUCTS OF FEMALE COLLEGE** **STUDENTS IN TEHRAN**

*Principle Investigator: farideh Khalaj Abadi Farahani*

*Address: Family Research Institute , shaheed Beheshti university, Tehran*

#### **Purpose of the study:**

This study tries to understand attitude and experiences of young female college students towards relationship with opposite sex and sexuality.

#### **Procedures:**

Since this interview is more in-dept it maybe necessary to re-interview you more than once, especially if you do not have enough time to discuss all matters. The interview will take about 2 hours of your time. You may find some of the questions asked sensitive in nature.

The fact that you take part in the study and the information that you provide during it will be kept confidential. Only the interviewer and researchers will have access to the information that you may provide. The information will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

#### **Risks and benefits of the study:**

By participating in this study and answering our questions, you can ask any question on sexual health from principal investigator. However, the results of this study inform the programmes and policies for improving your health. Your participation in this study will not involve any risks to you.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to refuse to participate or answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with. If you change your mind about participating during the course of the interview, you have the right to withdraw at any time. The decision to participate or to withdraw will not affect any other benefits to which you would be entitled.

If there is anything that is unclear or you need further information, we shall be delighted to provide it

#### **Declaration of the volunteer:**

- ✓ I have understood that the purpose of the study is to examine sexual attitude and behaviours of female college students.
- ✓ I realise that it may be necessary to be interviewed on more than one occasion.
- ✓ I have read the above information
- ✓ I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.
- ✓ I consent voluntarily to participate as a subject in this study and
- ✓ I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without in any way affecting my future.

Signature of volunteer:..... Signature of investigator:.....

Date:..... Date:.....

Date:..... Date:.....



## **Appendix 3**

### **FGDs' Index System**

- 1. Main objectives of today young females /rational**
  - 1.1. Higher Education, motivation**
  - 1.2. Employment/priority**
  - 1.3. Marriage/divorce**
- 2. The views on relationship with opposite sex**
  - 2.1 On different type of relationship (from friendship, to sexual intercourse)/rational/intention or propensity**
  - 2.2 Motivations for relationship and sex with opposite sex**
    - 2.2.1 For females and girls/rational**
    - 2.2.2 For males /rational**
  - 2.3 Prevalence/age of onset/differences among different groups**
  - 2.4 Circumstances/conditions**
  - 2.5 Disadvantages, advantages**
  - 2.6 Friendship, temporary marriage and permanent marriage**
- 3 . Current norms and attitude among**
  - 3.1 Youth /gender based double standard**
  - 3.2 Parents**
  - 3.3 Society**
  - 3.4 Changes**
  - 3.5 Causes**
    - 3.5.1 Migration**
    - 3.5.2 Role model**
- 4 Means of expressing attraction to opposite sex**
- 5 Means of building friendship with opposite**
  - 5.1 Mix sex universities vs. female sex**

## 5.2 Private un. vs. government un.

## 6. Marriage for females

### 6.1 Main concerns

### 6.2 Method of partner selection

### 6.3 Importance of pervious sexual experience of partner for marriage and vice versa

### 6.4 Extent of relationship before marriage

## 7. Importance of virginity

### 7.1 For females,/how to deal with loss of virginity/rational

### 7.2 For males/rational

### 7.3 For families/role of families in importance of virginity/gender imbalance

## 8. Migration/ and social influences on attitude and behavior

## 9 . View towards opposite sex among young males and females

## 10. Characteristics of sexually experienced unmarried females

## 11. Peer

### 11.1 Sexual relationship

### 11.2 Pregnancy/abortion

### 11.3 Psychological feeling

### 11.4 Pressure

### 11.5 Communication about their friendship and sex

## 12. Abstinence

### 12.1 Motivation

### 12.2 Problems/ways to deal with

## 13. Individual based differences for saying no/rational

## 14. Other Risky behaviours among female college students

### 14.1 Smoking, drug abuse among female college students

### 14.2 Going to mixed party



## **IDs' Index System**

### **1. Family**

#### **1.1. Context**

- 1.1.1. Socio-economic status**
- 1.1.2. Values, religiosity**
- 1.1.3. Privacy at home/absent father, mother**
- 1.1.4. Double standards/reasons (gender based-individual based....)**

#### **1.2. Parents**

- 1.2.1. Socio-demographic characteristics (age, education, employment**
- 1.2.2. Relationship/Communication with parents about sex, important and private issues, warning about sex/time spending/values and morals**
- 1.2.3. Parent's strictness, relaxation/parental control/lie to parents/escaping from control**
- 1.2.4. Parents' awareness of friendship with OS, sex/views, rational**
- 1.2.5. Parents' reaction, gender based standards (siblings, gender,)**
- 1.2.6. Punishment, type**
- 1.2.7. Parents' relationship/Conflict**
- 1.2.8. Responsible person in disciplining**
- 1.2.9. Health Status**
- 1.2.10. Parents living together, Separation, step parents, death, parent's relationship with other members of opposite sex**

#### **1.3 Siblings**

- 1.3.1. Existence, age, sister, brother**
- 1.3.2 Relationship and communication**
- 1.3.3. Marital situation/sexual experiences/influence**

### **2. Individual**

- 2.1 Marital status/experience/how acquainted**
- 2.2 Housing (living with parents, in dormitory, private), privacy**

- 2.3 Child experiences (abuse, living in western cultures...)
- 2.4 Self-esteem /self confidence/assertiveness
- 2.5 SRH information/misperceptions
  - 2.5.1 Sources, quality, appropriateness, available and preferred sources, rationales
  - 2.5.2 Necessity, rationales
  - 2.5.3 Preferred age, preferred subjects
- 2.6 Future vision/values (for Marriage, education & employment),
  - 2.6.1 Intention for marriage, criteria
  - 2.6.2 Success in university studies/school performance
- 2.7 Religiosity, smoking, alcohol, ex, drugs/feeling
- 2.8 Personality (independent, out going, devotion...)
- 2.9 Entertainment
  - 2.9.1 Frequency, Type
- 2.10 *Age, education, employment, native ness*
- 2.11 *Internet access, satellite, pornography, going party*
- 2.12 *Psycho-social problems, current or during adolescence (conflict with parents, peers, school authorities)*

### 3 Relationships

- 3.1 Same sex peers
  - 3.1.1. Pressure
  - 3.1.2 Perception on their friendship and sexual behaviour
  - 3.1.3. Communication about the sexual experience, friendship, event such as other risky behaviours
- 3.2 Friendship with opposite sex
  - 3.2.1 Casual friendship
  - 3.2.2 Intimate friendship
    - 3.2.2.1. Age of onset, number, how acquainted, duration, frequency of meeting



3.2.2.2. Sexual intimacy

3.2.2.3. Feeling, motivation, preferred criteria for friendship, emotional changes

3.2.2.4 Termination,

3.2.2.4.1 Reasons/justification

3.2.2.4.2 Psycho-physical influences

3.2.2.4.3. Changes in relationship before termination

3.2.2.4.4. Looking for return of relationship/initiating relationship with others, parallel relationship/reasons

3.2.2.4.5. Meaning of relationship after termination (memories)

3.2.2.5 Attempt to maintain the relationship/exchanges/reasons

#### 4. Sexual behaviour

4.1. *Meaning of different type of sex, symbols/beliefs/information*

4.2. Motivations/reasons

4.3 Perception of difference between men and women/misperceptions

4.4. Duration between onset of friendship to sex, number of sexual partners

4.5 *Location, occasion*

4.6 Duration/ intervals /when last sex

4.7 *Willingness, preparedness, prediction, expected, unexpected sex, experience of forced sex, suggestion*

4.8 Type of sex ever had, who and how suggested, /rationales/meaning and feeling/reaction

4.9 *Expectations and feeling, propensity*

4.10 *Fears and worries, rationales*

4.11 Protection (against pregnancy and STDs/HIV)/reasons

4.12 Consequences

4.12.1 Losing virginity, type of hymen, influence on future sexual behaviour, problems in marriage, strategies

4.12.2 Pregnancy, abortion/STDs

4.12.3 Seeking services, failure, reasons,

4.12.4 Seeking information and counselling and services

4.12.5 Type of Hymen

4.12.5.1. Problems, feelings, partner reactions

4.12.5.2. Communication with others about type of hymen, doctor examination

4.12.5.3 Psychological feeling

4.13. Sexual satisfaction, reasons

4.14 Communication with others including future partner or husband about her sexual experience /other's reaction

4.15 Lessons learned, future decision/rational /current feeling/views toward males

*4.16 Homosexuality, masturbation/ attitude, experience, prevalence*

*4.17 Changes/current situation in relationship after sex, going out, restaurant,*

*4.18 Marriage/ type (temporary marriage), sex, divorce/ reasons/influence on behaviour, feeling*

## 5. Partners

5.1 Discussion about sex/Interaction

5.2 Private place/parent's home

5.3 Partner's marital status

5.4 Partner's socio-economic characteristics (age, credibility, education, economic)

5.5 Partner's awareness of previous relationships, sex & discussion

5.6 Partner's relationship/closeness with female's family (family involvement)

5.7 Partner restrict ness, controlling

5.8 Partner's motivation, rational, view towards her



5.9 Partner's sexual function, suggestion for sex & awareness, satisfaction, attempt for satisfying females, reaction

5.10 Partner's religiosity and values, personality, other risky behaviour (drinking, drug use,), temporary marriage

5.11 Partners' power in relationship/strategic plans for persuading females/money or gift exchange

5.12 Previous experiences/parallel current relationship with other girls

5.13 Partner's parents or families awareness of relationship, role/ double standards

## 6. Attitude towards

6.1 Relationship with opposite sex including sex, conditions, current and previous views, rationales, criteria for knowing partner's motivation of sex

6.2 Importance of Virginity, Hymen, rationales

6.3 Marriage

6.4 Male's perception on virginity /gender differences

6.5 Differences in sexual behaviours between different group of students

6.6. Role of parents in sexual behaviours of young people

6.7 Homosexuality, masturbation, other form of sex among young people

6.8 Rationales for not getting involved or getting involved in pre-marital friendship and sex among some young people/how to deal with sexual desire

6.9 Suggested strategies to overcome the problems of young people pre-marital relationship and sex

6.10 Norms/changes, perception of current sexual behaviour among youth/reasons

6.11 Meaning of sexual contact and perceptions

**APPENDIX 4 :**

**A SAMPLE OF THEMATIC CHART FOR FGDS( THEME: ATTITUDE ON RELATIONSHIPS WITH OPPOSITE SEX)(theme number: 2.1)**

No.	CHARACTERISTIC S OF THE GROUP	Data charted in column 2_1 Attitude on relationship with Opposite sex(OS)	Elements/dimensions identified in order identified in chart	Categories/classes
FGD 1	No: 8 people GOVERNMENTAL, DORMITORY, DICIPLINE: RELIGIOUS, HISTORY, RELIGIOUS JURISPRUDENCE, INSURANCE , AGE RANGE 20-23, DATE 28/3/1384	Socializing is ok, uncertainty about relation by phone or dating, negative view on consequences of physical contact , *it depends to the boys *not did agree with the relation, love is not prohibited in Islam,(5-6) * necessity of premarital relationship with limitation(10) - unintentional nature of relationship(mostly agree)(13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCIALIZATION OK,</li> <li>• UNCERTAINTY ABOUT DATING AND MORE RELATION,</li> <li>• Negative view on physical contact</li> <li>• Person circumstances are important, not disagree with relations</li> <li>• love is not prohibited in Islam relations within boundaries</li> <li>• unintentional nature of relationship(mostly agree)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of relationship (healthy, unhealthy)</li> <li>• Circumstances (appropriate motivations, love, faithfulness, chastity of boy, defining boundaries, not having preconditions such as sex, parent's awareness...)</li> <li>• Motivations for relation for females and males(differences by different groups, discipline, healthy motivations, abusing, it depend to the way they get to know each other, not related to weakness of family relation....)</li> <li>• Extent of intimacy in relationship</li> <li>• The character of girl (sensitive, control her feeling,</li> </ul>
FGD 2	NO: 8 people (4 tehrani, 4 other provinces) GOVERNMENTAL, DICIPLINE: Architecture /engineering AGE RANGE 22-24, DATE 10/7/1384	*the common relation is going out and dating, (all laughing, no , no), sex is necessary for securing relationship, young people tell lie often if they say they have not sex because men always looking for sex,, * yes, I agree, 98% have sex, in certain discipline is more prevalent like <u>experimental(discipline based), nursing and medicine, sex became a normal issue for all girls, one friend refused from sex and her boyfriend called her "Ommol"(old styled woman or foguevish) and she accepted to have sex. The reason is the nature of open discussion of sensitive issue in medicine, most of these students have sex, I agree, I agree, I oppose, what we see is a moderate state not more, I oppose, of course in our group it may be, but in whole society, most have gone to end, wanted or unwanted, these young females are themselves interested and agree, boys claim that they know better the girls that 95% have sexual exp., they claim that girls do not never know themselves or the fact, and 90-95% are not virgin, they think one way for entertainment is sex for girls, most of my friends in high school are not virgin now, those with family restriction have sex from anus because keep virginity, I agree, I agree that these issue has been increased, but concern about these</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dating is normal</li> <li>• Sex secure relationship</li> <li>• Girls hide their sex often</li> <li>• Men often looking for sex</li> <li>• Majority have sex</li> <li>• Certain groups are involved more in sex (medicine, nursing)</li> <li>• Sex became a normal issue for most girls</li> <li>• The boys bully the girls who refuse sex</li> <li>• Not most, average have sex</li> <li>• Mostly agree that sex is average among students</li> <li>• In society most youth have done sex</li> <li>• Sexually experienced girls mostly agree to have sex.</li> <li>• Boys claim that majority of girls have sex</li> <li>• Boys claim that girls do not know girls sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Sex became a type of entertainment for girls</li> <li>• Sex from other ways is common among girls with strict family (anal sex)</li> <li>• Concern about how these girls are becoming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of relationship (healthy, unhealthy)</li> <li>• Circumstances (appropriate motivations, love, faithfulness, chastity of boy, defining boundaries, not having preconditions such as sex, parent's awareness...)</li> <li>• Motivations for relation for females and males(differences by different groups, discipline, healthy motivations, abusing, it depend to the way they get to know each other, not related to weakness of family relation....)</li> <li>• Extent of intimacy in relationship</li> <li>• The character of girl (sensitive, control her feeling,</li> </ul>



		<p>issue in the society, how these people are going to become mother., oppose: but I don't think that is bad, why you think this is bad, when someone accepted this relation and enjoy it why not, but I personally have a paradox and am not sure for myself, I agree, I don't know my self what is right. *Being faithful is valued (not being with several people), it is alright if you are faithful to someone who love, not being every night with some one else.(5-8), uncertainty about the accuracy of these type of relationship. not related to religion, our FP lecturer recommended us have boyfriend but don't marry him, because boys will say that you certainly have another sexual relationship with others except me, I also agree, one should have boyfriend but not marry him.because we don't have any knowledge about opposite sex till university(18)</p>	<p>mother themselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The way of asking by the interviewer are judged ,</li> <li>• Why these relations are seen with judgement, they are not bad, people enjoy and are happy</li> <li>• There is a paradox and uncertainty for many regarding the accuracy of these relations</li> <li>• In a relation, faithfulness is valued(not being with many people)</li> <li>• Love in relations is valued</li> <li>• Not marrying with boyfriend because boy will judge you later in life</li> <li>• Not knowing OS till university</li> </ul>	<p>high self-efficacy, define what she want in relation.....)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty about relations(contradictory messages)</li> <li>• Unintentional nature of relationship</li> <li>• Different Perception of sexual experiences among girls by boys and girls, bullying</li> <li>• Different Type of sex by type of person and family</li> <li>• Concern about future of the society</li> <li>• Strong agreement to sex because both enjoy, that is not bad</li> <li>• Need to know OS</li> <li>• Consequences of relations(psychological damage, judgment by the boy if marry with BF, people talk behind )</li> </ul>
<p>FGD 3 NUMBER:10 PEOPLE,AZAD UNIVERSITY, DISCIPLINE:ENVIR ONMENTAL ENGINEERING, INDUSTRY, MOST TEHRANI, AGE RANGE : 21-23, DATE : 1384</p>		<p>*I agree, because if is healthy relation, will help a better marriage, you know men, your decision is better, even the boy can be a help for the girl in their lessons, job,* I am not certain, if relation is healthy it is good, healthy relation is a type which is not based on abusing each other, * I agree, but if it goes negatively, better to be terminated, boys consider girlfriend as the girl that have affair with her. good aim should be considered for friendship, *I agree, human should know each other before marriage, being friend help to know each other, but in marriage it may happen after 2 years, they should know one's characters for marriage.* even if the motivation is not marriage they should not abuse each other, a healthy relation for helping each other is ok, *I think the boy with the motivation of merely friendship is not pure and ok., I personally socialized with my husband for 6 months without Aged and Nomadic(formal announcement and registration) but close family knew.*if the boy love the girl but is unprepared for marriage economically, he should wait(all laughing). * some boy without marital intention they want to just spend their time with the girl.* I personally don't</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy relation is valued</li> <li>• Healthy relation help better marriage ,</li> <li>• Healthy relation help knowing men</li> <li>• Healthy relation help improvement in study and job</li> <li>• Healthy relation is not based on abusing each other</li> <li>• Non-healthy or negative relations better to be ended up.</li> <li>• Men's perception of girlfriend is someone who have sexual relations with</li> <li>• Relations should be based on appropriate aim</li> <li>• Girls should know boys for marriage</li> <li>• Boys who their motive is only being friend are not ok</li> <li>• Boys with economic shortage , if love someone should wait till marriage,</li> <li>• Some boys just want to spend time with girls</li> </ul>	

	<p>know , I have paradox severely, till 2-3 years ago I believed that boys only abuses girls, I saw that when they get friend they want more even sex, *if don't have, it will be terminated.* I agree, if you tell a boy that I don't want to hold my hand, he will not continue with you. but I am not sure that is ok or not because my knowledge is low and have not experience before.* I don't know but 90% of relation connect to sex, because boys have not reached to emotional and mental maturity and feel a natural instinct and they get friend for sex not only accompanying the girl. If boys had enough chastity and their motives was only accompanying, that was ok, but it is not. * I think having boyfriend is not bad but should not be based on abusing; we can go ahead and if reached to sex, say no, that they fear. Kissing and sex not.* I agree but am not sure, have contradiction. I think we cannot go ahead and in the middle leave the situation we are emotionally vulnerable. * I also don't know which is right, is bad or good but I think we can experience at least because we are going to marry with a boy at last (all laugh). * boys are very different, they are not the same, some boys don't tell from the first time that we want to have sex, in the middle it goes gradually, come to my home.. * I agree and disagree, agree because we can know men, disagree if the girl doesn't control her feeling, if not she get hurt severely, I saw among friends, agree, because help better marriage * when I told 100% depend where boy get to know the girl, in parties, street is 100% for sex, about university students am not sure.* it depends to the way the girl behave , the boy can know this is the type that may have sex or not.(6-10).</p>	<p>There are uncertainty about the issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boys often want more in relations</li> <li>• If the girl doesn't let the boy have more physical contact or sex, the boys leave her</li> <li>• There is uncertainty that which is right and wrong</li> <li>• Boys only respond to their natural instinct and want sex in relations</li> <li>• Relations in which the boy have chastity and appropriate motivations are valued</li> <li>• We need know men</li> <li>• Men are different in characteristics</li> <li>• In a relation when it gets to sex we can say no</li> <li>• That is difficult at that stage saying no,</li> <li>• Girls are vulnerable psychologically</li> <li>• Girls who can control their feeling are less vulnerable to these relations</li> <li>• The motivations of relations depend to the way boys and girl get to know each other is e.g. in parties and street, mostly motivations are sex but in university, not sure.</li> <li>• Girl character and behaviour determine what will happen in that relation.</li> </ul>	
<p>FGD 4</p>	<p>NUMBER :11, GOVERNMENTAL UNIVERSITY, DISCIPLINE: PSYCHOLOGY,ALL FROM OTHER</p>	<p>* Motivation is important, for knowing each other and for marriage is ok a healthy relation is ok even going out. even other motives if is healthy and cause improvement in personality is ok.* I agree if it is a healthy and pure relation and my parents be aware of that relation(5)(disagreement of others, that is Namzadi and khistegari).* even if one</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy motivations such as knowing each other, marriage, and other healthy motivations are ok when it comes to relations</li> <li>• Healthy relations some times lead to improvement of personality</li> </ul>



PROVINCES  
 EXECPT ONE, AGE  
 RANGE 20-21,  
 DATE 1385

have good family, but she needs some one from opposite sex to talk with like boyfriend, everyone has certain circumstances or condition, like a friend of same sex it can be helpful or destructive.\* I see those who have boyfriend have bad psychological feeling and has been hurt(5), depend to the boy and how sensitive is the girl. \* disagree to such relation particularly with no intention for marriage because women get hurt very much and influence their life in future. boys are opposed to girls and don't get hurt, other reason: religious values are important, \* I think this is a need of everyone but it is true, girls get hurt very much because get emotional very soon, if don't feel emotionally attached, it is ok , women with marriage intention enter to a relation and it is not go to marriage in our society talk behind her, some fear of what people say behind them.\*I agree that some don't feel emotionally dependent, they say from first that they don't intend for marriage(a discussion among all) \* girls should define from first that you don't have to touch me or other condition.\* but we cannot trust boys, we don't know them, I fear personally\* the relation which have these things(sex) is not ok, (8).\* I have contradiction I see some have good relation. \* We 4-5 are in contradiction. we are separated during school from boys and in university we are mixed, in year 2-3-4 when we want to know each other, the get separated and go to work.

- Parents are suggested to be aware of healthy relation
- The need for having relation with OS doesn't necessarily show a weakness in family relations
- Having Bf or having friend of same sex can have + or - consequences.
- Psychological damage are seen among those entered in such relations
- The extent of sensitivity of the person determines the extent of psychological damage.
- Not agree with relations with no marital intention
- Boys get hurt less than girls
- Religious values are important.
- Girls get hurt more than boys
- Most girls have marital intention
- Girls fear of what people talk behind them if their relation does not end to marriage
- Girls should determine everything from first time if they want to be in a healthy relation
- Boys are not trustable
- I personally fear
- There are contradiction for we 4-5 , we see some who have very good relations
- We are separated from boys , we need know them in university (within a short time)

### A SAMPLE OF THEMATIC CHART FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

**THEME: Attitude towards relationship with opposite sex including sex, conditions, current and previous views, rationales, criteria for knowing partner's motivation of sex(theme number : 6.1)**

IDs	6.1 Relationship with opposite sex including sex, conditions, current and previous views, rationales, criteria for knowing partner's motivation of sex	Elements/dimensions identified in order identified in chart	Categories/classes
Post_IDI_1	<p>• کلا نظرت راجع به روابط با جنس مخالف قبل از این رابطه و بعد از این رابطه چیه؟ روابط باید باشه یا نه چه حدی؟</p> <p>• قبل از اینکه این رابطه را داشته باشم حس میکردم ادم با کسی که دوستش داره خوب چه ایرادی داره آدم روابط داشته باشه ملاک دوست داشتن خیلی برام مهم بود به چیزی که الان بین ما جوانان نیست واقعا" الان اگه کسی بخواد بر اساس اینکه یکی رو دوست داره یک کاری رو بکنه بزرگترین اشتباهو کرده حداقل توی روابط دوستی اش و فکر میکردم اصلا" کار اشتباهی نیست ولی ...</p> <p>• یعنی فکر میکردی رابطه جنسی هم اشکال نداره؟</p> <p>• رابطه ای که بکارت از بین بره چرا مخالف بودم</p> <p>• پس رابطه ای که بکارت از بین نره مثل مقدم دهان و لمس اشکال نداشت</p> <p>• اگه نمیتونم بگم اشکال نداره چون من خوردم با رابطه از مقدم مخالف بودم ولی در معرض قرار گرفتن متفاوتم کنم ولی فکر میکنم به اشتباهی که بود این بود که حس میکردم مثلا" ممکنه که دو نفر پیش هم بخوابند و هیچ اتفاقی نیفته</p> <p>• دقیقا" این اشتباهی بود که من کردم اصلا" فکر نمیکردم فکر میکردم خوب تو دوستش داری و کنارش میخوای ولی اصلا" فکر نمیکردم توی ذهنیت اونها به چیز دیگری میگذره من با اینش مخالف نبودم و اشتباه میکردم ولی الان میگفتم نه کلا" رابط جنسی نه اشتباه از این قدم شروع میشه که ادم خونه طرف بره خونه ای که اون شخص تنها باشه حتی اگه خونواده اش هم باشن مادر ما خیلی زمینه سازند برای پسر هاشون</p> <p>• قیلا" پس فکر نمیکردی دو نفر بخوابند بطل هم ممکن است مسئله ای پیش نیاید الان اگه کسی باهات مجدد دوست بشه و بهت بگه بیا خونمون بتر هم میری؟ (۱۱-۱۲) • حداقل ما ایرانی ها با دوستی به هیچ جا نمیرسیم چون زمینه ساز همه چیزون سویی استفاده است به نظر من به کسی هم که الان به قصد ازدواج میاید اون خیلی ذهنیت خراب تره بخاطر اینکه اون میخواد به اصل مطلبی هم که تو حتی بکارت رو هم از دست بدی برسه باز حداقل دوست من که به من میگفت در حد دوستیه این رو حداقل حفظ میکرد (بکارت) ولی اینکه دلمه پنهان از دواج میده فکرش رو فراتر برده و کارش رو هم میکنه بدون شک به همین دلیل دیگه حالا (۱۲) • چه نوع رابطه ای پس مناسبه؟</p> <p>• دوستی بدون رابطه جنسی ، اشتباه از اینجاست که ادم خوتشون بره</p> <p>• پس رابطه دوستی رو قبول دارم در حد اینکه حرم ما حفظ بشه (D4+۱۲)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before my recent experience I thought it is ok to have relation with someone you love, but now I think that is a big mistake(lesson learnt)</li> <li>• Nowadays there is no relationship based on love</li> <li>• I was agree with relation with O.S. but should take care of virginity</li> <li>• There was a misperception for me that if I sleep with my BF nothing will happen,</li> <li>• I was opposed with anal sex but I was exposed to it and I could not resist it (11-12)</li> <li>• I did not think that boys think only of sex( differently )</li> <li>• The big mistake start when the girl goes to the boy's home while he is alone at home(11_12)</li> <li>• Feel of regret of sexual relation</li> <li>• I don't agree with friendship with OS at least here in Iran because it is based on abusing each other</li> <li>• Boys who says their motives is marriage are even worse because they may cause you lose your virginity and then they</li> </ul>	<p>-The influence of sex on the attitude(consequences)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (big mistake)don't agree</li> <li>• No love relationship exist</li> <li>• Reached to the belief that young people abuses each other</li> <li>• Marital motives stated by some boys may cause you lose your virginity(more worse)</li> </ul> <p>-rational :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misperception about men's motives and differences with women</li> <li>• No information about anal sex</li> <li>• No power to resist anal sex</li> <li>• First mistake is going home with BF alone</li> </ul> <p>-Feeling after end of relation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regret</li> </ul> <p>-Circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Iran sex should not exists between OS before marriage because young people abuses each other</li> <li>• Virginity should be maintained if young people have premarital relation</li> </ul>



post_IDI 2	<p>• راجع به این دانشم می‌رسیم حالا شما اگر بخوای توصیه کنی به رابطه جنسی قبل از ازدواج یعنی منظور اینه که باید رابطه عاطفی و عشق و علاقه واقعی وجود داشته باشه اگر بخواید رابطه وجود داشته باشه؟</p> <p>• به درسته بخاطر اینکه به نظر من خیلی از درصد های ازدواج توی همین رابطه خلاصه میشه آگه من نتونم شوهرم رو ارضا کنم یا شوهرم نتونه منو ارضا کنه توی رابطه جنسی شاید واقعا" توی بقیه جهات زندگی اصلا" خوب نباشه</p> <p>(۱۰) • یعنی الان توصیه میکنی به دخترها که اگر با کسی دوست شدند و ازش رابطه جنسی خواست باهاش داشته باشند ؟</p> <p>• به شرط اینکه بدوند که طرف قابل اونها را دوست داره ؟</p> <p>• توی طولانی مدت میشه فهمید که منو طرف مقابل برای چی میخواد فقط بریا سرگرمیم یا نه واقعا" دوستم داره و وقت برام میزاره ، کسی که روز تولد ادم رو یادشه و به هدیه به ادم میده کسیه که علاقه داره به ادم دوست داره نه اینکه از تو فقط به استفاده ای بکنه و بره</p> <p>(۱۰)</p>	<p>go away(12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally I agree with friendship with OS but the boundaries should be kept safe.(12)</li> <li>• If two people are having sex they have to love each other</li> <li>• I find sex necessary if they love each other because if they wanted to marry to should be able know how they are in sexual performance since many divorces is because of unsatisfactory sexual relations</li> <li>• In long term someone can understand the boy has loved her or not, the one who do care, spend time for her(10)</li> </ul>	<p>-Circumstances for having sex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love each other</li> <li>- attitude on PM sex</li> <li>• Positive because they know each other sexual performance to prevent divorce</li> </ul> <p>-Criteria to find out relationship based on love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time spending</li> <li>• Doing care</li> </ul>
post IDI 3	<p>• پس نظر شخصی تو راجع به رابطه دختر و پسر با جنس مخالف قبل از ازدواج چیه ؟ مثلا" خوبت دختر داشته باشی ؟</p> <p>• به چیزی بگم من برای دختر خردم رفتاری که مالم باهام داشت انجام میدم شاید خیلی نصیحتش بکنم ولی به جاهایی خیلی محدودش میکنم حتی برای دوست پسر داشتنش تا به منی محدودش میکنم چون میدونم که در هر حال اون پسر بازشو میکنه به روش نمیاورم ولی میزارم که اون ترسه رو از من داشته باشه چون همون ترسه باعث میشه به سری کارها رو نکنه</p> <p>• کلا" توصیه ات چیه به دخترها ؟ کلا" نظرت چیه در مورد رابطه قبل از ازدواج ؟ رابطه تا چه ؟</p> <p>• به چیزی بگم الان بکلرت تو جامعه ما به جوری جا افتاده که مثلا" فلاتی وقتی دختره ... مثلا" من خردم دخترم ولی خوب همه راهی رو رقت ولی خوب .. ببخشید اینته راه(خنده) . که دیگه چیزی نداره که دلیل بر پاکی می یعنی دلیل بر اینه که من تابحال رابطه ای نداشتم در واقع من شوهرم رو گول میزنم با این حالت درسته . در واقع تو فرهنگ ما باید جوری جا بیفته که این مسئله برامون خیلی مهم نباشه من خیلی از پسر ها رو دیدم که مسئله بکلرت براتون اونقدر اهمیت نداره</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I agree to relation between OS premarital , but until a certain age the girls should be restricted and they should have a fear , this fear cause they don't involve to any affairs</li> <li>• Regarding hymen , nowadays for instance a girl may have done all thing in relation with OS except vaginal sex and it is considered virgin, this doesn't mean , boys should change their view towards virginity(14)</li> <li>• Finally I agree to relationship before marriage with someone who you love</li> <li>• However it depend to the person (girl) if she is very delicate and</li> </ul>	<p>-Attitude on premarital relation: positive</p> <p>- Circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age limit</li> <li>• Love</li> <li>• Not to be very sensitive and emotional</li> </ul> <p>-Societal change or adaptation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boy's attitude should be changed towards virginity because intact hymen is not good sign of virginity(14)</li> </ul>

	<p>نداره          (۱۴) • نظرت بالاخره در مورد رابطه جنسی قبل از ازدواج چیه؟ دختر ها رابطه داشته باشند؟          • نظرم اینکه که رابطه جنسی قبل از ازدواج خوبه داشته باشند          • باکی؟          • با کسی که دوستش داشته باشند آخه به بدی هم داره در مورد آدم های مختلف مثلاً "آدم یکی رو مبینه میگه تو رابطه داشته باشی خوبه یکی هست که میگه تو رابطه داشته باشی بده بخاطر اینکه یکی هست که اون رابطه باعث میشه که خیلی وابستگی و خیلی تکررات ایجاد بشه و رابطه طوریه که خیلی سریع آدم دید به آینده پیدا میکنه بعد که رابطه کات میشه خیلی صدمه میخورند واسه همین بهتره که اصلاً "دوست نشند          (۱۴) • بالاخره نظرت چیه راجع به رابطه جنسی قبل از ازدواج چیه؟          • خوبه باید داشته باشند          D5+(۱۵)</p>	<p>sensitive and through a simple relation , plan for future very much, if the relation end , she may get hurt very badly so I do not recommend them(14)</p>	
<p>post_IDI 4</p>	<p>• الان نظرت راجع با جنس مخالف چیه؟ نظرت قبل از اینکه رابطه داشته باشی چه بوده؟          • میدونی آخه جامعه ما نمی پسندند وگرنه از نظر من بد نیست .          • قبل از اینکه رابطه داشته باشی چی؟          • قبلش نه حتی بوسیدن هم برام خیلی سنگین بود و فکر میکردم وای من دیگه خیلی دختر بدی هستم و من دیگه باید بمیرم          • الان چی فکر میکنی؟          • الان میدونی هر کسی نیاز داره به این رابطه نه صرفاً "رابطه میکنم ها ، نیاز عاطفی اینکه یکی دوستش داشته باشه یکی لمسش کنه یکی ببوسش یکی بغلش کنه پس این رابطه را موافقی؟          • بله          • در چه حدش رو؟          • نه در حدی که با هر کسی که فقط دوست باشه اینکه تنش رو در اختیار هر کسی که فقط میخواد باهش دوست باشه نه اصلاً موافق نیستم          • یعنی باید چه شرط دیگه ای داشته باشه که موافق باشی؟          • مثلاً بخوانند با هم زندگی کنند          • یعنی ازدواج بکنند؟          • من خودم شخصاً با کسی دوست نمیشم مگر عاشقش باشم نه اینکه از اولش و اون باشه که میخوام باهش زندگی کنم یعنی خصوصیتشو داشته باشه</p>	<p>• I agree with relation with OS but our society does not accept          • Before relationship, in my view even kissing was bad and I though I should die because I had kissing but now I think this a need, not sex, but the emotional need that some one love her, touch her, hug her          • I don't agree to relation with anybody, you should love him and want to marry him          • I personally think love is important criteria for friendship, some one who have the right characteristics          • Even sex is ok if they love each other , sex necessitate of a 2 year relation if it is going on</p>	<p>• Attitude :          - Change by age :I agree now with relation with OS, while before in my view even kissing was bad          - Reason of attitude change: feel of a need to be loved with OS, to be touched and hugged with OS etc.          • Circumstances for sex:          - Love          - Marriage intention          - Have appropriate characteristics          • Rational for sex: sex come</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• یعنی تماس جنسی رو هم موافقی ؟</li> <li>• آه مشکلی نیست... میدونی آخه لازمه اش میشه... به پسر ۲۰ ساله هیچوقت نمیتونه بدون رابطه جنسی دو سال باهات دوست بمونه آگه من هم بهش سکس ندم میره دنبال یکی دیگه شاید من به تماس جنسی احتیاجی نداشته باشم چون عموماً خانمها خیلی تحریک نمیشنند احتیاج ندارند من اینجوری فکر میکنم یعنی خودم اینجوری هستم الان یک ساله که تماس جنسی نداشتم شاید به بغل و بوسه احتیاج داشته باشم ولی به اون سکسه احتیاج ندارم ولی اونجوری که میدونم آقایون اینجوری نیستند</li> <li>• پس دوست داشتن خیلی برات اصله ؟</li> <li>• بله</li> </ul>	<p>because boys need sex and sexual drives are much more than females(difference between men and women in sexual drives)(15-16)</p>	<p>up in a long love relationship because boys sexual desire is resistible and is more than girls(different between men and women in sexual desires and control)(15-16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of norms: society does not accept</li> </ul>
<p>post_IDI5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• نظرت الان و قبل از تماس جنسی در مورد روابط با جنس مخالف و اینکه تا چه حد نظرت چیه ؟</li> <li>• قبل از اینکه رابطه داشته باشم فکر میکردم که نباید داشته باشم تا وقتی ازدواج کنم ولی الان فکر میکنم تنه با هر کسی ولی با کسی که میدونم ازدواج میکنم و دوستش دارم هیچ اشکالی نداره آدم رابطه داشته باشه</li> <li>• دیدش نسبت به تو عوض نشد ؟</li> <li>• خیلی عاشق تر شد و خیلی احساسش قوی تر شد</li> <li>• پس شرط دوست داشتن مهمه ؟</li> <li>• بله</li> <li>• با داشتن دوست پسر موافقی ؟</li> <li>• بله هیچ ایرادی نداره به نظر</li> <li>• گنتی قبلاً با داشتن تماس جنسی قبل از ازدواج مخالف بودی پس چطور باهات کنتر اومدی ؟</li> <li>• خیلی سخت بود تا منتهای با خودم خیلی درگیر بودم که من با اون عقاید چرا اینکار رو کردم مسرت شدم ایبا خدا منو می بخشه بخاطر این موضوع</li> <li>• احساس گناه میکردی ؟</li> <li>• بله</li> <li>• چه نوع سکس داشته باشن قبل از ازدواج ؟</li> <li>• من نمی تونم قضاوت کنم که همه چی رو رو داشتم</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before relation , I thought that I shouldn't have sex, but after my relation I think with some one who may marry or love him is ok relationship</li> <li>• After sex he became more attracted to me</li> <li>• For me at first sex was very difficult , I thought I committed a sin and thought whether God will forgive me for that</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change to liberal after relation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Love</li> <li>- Marital intention</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lesson learned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sex improve the relation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Feeling at first sex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regretful</li> <li>- Feel of committing a sin</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>post 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• خودت نظرت راجع به روابط قبل از ازدواج چیه ؟ یعنی دختر ها باید رابطه داشته باشن یا نه ؟ اگر آره تا چه حد ؟</li> <li>• آره من نظرم اینکه دو جنس مخالف بهم گرایش دارند من خودم دوست دارم رابطه باشه کسی بگه من دارم منمن نمی کنم عیب نمیدونم ولی خوب چون جامعه ما اینجوریه من خودم به این مشکل برخوردی و ازدواجم بخاطر به هیچین مسئله ای خراب شد اینه که خوب جامعه نمی پسنده که دختر قبل از ازدواج سکس داشته</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I like personally relation with OS and if some one have such relation I don't blame or prohibit her but because of our society, my marriage faced a problem because of such relations , I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attitude : agree with relation with OS</li> <li>• don't blame girls ho have premarital sex</li> <li>• lesson learned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- because of societal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>باشه و بکارش تو دست بده بخاطر همین میگم که دختر باید تو اینجور مسائل مراقب باشه</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• یعنی بکارش تو حفظ کنه ؟</li> <li>• بله حفظ کنه</li> <li>• خوب یعنی تماس داشته باشه و بکارش تو حفظ کنه یا نداشته باشه ؟</li> <li>• خوب اگه بتوند نداشته باشه خیلی بهتره</li> <li>• پس فقط در حد بیرون رفتن باشه ؟</li> <li>• خوب نظرم اینه که اگه به پسری با به دختری سکس داشته باشه اگه هم میخواست از دواج کنه دیگه نمیکنه</li> <li>• پس سکس داشتن باعث میشه نظر از دواج پسر ها عوض می شه ... خوب اگه به دختر از مقعد اینکار رو کرده باشه چی ؟</li> <li>• اگه قصد از دواج داشته باشه نباید از مقعد هم حتی نزدیکی داشته باشه میدونی واسه چی واسه اینکه سن از دواج رفته بالا و این به نیازی است برای دختر و پسر .. چرا برای پسر عیب نیست میگن پسر عیب نداره بزار همه کارهاشو بکنه بعد بره از دواج کنه ولی واسه دختر عیب می دونن خوب اگه سن از دواج بالا رفته برای دختر هم رفته دیگه پس دختر هم اون نیازو داره پس چرا دختر اون نیازشو مخفی کنه ....</li> <li>• (۱۲-۱۳) • پس با این حساب باید چکار کنه مثلا به دختر ۲۸ ساله که هنوز معلوم نیست چند سال دیگه میخواد از دواج کنه وقتی وارد به رابطه با جنس مخالف شد و اون از سن سکس بخواد باید چه کنه ؟</li> <li>• به نظر من داشته باشه</li> <li>• از راه واژن ؟</li> <li>• چون از راه واژن اون مشکل پیش میاد نه ولی اگه به دختری باشه که سنش بالا باشه مثلا ۲۸-۲۹ ساله اگه هم از طریق واژن بکارش رو از دست بده میتونه بخاطر استقلال مالی که بدست آورده اون مسئله رو ترمیم کنه دکتر بره</li> <li>• (۱۳) • فکر میکنی همه رابطه های دوستی منجر به سکس میشه ؟</li> <li>• نه من فکر میکنم اگه سکس نباشه دیرتر رابطه قطع میشه حتی امکان داره به از دواج بکنه</li> <li>• یعنی میکنی اگه دختری سکس نداشته باشه امکان داره اون دوستی به از دواج بکنه ولی اگه سکس داشته باشه دیگه به از دواج نمیکنه؟</li> <li>• خیلی موارد نادر ممکنه پیش بیاد من توی دانشگاه با بچه ها که صحبت میکردیم گفتم علت اینکه بعضی ها حتی سکس هم دارنند و به از دواج میچلمه چیه ... به نظر به حرف جالبی زد گفت اگر تو با به نفر دوست بشی توی همون هفته و یک ماه اول بری باهاش سکس داشته باشی خوب این فکر میکنه خوب اینکه اینتر راحت با من سکس داشت با یکی دیگه هم قبلا که دوست بوده رفته حتما ولی وقتی این رابطه توام داشته باشه یکسال دو سال .. نداشته باشی بعد از اون داشته باشی</li> </ul>	<p>think in such relation the girl should be careful not to lose her virginity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think if a boy have marital intention in a relation, the girl agree to have sex , they will not marry anymore , even they should not have anal sex</li> <li>• I don't accept this idea that age at marriage has gone up and this is a need for boys, so let boys do what they want, this is true as well for girls, age at marriage has gone up for girls as well and they also have sexual needs, why girls should hide their sexual drives(12-13)</li> <li>• A 28-29 year old girl if have vaginal sex and lose her virginity, she may be able financially to fix the hymen but younger girls may not</li> <li>• I think those friendship with OS that lead to sex they do not end to marriage</li> <li>• If a girl does not have sex, it may end to marriage</li> <li>• there is a common belief among my peers that those girls who agree to sex in first weeks and months of their relations, the boy think that ok this person is having easily with me sex, she may have had with others similarly, but those girls who postpone their sex to one year after acquaintance these</li> </ul>	<p>norm, I don't recommend girls to lose hymen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- rational: My marriage faced problem because of premarital sex and lack of hymen</li> <li>- if the boy have marital intention, the girl should not have sex with him even anal sex because otherwise he will not marry her</li> <li>- not having sex in a relationship may lead it to marriage</li> <li>- postponing sex in a relationship e.g. one -two years, may lead that relation to marriage because boys don't think the girl is loose(14)</li> <li>• attitude on gender double standard</li> <li>- if age at marriage for boys has gone up, that is also true for girls and they should be treated similarly(12-13)</li> <li>• Circumstance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An older girl(aged 28-29 is economically able to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>خوب این اون فکر و راجع به تو نمی کنه اگه هم بکنه چون خودش بهت وابسته شده دیگه نمی تونه دل بکنه ازت (D9+14)</p>	<p>relations may end to marriage because in this period he became emotionally dependent to her(14)</p>	<p>fix the hymen if she lose it</p>
<p>post 7</p>	<p>من فکر میکنم یک میل جنسی مثل غذا خوردن... ولی این به جوری تو جامعه ما جا افتاده انگار به چیز گناهه.. انگار مثلا" ...وای ما مثلا به چنین میلی داریم چقدر بد... نمی دونم چرا اینجوریه... به نظر من اگر من تشنه میشم و آب میخورم... میل جنسی هم همونه... به نظر من فرقی نمیکنه و من تازه دارم اینهارو میفهمم (۳) حالا در نهایت نظرت راجع به روابط با جنس مخالف بین جوانها چیه؟ قبلاً" چی فکر میکردی حالا چی فکر میکنی؟</p> <p>• قبل از اینکه رابطه داشته باشم به نظر م خیلی احمقانه بود کسی با کسی سکس داشته باشه</p> <p>• الان چی ؟</p> <p>• الان هم احمقانه است</p> <p>• یعنی نباید داشته باشه ؟</p> <p>• نه اینکه نباید داشته باشه ولی به نظر من قبل از ازدواج وقتی دو نفر می خاندن هم ازدواج کنند باید با همدیگه سکس داشته باشند</p> <p>• اگه میخواند با هم ازدواج کنند ؟</p> <p>• لره بخاطر اینکه فکر میکنم اگه یکی با یکی ازدواج کنه و تئونه باهش همبستر بنشه نمی تونه باهش زندگیشو ادامه بده چون خواهر من اینجوری شد که از شوهرش جدا شد ...</p> <p>• خواهرت چرا جدا شد ؟</p> <p>• خواهر من از شوهرش بدش میومد که بهش دست بزنه</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual activity and needs is something like having food , that is a need , like drinking water, why it is considered badly in our society?(3)</li> <li>• before my relation I thought it is very foolish to have premarital sex , but now I think the girl know the boy very well and know he loves her they can have sex but they should respect their boundaries and protect themselves from diseases(take hygienic measures)</li> <li>• if they want to marry each other they should have sex to find out their sexual performance whether they can live with each other</li> <li>• my sister failed her marriage because she had a traditional marriage and did not like her husband sex(21)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Positive attitude. On premarital sex because it should be considered as an instinct need, why it is not (complaining???)!!!(3)</li> <li>- Change in attitude to liberal, before I was considering it as a foolish but now after starting relation I believe they can have sex with respect to boundaries and take care of their health</li> <li>- Sex is necessary if they want to marry to find out about sexual performance and prevent future divorce because of dissatisfaction of sexual life(21)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>• ازدواج سنتی بود ؟</p> <p>• سنتی بود دوست که بودند ولی دوستهای خانوانگی بودند ماها با هم بزرگ شده بودیم ..</p> <p>• یعنی دوستش نداشت ؟</p> <p>• نه اون پسر . مثل اینکه خواهر منو خیلی دوست داشت</p> <p>• پس تو میگی دختر و پسر ها با هم دوست باشند ولی اگه قصد ازدواج دارند با همدیگه سکس داشته باشند ؟</p> <p>• ببینید به نظر من پسر و دختر ها باید با هم دوست باشند با همدیگه سکس هم حتی داشته باشند ولی این واقعا نیاز به به شناخت داره واقعا دختره بدونه که ..حالا فقط دختر ها مورد دام قرار نمی گیرند حتی پسر ها هم هستند که ..اینجوری بشند ولی من میگم دختره باید طرفشو بشناسه بدونه که این طرفشو دوست داره حتی اگه نمیخواد باهاش ازدواج کنه اگه میخواد باهاش رابطه داشته باشه اولاً که به نظر من بهداشت و اینها رو خیلی باید رعایت کنه بعدش هم به حریمی روی حفظ بکنه و واقعا بدونه پسر و واقعا اونو دوستش داره که این رابطه رو باهاش برقرار کنه</p> <p>• پس ملاک دوست داشتن خیلی مهمه e4 8d+(۲۱)</p>		
post 8	<p>من یک ایده خاصی راجع به مقوله سکس و کلا رابطه با جنس مخالف داشتم برام خیلی حالت تقدسی داشت به واسطه مطالعاتی که داشتم (۵)بعد خیلی جالبه به سری ادم ها سکس محور اصلی زندگیشونه به سری نه در کنار بقیه چیز های زندگیشو خوب سکس هم هست</p> <p>• پسر ها یا دخترها؟</p> <p>• هر دو.....من به دوستی دارم دختره ..این همون دختریه که به من پیشنهاد سکس داد دوست پسرشو داره و با پسر های دیگه هم سکس داره و اصلا سکس برایش مهم نیست سکس برایش به مقوله ای است که الان مثلا با این پسر سکس داره انگار الان داره تو این رستوران غذا می خوره بعد توی به رستوران دیگه من هم رستمن چون به مقوله خیلی شخصیه به من مربوط نیست که بگم فلانی تو چرا اینکارو میکنی یا من دوستایی دارم که با به آمدند و همیشه هم با هموندت خوب قاعدتا از نظر اخلاقی خوب خیلی صحیحه که اگه آدم بخواد سکس بکنه (۱۱) • خوب حالا نظر خودت راجع به روابط قبل از ازدواج چیه ؟ دختر ها باید رابطه داشته باشند ؟ نباید داشته باشند ؟</p> <p>• باید داشته باشند</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sex was an important and holy matter in my life because of my previous studies(5)</li> <li>• for some people, sex is axis of their life, both girls and boys, I have a friend who have her BF and have sex with different people like having lunch in different restaurant, but some friends have one BF and have sex with that certain person which is morally acceptable(11)</li> <li>• I agree to relations before marriage even have sex because one of the main issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Sex as a Holy matter in life (5)</li> <li>o Sex is acceptable morally when is with a certain person, multiple partner is immoral(11)</li> <li>-Premarital sex is important because the girl achieve experience and this guarantee her future marital life(16)</li> <li>o Blaming boys who</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>• مهمترین چیزی که توی رابطه زناشویی وجود داره چیزی که برای همدیگه نگهشون میداره سکسه مرد اگه از سکس زنش خوشش نیاد قطعاً" میره سراغ کس دیگه ای فقط کافیه به زره اینها قید و بند نداشته باشند که معمولاً خاتم ها بیشتر دارند بخاطر نوع تربیتی که دارند اقاویون خیلی راحت رها میکنند میرن دنبال به زن دیگه</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• دیگه چی ؟</li> <li>• بتوند سکس خوبی داشته باشند</li> <li>• منظور بتون بدون دخول دیگه ؟</li> <li>• نه هر جور که میتوند به نظر مردی که براش مهمه ...بین من الان خورم بکارت دارم ولی اگر با کسی بخوام روزی ازواج کنم و بگه من تو رو میخوام چون تو باکتره ای امکان نداره من با این آدم ازواج کنم یعنی این آدم انقدر احمقه که خودش تو زندگیش همه کار کرده و من حالا بیام و همه چیزو دو دستی تقدیم کنم</li> <li>• پس تو میگی باید رابطه داشته باشند ؟</li> <li>• بله</li> </ul> <p>D11+17)</p>	<p>in marriage is having good sex specially men seek sex other sides if their wife does not have good sex(16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although I have my hymen , but if a boy want me because I am virgin I never marry him because he has done every thing and now that is important for him that I am virgin(16)</li> </ul>	<p>seek virgin girls because of gender imbalance(16)</p>
<p>post 9</p>	<p>• خودت نظرت راجع به رابطه دختر و پس ما چیه ؟</p> <p>• خیلی به فریش بستگی داره من الان خودم از رابطه قبلم خیلی خوشحال و راضیم برای اینکه فکر میکنم زنها خیلی کم تجربه میکنند مگه چند دفعه زندگی میکنیم که به بخشی رو تو زندگی هیچموقع درک نکنیم من مثلاً خوشحالم که درک کردم مثلاً اینجوری بهش فکر میکنم ولی مثلاً خیلی دختر ها رو دیدم که این اتفاق برایشون میافته بعد میگن وای حالا دوباره چه جور ازواج کنم من که دیگه دختر نیستم به نظر من به امش بستگی داره اگه بتونه باهش کنار بیاد خوب چرا</p> <p>• یعنی چی اگه برای ازواجش مشکل پیش نیاد ؟</p> <p>• نه اگه از لحاظ روحی می تونه بنهمه چرا اینکارو کرده بپذیره ....</p> <p>• (۱۶) پس نظرت اینه که اگه بتوند باهش کنار بیان کلا رابطه داشتن خوبه ؟</p> <p>• نمی تونم کلی نظر بدم چون به چیزیه که تجربه کردم توی مسئله خاصی واقعاً نمیتونم بسطش بدم شاید به روز بنهم که خیلی اشتباه کردم شاید به روزی بگم چرا اینکارو کردم هنوز فرسیدم به جلی که بگم اشتباه کردم (۱۷)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It depends very much to the person, I am personally very happy with my previous relation. I think women are unlikely experience sexual pleasure and I am happy that I had the chance in my life to have this opportunity , this is important section of our life, some girls regret afterward that how to marry , and so for and so on, so this depends very much to the person</li> <li>• If the girl accept emotionally the rational for doing sex, this relation has not bad influence on her(16)</li> <li>• However I may reach to a point sometimes in future that why I have done premarital sex(17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling after sex       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Girls are different when they evaluate themselves after sex,(person dependent)</li> <li>- I was happy because that was a unique opportunity in my life to experience that important section of life (pleasure)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Influence of sex :       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Girls who emotionally accept, they get hurt less likely than those not(16)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• No general recommendation for premarital sex(17)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I cannot give a general recommendation about relation with OS before marriage(17)</li> </ul>	
<p>post 10</p>	<p>• خودت نظرت چیه راجع به روابط دختر و پسر در چه حدی باشه باید باشه یا نه و چرا ؟</p> <p>• خوب رابطه فکر میکنم لازمه برای چی ؟</p> <p>• خوب بالاخره بعد از یه سنی می خان از دواج کنن بالاخره باید به شناختی از جنس مخالف داشته باشند خیلی از دوستانم مثلاً شناخت خاصی نداشتن مثلاً یکی از دوستانم به اجبار پدرش وقتی پدرش فهمید که دوست پسر داره قضیه جدی هم نبود از دواج کردند اصلاً راضی نبود بعد از یکسال هم طلاق گرفت ... فکر میکنم باید شناخت باشه ولی... والدین باید خیلی به بچه ها کمک کنند تو این زمینه نه هر دوستی یعنی ... خوب الان خیلی از دوستی ها ... پسر ها اکثراً" برای سکس میخوان الان توی دوستان من هستن که پسره اومده میگن که یه دوستی پیش اومده همه به همچین چیزی رو مطرح کردند خیلی بده به نظر من اگه جامعه مون بازتر باشه به همچین مشکلاتی ممکنه پیش نیاد یعنی توی همه بچه ها یه همچین چیز هایی هست کمترین دختر پسری هستن که با هم دوست باشند و سکس نداشته باشند</p> <p>• خوب بالاخره شما میگید دختر و پسر ما با هم رابطه داشته باشند ؟ اگه بله تحت چه شرایطی ؟</p> <p>• فکر میکنم .. باید ... نمی گم باید ... ولی اگه تو نفر همدیگرو دوست داشته باشن ... ولی اگه در حد یه چیز سطحیه در حد اینکه ادم بره بیرون و چیز خلصی نباشه نه ... ولی من اگه بخوام سکس داشته باشم همیشه ترجیح میدم با کسی سکس داشته باشم که دوستش داشته باشم نمیخوام با کسی که دوستش ندارم یه همچین اتفاقی بیفته پس دوست داشتن رو ملاک و مجوزی میدونی برای اینکه سکس داشته باشن ؟</p> <p>• بله</p> <p>• سکس در چه حدی داشته باشن ؟</p> <p>• خوب از راه وازن خوب خیلی خطر ناکه</p> <p>• از نظر پلر شدن پرده بکارت ؟</p> <p>• هم از اون نظر هم از این نظر که وقتی پرده نباشه خیلی امکان مریضی ها بیشتره ... برای یه دختر خوب یه پسر این مشکلاتو نداره ...</p> <p>• یعنی چی ؟</p> <p>• خوب مکنه عفونت پیش بیاد</p> <p>• بخاطر اینکه پرده نیست ؟</p> <p>• بله</p> <p>• یعنی فکر میکنی پرده به ملمعی است برای اینکه عفونت به بالا نره ؟</p> <p>• بله</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude positive :</li> <li>• Rational:</li> <li>• Knowing OS for marriage and preventing divorce</li> <li>• Role of parents in getting know the OS among youth</li> <li>• Motivation is mostly sex for boys</li> <li>• Few relations doesn't involve sex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Circumstances</li> <li>- Love</li> <li>- Keeping hymen because of preventing infection (17)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	



post 11	<p>D13(17)</p> <p>• کلا خودت نظرت راجع به رابطه با جنس مخالف توی جوینها چیه؟ فکر میکنی جوینها باید رابطه داشته باشند؟</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• بله</li> <li>• تا چه حد؟ بکار تشونو حفظ کنند نکنند؟</li> <li>• اون خیلی شخصیه به نظر من شاید یکی دوست داشته باشه اینکارو بکنه یکی نه ولی من همیشه فکر میکنم باید ارتباط داشته باشند چون خیلی تاثیر داره</li> <li>• چه نوع ارتباطی داشته باشند؟ ارتباط جنسی؟</li> <li>• جنسی بله</li> <li>• تا چه حد؟ لمس مقعد وازن اورال؟</li> <li>• میگم بستگی به طرف داره</li> <li>• چرا؟</li> <li>• چون من فکر میکنم توی زندگی مشترک که دو نفر می خوان با هم داشته باشند این خیلی عامل مهمیه</li> <li>• یعنی اگه با اونهم نخوان ازدواج کنند باید این تجربه رو داشته باشند داشته باشند؟</li> <li>• بله حتما"</li> </ul> <p>(17)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think there should be premarital relationship between OS if they should know each other, they even can have sex vaginal or non vaginal it is up to themselves, there is no problem because this is important factor in marital life</li> <li>• Even if they do not intend to marry each other they need sexual experience(12)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude positive : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rational :</li> <li>○ Knowing each other</li> <li>○ Critical section in marital life and necessity of having sexual experience(12)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sex is ok complete or not depending to the themselves</li> </ul>
post 12	<p>• خودت کلا نظرت چیه راجع به رابطه دختر و پسر قبل از ازدواج؟</p> <p>• ببین قبل از اینکه نامزد کنم فکر میکردم باید باشه</p> <p>• چرا؟</p> <p>• فکر میکردم آدم برای زندگی بعدش تجربه کسب کنه میبونی آخه من خیلی پروسه متفاوتی رو طی کردم توی این دوره سکس به جاهایی شو توی موقعیتی برخورد کردم که یکی رئیس بود من زیر دست بودم به جاهایی رسیدم که من رئیس شدم اونها زیر دست شدند</p> <p>(16) • حالا که نامزد کردی میگی که روابط بین دختر و پسر نباید باشه در صورتیکه قبل از نامزدی میگفتی باید باشه چرا؟</p> <p>• احساس میکنم ... به چیزهایی تو زندگی ... به جورایی احساس میکنم که همه اونکارهایی که باید توی به زندگی میکردم کردم الان نامزدم برام اون جذابیتی که شاید قبلا "هیچ پسری رو ندیده بودم ..... نداره .... نه اینکه نداشته باشه ..."</p> <p>(23) • فکر میکردی تو باشه یا ندیده باشی خیلی بهتر بود برات؟</p> <p>• لره به اضافه اینکه الان ... الان مثلا "ماملن بلام مثلا " می به من میگن خوش باش مثلا " همین نش ماهه و بهترین دوره وای ولی من احساس میکنم هیچ جذابیتی نداره من زودتر دوست دارم برم خونه خورم و بچه دار بشم</p> <p>(23) • خوب قبلش گفتم که اعتقاد داشتمی دختر و پسر باید روابط داشته باشند .. فقط بخاطر اینکه تجربه کسب کنند؟</p> <p>• فکر میکردم نباید تنها باشند ... حالا تجربه ... البته من به دوستم که منهنشون کمه و الان دوست پسر دارن د بهشون سفارش میکنم بهیچ عنوان اجازه ندید بهترین دست</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before my engagement, I held a belief that these relation with OS should exists, because they should get the experience but now after my engagement, I think it should not be because sex is not exciting anymore and I cannot enjoy like the first time (23) now I like to go and bear kids and have child(23)</li> <li>• St some point in my sexual relationship I was under and naive and at some point I drove the sex and directed it(16)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude change after sex: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before involvement in sex I believed sex is ok to get experient now I regretted because when you marry , sex isn't exciting anymore(23)</li> <li>• Different partners had different sexual experience, some I drove some they(16)</li> <li>• Lesson learned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Even girls should not let their Bf touch them , never let them have sex(24)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>بزنند</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• رابطه دوستی رو موافقی ؟</li> <li>• آره</li> <li>• روابطی جنسی رو ؟</li> <li>• نه</li> <li>• (۲۴) • فکر میکنی رابطه دوستی دوام پیدا میکنه بدون روابط جنسی ؟</li> <li>• بستگی به آدمش داره</li> <li>• اگه تو سن های خودشون آشنا بشند آره دوام پیدا میکنه دارم دور و برم نمونه هاشو دیدم ولی به فاصله های سنی زیاد نه ... مثلا من یکی از مشکلاتم این بود که رامین خیلی از من بزرگتر بود و قدرت دست اون بود (D15+۲۴)</li> </ul>	<p>who are very young and have BF , that don't let their Bf even touch them or have sex with them (24)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think if they get same age Bf their Bf may not ask them sex but if their Bf is much older than them they will not have much power in relation and they want sex(24)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older partners have more power and girls cannot resist on their desire , but same age partners have less power(24)</li> </ul>
pre-13	<p>دیشب، داشتیم با دوستم ... از اورژانس آورده بودنش، اینجوری نیست که بخوایم ضبط کنی ..... حالش خیلی بد بود چند روز بود که من گیر دادم میگم همه شما عقده جنسی دارید و خیر ندارید و همه بیماریهای معده و دل و کمر و ... و اینها مال عقده جنسی است و خودتون خیر ندارید، و سرکوب می کنید و انسان صافگی ام و می گم اینهمه، شما صادق نیستید با خودتون و برای اینست که زحمتش دو برابر داره میشه. (۶) • دقیقا، خوب این نیاز، خونت هم گتتی که وقتی این رابطه را داری احساس آرامش میکنی، حالا کسالتی که ندارند آنها چطور با این نیازشون برخورد می کنند، این يك نیاز است عاطفیه جنسی ؟</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ما نیاز جنسی شون رو بگیریم به کنار، انتهاتی که دارند که میروند سراغش، انتهاتی که ندارند چطور ؟</li> <li>• ببین الان من به دوست دارم دقیقا داره فوق می خونه، فوق ادیان عرفان می خونه، این بچه تشنگ میگه، دارم میدم کلاس تنبور، دارم میدم کلاس هارمونی، دارم میدم کلاس .... یعنی هی گریز می زنه، خودم هم اینجوری بودم ولی هالیم نبود، ببین من میزنم، سه تار زدم، سه تار رو گذاشتم، تنبور زدم، تنبور رو گذاشتم، کلاس خطاطی رفتم، خطاطی رو گذاشتم، نقاشی پورتريت، ... همه نیمه کاره مو من هالیم نبود که چیه، من پورتره رفتم، پورتره رو گذاشتم، من يك مری آواز می خونم و پر می کردم ... می نهمی، یعنی ... ورزش می کردم، هالیم نبود که چمه، الان وقتی میگم که چرا رشد جنسی ام کم است برای اینکه تو سن ۲۴ سالگی به این نتیجه رسیدیم که من نیاز دارم به کسی زنگ بزنه حالمو ببرسه، دقیقا از جنس مخالف، .... یعنی یکی دستمو بگیره از جنس مخالف، یکی لاسمو صدا کنه، از جنس مخالف، چون خیلی ما لاسمو صدا می کنند، اونیه که فرق میکنه، یکی به من بگه، مرضیه، اینهم خیلی مهمه، (۶) (بهر حال ما باید به شعور اون بیرون باید احترام بگذاریم، مطمئنا آدم ها خوششون نمی آید من در اغوش یکی باشم، من مطمئنم که این جا هنوز جا نیتاده و هیچ جایی دنیا، جا نیفتاده است. (۷-۶) • من به يك نتیجه خاصی رسیدم، من در نهایت به این نتیجه رسیدم که مثل ادیان چین که کره زمینیه، تمام هستی رو به تربینه</li> </ul>	<p>When I see my friends who have some physical pains such as pain in stomach, head, back, I believe that these are due to sexual obsession and they do not know (6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those who don't respond to such sexual needs they jump from one branch to another branch, they go to learn tanboor, then leave it and turn into another art they don't know what they want, I was like than and then at age 24 I realized I need some one from opposite sex call me , ask about me and call my first name , these are very important(6)</li> <li>• In our society we should respect other people , our society does not accept people hug or kiss each other in front of others even it is not the case in other countries(6-7)</li> <li>• I believe all girls have sexual obsession and why do you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sexual obsession among those girls who doesn't have any relations and sex cause psycho-physical pain</li> <li>- Distress and wandering state exist among those girls without any relations</li> <li>- A need comes up with age to be with a OS (6)</li> <li>- Societal norms should be respected with regard to outgoing and kissing and hugging(6-7) otherwise we face problems</li> <li>- Sexual obsession among all girls exist and should not be suppressed (8)</li> <li>- Sex important</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



<p>و ماده تقسیم می‌کند، من هم دارم تقسیم می‌کنم اتفاقاً دیروز یکی از دوستانم حالش بد شده بود بهش گفتم، همینجا خوابیده بود، ... به پوچی رسیده بود از حرفی که من بهش زده بودم که شما همتون عقده جنسی دارید اینقدر سرکوب نکنید، (۰۸ الان چی؟ می‌خوام بدونم سن چقدر تاثیر داره، تا ۲۳ سالگی کمتر به این نیاز توجه می‌کردی؟ نمی‌دونم، در نهایت توی همان سیر مطالعاتی من با فریاد آشنا شدم و اندیشه‌های دینی‌اش و بعد صادقانه نشستم با خودم تا امل کردم و دیدم این تتوری بیخودی نیست خدایی‌اش در سراسر جهان داره سرکوب می‌شه، حتی استادهاش ما این رو قبول ندارند اما بعنوان تجربه‌ای که خودت داری، کاری نداری که دیگران چی می‌گند. و تحت تاثیر قرار می‌دهد، همه چیز رو، حتی پس از ازدواج تا حد زیادی، اگر دو نفر از این نظر با هم می‌باشند مشکلات کمتری دارند.</p> <p>(۸-۹) نه منظورم اینست که خودت فکر می‌کنی که باید باشه این تماس (تماس جنسی) قبل از ازدواج؟</p> <p>• نه،  (۹) به هر حال تو فرهنگمون داریم زندگی می‌کنیم اگه بخوای پشت بهش بکنی خوب لای چرخ خودت گذاشتی تجربه هم به من اینو می‌گه تا الان هم، زیاد برخلاف آب حرکت کردن کار خوشایندی نیست (۱۰) خودت هم موافقی، فکر می‌کنی خوبه به همچین عرفی و شناختی قبل از ازدواج؟</p> <p>۲۰ آره چه اشکالی داره؟</p> <p>۱۰ حالا حتی اگر اولش هم اسم ازدواج نباشه؟</p> <p>۲۰ نه، اگر من رو می‌گی، می‌گم من اصلاً حوصله ندارم، اما به سری داره کار می‌کنه، انقدر بچار پارادوکس هستم خودم که می‌تونم بگم برای این خوبه، برای اون خوب نیست، مثلاً برای هم اتاقی من خوب نیست، یا به آقای رابطه داره که معلوم نیست که می‌خواد باهاش ازدواج کنه یا نه؟ این دختر داره آب می‌شه، دارم می‌بینم که قطره قطره آب می‌شود. برای این خوب نیست، این همون بهتره که با هیچ پسری رابطه نداشته باشه، و برگرده خونه و به روش سنتی ازدواج کنه، ۱۰ از چه نظر، از نظر روحی، شخصیتی؟</p> <p>۲۰ آره دیگه، داره می‌کاهد ازش، می‌فهمم، بچه نیستم، دارای ....</p> <p>۱۰ تماس جنسی چی؟</p> <p>۲۰ توی ایران آره،</p> <p>(۱۳) ۱۰ نظر شخصی خوبت رو دارم می‌پرسم که اگه کسی فرصت ازدواج برات پیش نیامد، یا اگر آمد مناسب نبود، در حقیقت با اون راه‌هایی هم که شناخه به شناخه بیره اون‌ها هم ارضا نشده بود خوب اون باید چکار کنه؟ دوست دختر و دوست پسر و نمی‌دونم ... دیگه؟</p> <p>۲۰ اونقدر خسته‌ام و سن بالا رفته که اصلاً دیگه حوصله ندارم، نظر کنه شخصیتی خودم رو بیرونی، با این ویژگی‌ها، این تیپولوژی لکه در نهایت این وابستگی خنجره جدا بشه، من استقلال خودم را بدمت آوردم، که ۲-۱ سال، ۳ سال این وابستگی کم‌رنگتر بشه که شده، گفتم ۴ سال زندگی جدا از به خنجره،</p>	<p>suppress it (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sex influence anything even after marriage it cause matching or no matching (8-9)</li> <li>If I get more independent to my family at older ages, have not got married by the that age I definitely will decide to have even sex (14-15)</li> <li>Anyway we are living in a culture and we should respect it otherwise we face problems (10)</li> <li>I like premarital relationship for knowing each other with motives of marriage, no problem I get bored of being just friend without marriage intention</li> <li>I am in a paradox about relationship , it depends very much to the person, I am looking some friends suffering very much because of their relations , for these type of emotional and delicate people it is better to have traditional marriage</li> <li>I see my sister that after age 30 she is tired because her relationship with her husband is only based on sex nothing more(14-15)</li> </ul>	<p>because that is deterministic factor in marital life (8-9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rational for Positive attitude o relation with PS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knowing each other with marital motives</li> <li>- Paradox in attitude on relation</li> </ul> </li> <li>Circumstances : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Age is and important factor on decision for sex</li> <li>- Independency help you to decide more independently from your family to have sex(14-15)</li> <li>- Not being delicate and sensitive emotionally , these girls are suggested to have traditional marriage</li> <li>- Traditional marriage are only based on sex and girls get bored after a while (14-15)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<p>استقلال شخصي من، تو اجتماع كه جاي خود رو پيدا كردم و مي دونم كه اصلا كجا وايستادم، سرم را از لحاف تازه بيرون آوردم ببينم ملكت چه خبره، تازه تو سن ۲۳ سالگي، با توجه به اين ويژگي هاي كه گفتم، كه مفهوم عقد براي من اينه از نظر شرعي و دستاين براي من رو شده از نظر حكم و قبح اخلاقي اش براي من رو شده، نه .... من هيچ چيزي ندارم.</p> <p>۱۰ يعني منظور چيه؟</p> <p>۲۰ براي من مشكلي نداره، يعني قبل از ازدواج تماس جنسي مشكلي نداره،</p> <p>۱۰ فكر ميكني اگه تا ۵ سال ديگه روابط جنسي قبل از ازدواج برات راحت ميشه انجامش؟</p> <p>۲۰ مسلمه ... (محكم با تن صداي بلند) ... خيلي راحت مي شد برام،</p> <p>• فروغ به شعري ميگه:</p> <p>• « سخن از بيوند مست من و او و هم اغوشي در اوراق كهنه يك دفتر نيست • سخن از دوستي خوشبخت ماست تا شقايق هاي سوخته بوسه تر »</p> <p>• سخن از بيوند مست تو و من تو دختر .....، اسم تو و آقاي فلان نيست و بيوند هم اغوشي دو كلمه نيست خود آدم ها من دارم مي بينم، من زندگي خواهرم رو دارم مي بينم زندگي بعضي نزديك ترين آدم ها رو دارم مي بينم، كه قضيه فقط هم اغوشي است. قضيه فقط جنسي است، زن به ۳۰ سالگي كه مي رسه، به ۳۲ سالگي كه مي رسه، خسته است، داد و فرياد مي زنه كه من ....</p> <p>۱۵-۱۴)</p>		
pre 14	<p>• حالا مي رويم سراغ نظر شخصي خودت، خودت فكر مي كني كه تا چه حد درسته كه رابطه با جنس مخالف داشته باشن؟ دونه دونه از رنايط اجتماعي، روابط دوستي و تماس جنسي برام بگو؟ من از رابطه اي كه بر اساس به سلام بوجود بيايد وبه رختخواب ختم بشه نمي پندم اصلا درست نيست چون هم اساس وجود دارد مخصوصا براي دخترها لسب رواني وجود دارد ولي روابط بوجود مي آيد احساسات قبل از اينكه رابطه جنسي بوجود آيد و بدون كه اگر بخوانند رابطه بوجود آيد و sex بينشون رد و بدل شود بهتره كه قبلش هم ديگر دوست داشته باشيم تا ساپورت كننده روحيه هم باشيم بعد بريم توي رختخواب چون خيلي مي تونه بهتر باشه چه بسا كه ما توي ايران واقعا الان من نمي دونم در اين زمينه چي بايد بگم به لحظه فكر مي كنم كه من چقدر آدم هلي رو دارم مي بينم كه اصلا براشون مهم نيست واقعا == براشون چيز اهميت داره نيست لگر با ديگران خوابيند حتما لنتشو مي برند خيلي دلم مي گيره (۸)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't agree to relations without any recognition and knowledge, start with a hello and end to bed, that is not ok, it is harmful especially for girls.</li> <li>• I agree to those relation that emotional attachment is established and then sex com along but in Iran when I see, love is not important for some young people they sleep with girls or boys and enjoy themselves . I get upset (8)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude:</li> <li>• Circumstances :             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not approving those relations who start without any knowledge of each other ( from hi to bed )is harmful specially for girls, when love establish and then sex comes up, that is ok</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pleasure as a motive among youth is upsetting(8)</li> </ul>
pre 15	<p>حالا خودت چي؟ انگيزه ات چي بود؟</p> <p>۲۰ نمي دونم، حالا، من با اون ارتباط داشتم ولي به كس ديگه اجازه نمي دهم بخاطر اينكه همينكه احساس ميكنم كه به حرريم خصوصي ام وارد شده و همينكه احساس ميكنم پسر ها خيلي سوءاستفاده ميكنند از دخترها، اون هم توي جمله ماه، اگه به</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't know exactly , I had relation but I don't let anybody else to enter my private world</li> <li>• In our society boys abuses girls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No clear view, uncertainty about relation with OS</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>جامعه‌ای بود مثلاً به کشور دیگری زندگی می‌کردم چرا این رابطه را برقرار می‌کردم ولی اینجا نه، (۲۰)</p>	<p>, if I was in other societies I might initiate such relation(20)</p>	<p>- Boys abuses girls in Iran , in other societies I would like to have relation(20)</p>
<p>pre 16</p>	<p>۰ امروزه کم و بیش از گوشه و کنار می شنویم که دخترها با پسرها روابط دارند ، حالا چه رابطه ، رابطه دوستی است یا جنسی است نظر شخص خودت راجع به دوستی چیه ؟ قبل از ازدواج ؟</p> <p>• به نظر من که به رابطه دوستی حتماً باید باشه حالا من اون دختر و پسر که تو خیابوند رو تایید نمی کنم چون خودم اصلاً از اونها نیستم و قبولشون ندارم ولی من پدرم با مادرم دوست بود که باهاش ازدواج کرد و خودش خیلی خوشبخت و به آشنایی قبل از ازدواج خیلی معتقد ، خودم هم این رو خیلی قبول دارم ولی به چارچوبی باید داشته باشه ، خودم شاید چارچوبشو ، اونجیزی که از نظر پدرم بود من رعایت نکردم ، از نظر خانواده ام ، ولی من از نظر خودم کار اشتباهی نکردم ۰ پس نظرت اینه که رابطه دوستی باید باشه ؟ راجع به تماس جنسی چطور ؟ چون به تعدادی هستند که وارد رابطه دوستی می شوند و رابطه جنسی هم برقرار می کنند ، نظر شخصی خودت چیه ؟</p> <p>• اگر واقعا به ازدواج مطمئن باشند فکر نمی کنم اشکال داشته باشه</p> <p>§ یعنی انگیزه ازدواج باشنده مشکلی نداره ؟</p> <p>• بله</p> <p>§ حالا انگیزه ازدواج نباشه چی ؟</p> <p>• نه اصلاً</p> <p>(۷) ولی من الان اگر کسی ، اگر به قصد ازدواج باشه ، اگر شناخت داشته باشم ، دوست ختوانگی باشه ، برادر دوستی باشه ، به شناخت کلی داشته باشنده به نظر من دوست پسر اصلاً مشکلی نداره ، ولی توضیحاتم خوب حالا چه مزایای داره ؟ برام بگو برام بگو ، دوسه ، ببین یکی مثلاً می‌گی که من از دوست پسرم خیلی چیزها یاد می‌گیرم ...</p> <p>۰ خودم رویگم یا ....</p> <p>۰ خودت رینگو ، با داشتن دوست پسر چه حسن های داره ؟</p> <p>۰ خیلی وقت ها زبان آدم رو به دختر نمی فهمه ، به وقتی مه آدم حالش گرفته است ، به وقتی که اوضاعش بهم ریخته یک دوست دختر نمی فهمد ، (۱۸) S چه منی بود ؟ دقیقاً چند مسأله بود که نگرشت عوض شد ؟ این نیاز درت احساس شد ؟</p> <p>• ما سال ۷۹ دوست شدیم ، سال ۸۱ ، تابستان بود که نظرم عوض شد (۸) حسن های تجبه ایت را بگو ، مه حالا فرض کن که می‌شد ، ۱% فرض کن که نشد ؟</p> <p>۰ راهم رو پیدا کردم ، دیدم می‌تونم دنبال چیه ام ، چکار باید بکنم ، من هدف اینه درس رو بخونم ، ترم شه لیسانسو بگیرم خوشحال بشم بعد لیسانس گرفتم ، توی دوستی من چیزهایی که بدست آوردم فهمیدم برای زندگی ام چه کار باید بکنم ، برنامه ریزی یاد گرفتم . فهمیدم اگر چیزی رو می‌خوام باید برسم ، من این رو می</p>	<p>• I agree with relation before marriage but there should be a boundary</p> <p>• My parents had premarital friendship and they are very prosperous now</p> <p>• I personally did not respect to the red lines and boundaries who my father defined</p> <p>• If the motive is marriage, even the sex is ok, otherwise not at all(7)</p> <p>• If the boy is someone who we know, sex is ok</p> <p>• Sometimes same sex friends don't understand us , when you are upset and are not ok a girlfriend doesn't understand you(18)</p> <p>• I learned a lot from my friend even if this friendship doesn't lead to marriage I have not lost anything</p> <p>• The only disadvantage is the fact that age 18 is not the right age for choosing marriage partner, that was too early , at that time I was only looking for</p>	<p>• Attitude positive on relation with OS</p> <p>▪ Circumstance es:</p> <p>- A boundary would be respected</p> <p>- If marital motive s are there sex is ok otherwise not (7)</p> <p>- Knowing the boy important for having sex with him</p> <p>• Rational :</p> <p>- Sometimes same sex friends doesn't understand you when you are upset (18)</p> <p>- You learn from OS</p> <p>- You should know OS</p> <p>• Disadvantage:</p> <p>- Early ages such as 18 is too early to choose martial partner(19)</p> <p>• Change of attitude after relation and by age</p>

	<p>خوام پس می توئم ، بعد . تقریباً هم همه چیز زندگی ام دو ازش دارم ،      O حالا معایب اون چیه و ایم رابطه ما چه عیبی داره ؟      O عیش اینه که آدم ۱۸ سالگی عقل درست و حسابی نداره که بخواد برای يك عمر زندگی اش انتخاب کنه من پیشمون نیست ولی احیای می کنم ۱۸ سالگی عقل آقدر کامل نبود ، شاید اگر به دوستی ساده داشتم بهتر بود ولی من ۱۸ سالگی انتخاب کل زندگی مو کردم ، به نظرم کار درستی نکردم      O یعنی زود بود      O خیلی زود بود      O یعنی احساس می کنی الان معیار ازدواجت با زمان ۱۸ سالگی متفاوت شده ؟      O اونموقع اصلاً توی خط ازدواج و اینها نبودم من بهکسی رو پیدا کردم گفتم این تب منه ، این خدای منه ، این قبول هر کسی گفتم اینانجوری ، من می گفتم نه این خداست . هرکسی ... حرف هیچ رو قبول نکردم بعضی يك چیزهائی ... دیدم نه ، همه می گن هنوز تو زندگی نرفتی ، تو زندگی بری عوض می شده ، این رو قبول می کنم ازسون ، چون بعداز ۴-۵ سال دیدم نه اون چیزهائی مه توی ۱۸ سالگی فکر می کردم همه اش هم این نیست . خیلی چیزهائی دیگر است . خیلی چیزهائی که من فکر می کردم راحت حل می شد و اصلاً مهم نیست الان خیلی وقتی برام معضل می شه O(۱۹) حالا دید خودت نسبت به پسر ها چه جوریه دید مثبت داری یا منفی ؟      O من کلا آدم خوش بینی هستم ،      O اگر پسری بیاد خواستگاری ات آیا کلا با دید منفی نگاه می کنی ، ای وای با کسی دیگر نیوده یا بوده ؟      O خوب من برام بودن نبودن اون با کس دیگری برام مهم نیست چون من معتقدم که پسر حتماً باید دوست دختر داشته باشه حلاله رابطه جنسی رو نمی گم ولی حتماً باید را به داشته باشه ، رابطه دوستی داشته باشه ، دختر هم باید دوست پسر داشته باشه ، بدونه پس فردا تو زندگی این مشکل پیش اومدباید چکار کنه ، بدونه چه جوری باید برخورد کنه ، بدونه ، مرد از چی حوشش می آید ، چکار کنه به نظرم اینها ما رو باید بدوند برای من مهم نیست که طرفی را بخواد بیاد خواستگاری من قبلاً دوست دختر داشت ، شاید اگر دختره جلوی چشم باشه ، بدون این بوده نراحت شم ، باید بدونم مثلا دختره ، فلیشش یا دوستش است اگر جلو چشم من نباشه .      مجبور نباشم هر ماه ، یا دو ماه یکبار ببینم برام اصلاً مهم نیست چون متعتم يك همچنین رابطه باید باشه (۲۰) خوب حالا نظرت رو گفتم ، چرا به همچنین نظری داری ؟ دلایش چیه ؟      • من مثلاً خودم به همچنین چیزی رو هیچوقت قبول نمی کردم و اگر به روز یکی به من می گفت که ۲۲-۲۳ سالگی به همچنین چیزی رو می گی امکان نداشت قبول کنم      § فکر می کنی عوض شدی ، نگرشمت تغییر کرده نه ؟      • لره ، چون قبلاً که دوستام می گفتند اصلاً به نظر من به دختر فامده که به</p>	<p>some one to be my lord and nothing was important for me , after 4-5 years I realized no there are some other things that are important and I had not cared about them at that age and they are important as well(19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My view towards boys in optimistic in general , that is not important for me that the boy have had previous friendship , even girls should have relationship to know the OS, the girl should know how to react in front of men , but I do not care if the girl was not some one who I frequently see her, I belief the relation should be before marriage(20)</li> <li>• My attitude has changed a lot from 2-3 years ago, I thought those girls who have such relations are loose but now when I started such relation, I felt it as a need and need to express my feeling</li> </ul>	
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	<p>همچین کاری رو کرده البته اونها هیچکدام قصد ازدواج نداشتند که به همین کاری رو کردند ، ولی مثلا خودم هم می گم اونموقع به نظر خودم دوست بودیم قصد ازدواج هم داشتیم ولی به همین چیزی رو نمی فهمیم ، اصلا تعریف نشده بود ولی بعد از به مدتی احساس کردم باید ابراز احساسات کنم ، به چنین نیازی تو می پیدا شد</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have had relationship with OS and don't blame those who have such relations but I prefer my daughter in future does not have such relations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson learned:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Though I had relation with OS and don't blame those who have such relation, but prefer my daughter not have such relations</li> <li>- Rich information was obtained Which is useful for other girls and I don't agree with any physical intimacy before marriage(14)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
pre 17	<p>• حالا تا الان راجع به تجربیات خودت بود، حالا به نظر شخصی خودت می خواهم سوال کنم ، به نظر تو آیا بچه ها باید رابطه با جنس مخالف داشته باشند ، برند بیایند و جنس مخالف را بشناسند یانه ؟ نظر خودت چیه ؟</p> <p>• آیا قابل قبول است برای تو که دختر ها ، دوست پسر داشته باشند ؟</p> <p>• برای خودم این مسئله جا افتاده است .</p> <p>• یعنی مواقعی که دوست پسر داشته باشند ؟</p> <p>• برام مسئله ای نیست که یکی داشته باشد یا نداشته باشد ، يك روز عمه ام از من پرسید اگر دخترت يك همچین رابطه ای داشته باشد چی ؟ گفتم ترجیح می دهم نداشته باشد .</p> <p>• یعنی خودت با اینکه این روابط را داشتی ولی ترجیح می دهی که دخترت رابطه نداشته باشد ؟</p> <p>• آره ، ترجیح می دهم نداشته باشد . رابطه ای که داشتم توی همین مه مورد ، خیلی تجربیات مفیدی برام داشته می گم ، خیلی ازبچه ها را خیلی راحت می توانم ، چی می گن ، راهنمایی شون کنم . و این مثلا اینجوری است و اینجوری نیست ، خیلی از این تجربیات که دارم خوشحالم ، درسته از این تجربیات اصلا راضی نیستم ولی تجربیتم همش از خودم نیست مال بچه های دیگر هم هست ، ولی ترجیح می دهم دخترم نداشته باشد .</p> <p>• رابطه صمیم دست گرفتن بوسیدن موافق نیستی اصلا نه برای خودم ، نه برای دوستم ، حتی یکی از دوستم از اینگونه روابط داشت ، رابطه ام را با هاش قطع کردم .</p> <p>(۱۴)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I obtained very useful experiences although I was not happy with my experiences but I can help other young people and provide my experiences for them but I prefer my daughter does not have such relations even I don't agree with physical intimacy such as kissing and handholding(14)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATTITUDE POSITIVE toward OS             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rational :</li> <li>- Need to know OS in order to find what we need in life, for instance my criteria for boys differed by age and that was useful for choosing marriage partner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
pre 18	<p>• نظر شخصی خودت در مورد روابط دختر و پسر چیه ؟ دختر و پسر آیا باید رابطه داشته باشند اگه باید تا چه حد ؟</p> <p>• من فکر میکنم که حتماً باید وجود داشته باشه تا ما پسر ها رو تجربه نکنیم نمی تویم اون چیزی رو که از زندگی می خواهیم رو بدست بیاریم من خودم مثلا تو سن های مختلف به تیپ پسر رو می پسندیم ... فکر میکردم اگه اینجوری اونجوری باشه مثلا خوبه ولی وقتی همونو بدست می اوردم میدیدم نه چقدر ایراد دارد فکر میکنم همین تجربیات زیاد باعث می شه که انتخاب ما برای ازدواج خیلی مناسب تر باشه</p> <p>• تا چه حد پیش بره ؟</p> <p>• من فکر میکنم باید حتماً سکس کامل داشته باشند</p> <p>• خوب چیز بعضشو چکار کنند ؟</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think the premarital relations should exist among boys and girls , we need to have experience with OS otherwise we would not achieve what we need in life for instance in different age I was looking for different type of boys and I found it very useful for choosing appropriate marriage partner even I think there should be a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ATTITUDE POSITIVE toward OS             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rational :</li> <li>- Need to know OS in order to find what we need in life, for instance my criteria for boys differed by age and that was useful for choosing marriage partner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>• خوب بیاید فرهنگمون عوض بشه که داره کم کم هم میشه... یعنی الان اکثریت دختر ها دختر نیستند و اگه این فرهنگ عوض بشه خیلی بهتره</p> <p>• منظور فرزند پسرها و خاتونهاست که بیا دختری که میخواهند ازواج کنند مهم نباشه که دختر باشه ؟</p> <p>• آره</p> <p>• پس نظر شخصی تو اینه که باید باشه حتی سکس کامل هم باشه ؟ چرا ؟</p> <p>• برای اینکه اگه کسی قراره لذت ببره خوب لذت سکس و اینها با دوست پسر خیلی قشنگ تره بخاطر احساس هایی که پیش میاد به نظر من.... بعضش هم اینکه توی زندگی سکس خیلی مهمه اگه من از سکس شوهرم لذت نبرم فکر میکنم خیلی از لحاظ روحی دچار مشکل میشم</p> <p>(۱۱-۱۰)</p>	<p>complete sex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The societal culture regarding virginity should be changed as it is changing , now the majority of girls are not virgin</li> <li>• Sex with BF has more pleasure because of emotional feeling and in future life also sex is very important if I don't enjoy of my husband sex, I think I will face psychological problems(10-11)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sex in important in future marital life and if don't know what to do we face problem (10-11)</li> <li>• Social norm should change regarding virginity</li> <li>- Rational : now majority of girls are not virgin</li> </ul>
pre 19	<p>الیه از کوچکی باید این پایه ها رو گذاشت که رابطه دداشتن این بدی ها رو داره رابطه داشتن تا این حدش خوبه... ولی دیگه بعد از اون... بقول به آقای بود که میگفتند شما کوم دختر و پسری رو ببینی که بیشتر از دو سه جلسه با هم صحبت بکنند بگند ما می خواهیم با هم آشنا بشیم.. بعد اینو بگند ما بخاطر فلان عیب همدیگر رو نپسندیدیم همه اینها منجر میشه به به رابطه....واقعا" کوم دختر و پسری اینطوری با هم آشنا شدند... پس این درست نیست پس اگه اسلام ما گفته که نباید چیز باشه.. یعنی واقعا" خود من دارم تازه پی میبرم... که چه چیزی داریم چه در گراتهایی داریم و هنوز درکش نکردیم وقتی گفته حواسمون جمع باشه... نگاه کردن بر نا محرم تیری از ناحیه... واقعا" تیری از ناحیه... یا نگاه شروع میشه هر کس گفته عشقه دروغ گفته... جاذبه های فردیه هومسه....(۷) شما دچار تضاد شدید توی خوابگاه رفتار بچه ها خیلی رفتار افسار گسیخته ای شده بود که از شهرم تمام میامند رابطه پیدا میکردند (۸) بستگی داره میگم حتی کسی بود که ظاهرش نه مثل ما بود اما خاتونش نسبت به این مسئله خیلی اهمیت میداد یا خودش اعتقاد شخصیش این بود که دختری که از دواج کنه این مشکل رو داشته باشه چه طوری میتونه توی شوهرش نگاه کنه....(۱۰)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From younger ages there should be said the disadvantages of relations with OS and define the boundaries</li> <li>• All friendship lead to a relation, so I think the friendship is not ok , when Islam prohibited it that is true which we don't pay attention enough to Islamic rules, these are not love they are desire and passion(7)</li> <li>• I was placed in a paradox situation in dormitory</li> <li>• Student girls in dormitory had a very out of control behaviour with OS (8)</li> <li>• Some girls who have a considerate family or strong beliefs or think how they would look at their husband's face if they lose virginity they don't go for it(10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude : negative towards relation with OS</li> <li>- Rational : Islam prohibited</li> <li>- There relations are not based on love that are passion and desire based (7)</li> <li>- In dormitory girls behaviour is out of control(8)</li> <li>- Strong belief, belief on family, importance of marriage are factors that prevent girls to have relations with OS(10)</li> <li>• A paradox in attitude when I was in dormitory</li> <li>• Suggestion: girls and boys should be warned of negative consequences relations with OS from childhood and be talked about boundaries and values</li> </ul>



pre 20	<p>• خوب حالا خودت نظر شخصیت چیه راجع به روابط دختر و پسر ؟</p> <p>• نه در حدی که هر دو شون به ناچاری بیفتند که تو رو خدا اینتر پول بید که دختره بره کورتاژ کنه یا پرشو ترمیم کنه نه به جایی که ازدواج که میکنه دختر انقدر کار بلد نباشه شوهر دنبال دختر هابی باشه که ارضاشون کنند به نظر من دختر باید حتماً " دختر بلد باشه</p> <p>• پس فکر میکنی باید تا چه حد پیش بره ؟ پس داشتم دوست پسر و دوست دختر رو قبول داری؟</p> <p>• قبول دارم چون حتی اگه رابطه جنسی هم نداشته باشند در حد حرف زدن بتونه اخلاق پسر • دستشون بیاد و بفهمه حالا این حرفو زد یعنی چی و به نظر من مسائل جنسی رو ... چون خیلی از دختر ها میگن ما مثلا خودمون به زره بلد بودیم و ازدواج که کردیم خودمونو زدیم به اون راه و اینها به نظر من این اشتباهه محضه باید حتی اگه بلد هم نیستند فیلمی چیزی از دیگران بگیرند که وقتی ازدواج کردند کم نیارند آنوقت شوهر انشون میره دنبال زنهای دیگه</p> <p>• پس یکی از دلایلت اینه که شوهر آینده ات با زنی برخورد کنه که بلد باشه اینکارو ... ؟</p> <p>• بله</p> <p>• خوب حالا اگه با یکی دوست بشه که رابطه جنسی بخواد از شون اون چی ؟</p> <p>• خوب اون خرابه و وضعیت چونکه بیکی از دوستای من از اول دبیرستان با پسر • دوست بود هنوز هم شش ساله که با هم دوستند پسر • بخاطر دختره رفت از این کشور درس بخونه حتی این دوستم و دختر خالم و دختر های دیگه میگفتند که ما با به پسر دوست بودیم بعد از به سال یهو پیش اومد که حالا همدیگرو بوس کردیم یا دستش به من خورد نه اینکه از همون اول به این قصد بخواد از هم مواستفاده کنند ... چون پسر که بیاد به به شخصی از همون اولش بگه بیا با هم رابطه داشته باشیم با خیلی ها دیگه بوده و هست ...</p> <p>• خوب حالا به صحبتی هست که دختر ها میکنند که کسایی که دوستشون ادامه دار شده حتماً " تلمس جنسی بینشون هست که ادامه دار شده ، آیا فکر میکنی درسته ؟</p> <p>• تلمس جنسی پیش میاد</p> <p>• ( • پس نزدیکی جنسی رو موافق نیستی ؟</p> <p>• بستگی داره بعضی ها هستند نمی تونند خودمونو کنترل کنند مثلا از طریق پشت مثلا دست بزنه جنس مخالفشو</p> <p>• پس از طریق مقعد اشکالی نداره ؟</p> <p>• اگه دیگه خیلی تمایل دارند</p> <p>۱۱(</p>	<p>• The relationship with OS should not cause trouble for both, e.g. abortion or repair of hymen and it also should give some sexual experience for future marriage</p> <p>• Even the girl should have such relation to know the nature of men's behaviours</p> <p>• Some girls who have some sexual experience after marriage they pretend as a naïve girl , that is absolutely wrong I think , I should seek ways to learn to satisfy their husband because their husband look after other girls</p> <p>• Those boys who at the first step want sex they are not ok , they definitely have had other relations with other girls they are not trustable</p> <p>• Sex comes up in relation with OS and some people cannot control themselves and do anal sex , if they have much desire, anal sex is ok(11)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude positive</li> <li>• Rational : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get to know men's behaviour</li> <li>- Get sexual experience</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relation should not harm none of them (abortion, repair hymen ) and it should give some sexual experience</li> <li>- Suggestion: girls should not pretend naive in sex when marry because their husband seek sex other sides</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Criteria for partner selection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those boys who ask sex at early stages of relations are not ok</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sex in unintentional , some cannot control, so anal sex is ok(11)</li> </ul>
pre 21	<p>• خوب از گوشه و کنار میشنوم که الان دختر و پسر ها با هم رابطه دوستی و تا حدی هم بعضی هاشون رابطه جنسی قبل از ازدواج دارند خودت نظرت چیه ؟ آیا باید این رابطه وجود داشته باشه ؟ تا چه حد ؟ چه نوع رابطه ای برای دختر رابطه</p>	<p>• I personally was looking for a missing love , I did not receive any love and care from my</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal motivation : looking for a love and care by OS because not received by</li> </ul>

	<p>مناسبه با جنس مخالف ؟</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• به نظر من ... من بریا خورم همیشه عشق آرزومه چون من توی خانوم هیچ عشقی دریافت نکرده بودم مثلا از طرف پدرم ... پدرم اگه به محبتی به من میکرد برای اینکه من وسیله ای بوم که ماماتو نگه داره .. برای همین این در نظر من به چیز خیلی بدی میامد از ارم میداد ولی مثلا بعد از اون دنبال این بودم که در وجود یکی این عشق پیدا کنم عشقو بهم بده ... دوست داشتم و به عشقی تو وجود باشه ... ولی کتاب که خوندم و خیلی دنبال فلسفه و اینها بودم همه جور فلسفه ... من احساس میکنم شاید اینها باعث شد من به زره دین و ایمون کمتر بشه ... به نظر من سکس کامل کننده عشقه یعنی سکس وقتی پیش میاد که تو احساس کنی تو طرفتو دوست داری و این بعنوان کامل کننده عشق بیاد بعنوان به چیزی که به عشقت تعالی بده به نظر من باید باشه</li> <li>• پس یعنی میگی که رابطه با جنس مخالف باید وجود داشته باشه ولی رابطه جنسی اگر عشق وجود داشته باشه باید باشه درسته ؟</li> <li>• درسته</li> <li>• اگر عشق وجود نداشته باشه چی ؟</li> <li>• اون فقط می خاد خودشو ارضا کنه که به نظر من درست نیست به موقعی هم شاید برآورده غریزه نیاز باشه مثل غذا خوردن شاید آدم اون عشق رو هم پیدا نکته ولی اون نیاز و داشته باشه آهمایی که این نیازو دارند آره طبیعیه که برآورده کنند ولی من این نیازو در خورم نمی بینم ... اگر هم میبینم سعی میکنم از بین ببرمش</li> </ul>	<p>father , if he liked me that was because of keeping my mum, I think if you love some one with sex you will complete and rise your love</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I lost my beliefs and religiosity over the past years</li> <li>• Sex without love is not ok, that is only for satisfying sexual desires like other needs and instinct, I did not have this need personally, if I feel it I try to remove it(13)</li> </ul>	<p>father</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sex with rise up your love relation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Circumstances:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Love not only sexual desire(13)</li> <li>• Change in faiths over the past years</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
pre 22	<p>دقیقا" اومدم من خورم همین الانشم بعد از یکسال که تجربه خیلی کسب کردم هنوز هم طرفدار دوستی های با جنس موافق هستم من شخصا" به این نتیجه رسیدم خورم هم ترجیح میدم یعنی حال بیشتری میکنم با دختر ها ... چون همیشه با پسر بودن به سری اضطراب داره .. اینکه طرف محدوده خودشو رعایت کنه حد خودشو رعایت کنه ظرفیتشو اصلا داشته باشه که باهاش چطورری حرف بزنی ... کلا" مخنه به جور مخنه .. میگم از پسر آدم بر میاد حالا یا تجربه بدی پیدا میکنه یا نمی کنه ولی خوب در کل من خورم شخصا" دوستی های با دختر هارو ترجیح میدم که با اونها برم بیرون میگویم (3) (نه اصلا" میگم اون اواخر من بخاطر همین هم ترکش کردم که اون فکر میکرد که حالا اشکالی نداره ما خورم ذهنمون اینه که نمی خواهیم از هم مواستله کنیم وقتی به فکر رو دوست داره چرا دستتون نگیره اما خورم ... خورم این عقیده ام به نظرم درسته ولی فکر میکردم نمی تونم به طرف مقابل اعتماد کنم .) (ولی خورم به سری اعتقادات برای خورم دارم یعنی زمانی که توی محیط جدید شدم خورم دو تا خط برای خورم کشیدم من به خورم گفتم حق ندارم که از این قوانینی که برای خورم میگذارم ... نه اینکه خورم رو مجبور کرده باشم بلکه اعتقادات اینه یعنی اگه به زره از این خط بیام بیرون خورم دچار عذاب وجدان میشم نمیدونم اینهم لازمه که بگم یا نه وقتی خورم تنها میشم با خورم از خدای</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I personally feel better in friendship with same sex(females), being with boys have always some anxiety, you should restrict yourself and see what you are saying he may not have the right capacity and it is hard (3)</li> <li>• I left one Bf because he asked me to have more relations he emphasized that we are not going to abuse each other, why we do not hold hand and etc. I was agree , but I could not trust him (6)</li> <li>• Since I had some beliefs , when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude negative       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anxiety when you are with OS</li> <li>- They ask more after a while</li> <li>- Boys are not trustable in my view (6)</li> <li>- Self conscious will suffer if involve in sex</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Circumstances:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting red line and boundaries because of faith and beliefs</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>خودم خجالت میکشم میکم حتی میتونم برم در حد رابطه جنسی هم که نباشه دستشو بگیرم بغلش کنم اینها هیچ ضرری به من نمیزسونه و فردا هیچکدومشون هم قرار نیست بفهمند چونکه ... به حالتی هست که فقط خودمون میفهمیم (7)</p>	<p>I came to new environment I draw two lines for myself and put some rules for myself , even if we kiss each other nobody will know but my concisions would suffer</p>	
<p>pre 23</p>	<p>• چرا بعضی ها تن به تماس جنسی میدن بعضی ها نه ؟  • همش بستگی به آدم داره اصلا " خانواده به نظر من . تاثیر نداره  • فکر نمیکنی خانواده تاثیر داشته ؟  • آخه میبونی اینجا توی خابوگاه همه شهرستونی هستن به محیط های کوچکی که حداقل همه بخاطر خرف مردم هم کاری انجام نمیدن بعد جالبه اینکه معمولا خوابگاهی ها خیلی هاشون این روابطو دارن پس چرا دارن با اینکه خانواده هاشون مذهبیند  • نه روابط جنسی رو دارم میکم بین شما وارد رابطه شدی ولی به حدی رو برای خودت رعایت کردی من میخورم ببینم اون چیه که تورو نگه داشته ؟  • اعتقادات خودم  • خوب اون اعتقاده از کجا اومده ؟  • کسی بهم نداده خودم بهشون میروم مثلا خواهرم خیلی آدم های هستن که حد خودشونو رعایت میکنند همیشه اونها رو دیدم  • الگوری تو اونهایند ؟  • من آخه شخصیتی هستم که هر چیزی رو انکه خودم بهش ترسم انجام نمیدم آدمی هستم که لجبازم روی حرف خودم میمونم اونها رو دیدم به حالتی است قابل ستایش هستن از نظر این رفتار ها ولی هیچوقت فکر نمیکنم اونها الگوری من بودند چون میکم خیلی ما رو دیدم توی دوستام که خواهر هاشون خیلی با شخصیت و خوب بودند ولی اونها راه دیگری رفتن ... میکم بستگی به خود آدم داره که چقدر خودشو موظف میکنه که در واقع از خودش مواظبت کنه  • یعنی فکر میکنی چی باعث شد این اعتقادات در تو نهاده بشه ؟  • خودم  • یعنی کسی اینو در بچگی در تو بوجود نیلورده ؟ ملاری .. پدر .. خواهر ...</p>	<p>• Decision for having or not having relation with Os is dependent to the person, family doesn't have any influence because here is dormitory all students are from other small cities that they did not do because of people 's judgement, but family are not here most of girls have such relations although their families are religious  • If I had friendship but never had sex because of my beliefs  • All my surrounding females in the family have boundaries , they were not my model in behaviour I have seen some friends that had very nice and chaste sister, but her sister did opposite, I belief that that is the person who define the ways to protect herself</p>	<p>• ATTITUDE:  - Person's belief is important in behaviour not family, sister and etc.  - Girls in dormitory with religious family don't have family and social norm control  - My beliefs cause me not to have sex although had friendship, god is seeing me (17)  - Feeling a need to have relation with OS after a certain age</p>

	<p>• نه ماډرم پډرم خاله هام خواهر هام همه اونهایی که دیدم آدم هایی بودند که هیچوقت اینگونه روابط رو برقرار نکردند و نظرشون هم اینه که نیاشه .... من از ۱۸ سالگی درس تموم شد خیلی از وقتها پیش میاومد میرقم بیرون بهم پیشنهاد می شد ولی محل نمی زاشتم بالاخره وقتی بابای آدم خونه نیست ادم میتونه براه به کاری بکنه یا مثلا من شخصی بودم که وقتی مامان بالابام مسافرت میرفتن من نمی رقم دقیقا" خونه به هفتقه یا دو هفتقه دست خورم تنها بوده ولی هیچوقت به خورم اجازه نمی دادم دست از پا خطا کنم باز هم به محیط باز یداشتم بعد از ۱۸ سالگی که درس تموم شد من برای کلاس کنکور به شهر دیگه میرقم و می ادمم دقیقا" همون ساعتی که باید میاددم..... چون اونوقت نیاز نداشتم بخاطر اینبود که به این نتیجه رسیدم چون من همون آدمی بودم که نمیکردم ولی خورم به این نتیجه رسیدم که نیاز به این کار دارم میکنم ایتم باعث میشد ککه اینکارو نکنم</p> <p>• پس آدم مذهبی هستی ؟</p> <p>• بله البته سرو وضعم به به آدم مذهبی نمی خوره ولی از درون به باید و نباید هایی دارم که فکر میکنم وقتی خداداره منو نگاه میکنه به سری کار هارو نمیکتم مثل اینکه ادم حرمت نگه داره جلوی پدر و مادرش به سری کارها رو نکنه دقیقا" اینطوری</p> <p>۱۷(</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I had many opportunity when I was home, many times I was alone but I did not feel any need to have relation with OS after age 18 I felt this need</li> <li>• I think my religious beliefs prohibited me from having sex although my appearance does not show this , I think God is seeing me and I respect my parents (17)</li> </ul>	
pre 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• از گوشه و کنار حتما" میشنوی که دختر و پس ها با هم رابطه دارند حتی بعضی ها رابطه جنسی دارند نظر شخصی خودت چیه راجع به این نوع روابط ؟</li> <li>• راستش به نظر من هرکسی با خودش یعنی اینطور نیست که من بگم این بده یا این خوبه.... چیزی که خیلی تاثیر داره هنجارهای اجتماعی و به هنجار اجتماعی نیست تو جامعه ما و روابط بین دختر و پسر به رابطه مخفی توی جامعه ما ..کملا طبیعی...ولی من خورم آدمی نیستم که بگم این رابطه بده...یعنی من دوستایی دارم که رابطه جنسی دارند نمیگم اونها بدند...میگم خوب اونها دیدند که مشکلی نداره برای خوندن من برای خورم بخاطر اینکه خونوانمو در نظر میگرتم ولی اگه خارج از ایران زندگی میکردم از این نظر هیچ مشکلی نداشتم</li> <li>• پس بیشتر محدودیتهایی مربوط به کنترل خانواده و کنترل جامعه است که تو رو محدود کرده ولی نظر شخصی خودت متقلونه ؟</li> <li>• بله</li> <li>• رابطه دوستی رو که میگی اصلا موردی نداره ؟</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This depends to the person that have such relation or not but this is not accepted in our societal norm to have relationship with OS, that clandestine in our society, but I personally do not consider these relation as bad even those friends who have sex I don't tell that they are loose or bad, ok they saw that is not problem for them and chose to have sex but I thought of my family, if I was abroad I would not think that these relations are bad</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Relation depends very much to the person</li> <li>◦ I do not consider bad such relation and sex</li> <li>◦ Motives for girls can bad luck, drawing other's attention, some involves and cannot get rid of that(20)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Circumstances : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age (12)</li> <li>• Economic and cultural</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p>• رابطه دوستی و روابط جنسی هم بالاخره به سنی داره یعنی من فکر نمیکنم به دختر ۱۰-۱۶ ساله باید دوست پسر داشته باشه ولی وقتی به ۱۸ سالگی برسه فکر میکنم عفتش لااقل آقدر شکل گرفته که بتونه برای خودش انتخاب کنه که آیا روابط جنسی میخواد یا نه از اون لحاظ مشکلی نداره</p> <p>• پس سن به نظرت مهمه ؟</p> <p>• بله سن مهمه</p> <p>• ۱۲ (• خودت اگه این شرایطو داشتی آیا میرفتی دنبال تماس جنسی ؟</p> <p>• سنوال خیلی سختیه فکر میکنم اگه ۲۸-۲۹ سالم بشه و این نیازو داشته باشم فکر کنم اینکارو بکنم.... چون فکر میکنم که حالا دیگه به سنی رسیدم که خودم از خودم دارم نگهداری میکنم و مجرد دارم زندگی میکنم ....</p> <p>• یعنی بستگی به استقلال داره ؟</p> <p>• بله خیلی صد در صد چون من تا زمانیکه زیر سقف پدرم زندگی میکنم قانونه پدرمه... تا زمانی که احساس کنم خودم روی پای خودم وای نستم که خانوادم دارند من رو ساپورت میکنند از هر جهتی خوب صد در صد منهم با قوانین اونها چیز میکنم ولی وقتی استقلال روحی فرهنگی و اقتصادی داشتم خودم فکر میکنم اونموقع موردی نداشته باشه</p> <p>• ۱۸-۱۹ (• چرا این قدرت پیدا کرده خانواده بهش گفته ؟ اون مسئله عرضه و تقاضا را هم دوست دارم بدونم ؟</p> <p>• دقیقاً حتی من شنیدم.. که خیلی از دختر ها نمیدونم به چه دلایلی... دلایل مختلفی وجود داره.. از روی بدبختی... بعضی ها از روی مسائلی که وجود داشته بعضی ها پول میگیرند... بعضی ها خیلی عدلی دوست میشن رفاتی دوست میشن مثلا دبیرستان یادمه یکی از دوستام که سلام علیک داشتیم خیلی واضح در مورد این مسائل صحبت میکرد فکر میکرد اینها خوبه فکر میکرد اینها مثبته خودشو شجاع میدونست بخاطر این کاره... مثلا میرفت رفاتی توی یه خونه ای با ۴-۵ تا پسر رابطه داشت نموم میشد میرفت... واقعا با اون دختر مثل یه اشغال برخورد شده واقعا اینطوریه ولی خوب یا نمی فهمه یا می فهمه و فرض میکنه این طوری نیست.... بخاطر اینکه دوست داره دیگه ان بگند به به چه دختری در صورتیکه این جلب توجه منقیه واقعا یا میره توش... و میگن رقیب توش و دیگه نتونستیم در بیاییم اینها همش بهانه است</p> <p>۲۰ (•</p>	<p>• Mostly family and societal factors restricted us</p> <p>• I think age determine whether a girl have relation and sex with OS or not a for a girl aged 15-16 year old is very early to have BF but at age 18 she can choose (12)</p> <p>• If I reach to age 28-29 which am more independent I may even have sex, as far as I am dependent to my family I should obey their rule when I am independt economically and culturally I can decide at that point (18-19)</p> <p>• I have heard some girls because of bad luck , some for money, some for being the centre of attention of other friends initiate such relations I knew a girl who considered herself very brave and she used to go with 4-5 boys and had sex and they treated like rubbish with her , some go to it and cannot come out anymore.(20)</p>	<p>Independency which comes with older ages(18-19)</p> <p>• Norm :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Relations are clandestine because Not accepted in our society</li> <li>○ In other countries I would not think these relations are bad</li> <li>○ Family and society restricted us</li> </ul>
pre 25	<p>• خوب خودت چی فکر میکنی ؟ فکر میکنی این رابطه باید باشه یا نباید باشه ؟</p> <p>• من از دواج رو به چیز... نمیدونم که حتماً روی کاغذ بیاد من فکر میکنم همین دوستم که من الان دوستم دارم که من حاضریم روش مرصمیه گذاری کنم و اون هم با توجه به مشکلاتی که برای من پیش اومده پای من وایستاده فکر میکنم ما الان به زن و شوهریم و... قرار نیست که به تعهدی به امضایی بده و اون بابلیی که من این جوری چیز میکنم بیاد رضایت بده که من باهش از دواج بکنم</p> <p>• خوب اگه بچه دار بشی چی ؟</p>	<p>• I do not believe on registration of marriage in marriage certificate, the boy who I love and he loves me we think we are couple and married , we had</p>	<p>○ Attitude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Marriage is not putting your name in a marriage certificate, two people who loves each other they are</li> </ul>

	<p>• هنوز که سکس واژن نداریم... بعضی هم ما بعد از مسافرت هنوز سکس نداشتیم... اصلاً واسه سکس نیست... سکس در کنار رابطه هست</p> <p>۱۴) (ایا روابط جنسی قبل از ازدواج رو باهاتش موافقی؟</p> <p>• چون دختر فوق العاده احساسیه و مشکله و من که چهار ماه عذاب کشیدم من خیلی خوب موندم در مقابل این شکلات بعضی وقتها که به خورم به برگردان میدم به مشکلات می بینم خیلی خوب موندم هر روز حائنه هر روز بدتر از دیروز... هر روز به فاجعه بندتر هر روز به رابطه بندتر هر روز به مشکل بیشتر.. همه اینها پیش میاد وابستگی عاطفی....</p> <p>• پس موافق هستی یا نه با داشتن دوستی؟</p> <p>• با داشتن رابطه دوستی موافقم</p> <p>• تماس جنسی چی؟</p> <p>• تماس چیز نباشه... یعنی بوسیدن باشه فقط لب باشه این جور چیزها دیگه فراتر از این نباشه و ولی این باشه فراتر هم میره</p> <p>• راجع به پسر ها چطور؟ توی پسر ها فکر میکنی داشتن تماس جنسی مشکلی نداره؟</p> <p>• برای هر دوشون مشکل داره و هم دختر و هم پسر تماس جنسی نداشته باشند بهتر.</p> <p>۱۶)</p>	<p>not vaginal sex yet , but this relation is not because of sex, sex will come up(14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relations have so many difficulties and problems emotionally because girls are delicate emotionally , I agree to friendship but sex , I should not go far more , I can have kissing and like that ,</li> <li>• Both girls and boys should not have sex before marriage (16)</li> </ul>	<p>already married</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship is not because of sex, sex come up(14)</li> <li>• Agree to relation not sex, because girls are delicate and sensitive emotionally(16)</li> </ul>
pre 26	<p>• خوب امروزه از گوشه و کار راجع به روابط بین دختر و پسر زیاد میشنوی... نظر خونت راجع به اینگونه روابط چیه حالا از دوستی گرفته تا رابطه های بیشتر مثل رابطه جنسی؟</p> <p>• در حد صحبت رو قبول دارم یا مثلاً به بیرونی بریم</p> <p>• یعنی دوست پسر رو قبول داری؟</p> <p>• آره ولی تا حد صحبت و نه بیشتر</p> <p>• فکر میکنی اتفاق میافته که پسر ها فقط با حرف زدن راضی بشند برای مدت طولانی؟</p> <p>• خیلی کم</p> <p>• خوب نظرت راجع به تماس جنسی چیه؟</p> <p>• نه موافق نیستم</p> <p>۸)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I agree just for having someone to talk and going out not more, I do not agree to sex before marriage(8)</li> </ul>	<p>Attitude: Only relation is ok forgoing out and talking not more (8)</p>
pre 27	<p>• خوب روابط بین دختر و پسر وجود دارد توی نورو بری هلت مینوی و میشنوی... نظر شخص خونت چیه راجع به این روابط؟ چه طور رابطه ای مناسبه؟ اصلاً باید باشه؟ نباید باشه؟ تا چه حدش باشه خوبه؟</p> <p>• به نظر من مشکلی که تو از دواج مبینم اینه که اول اشنایی... بعد از دواجه... بعد مسکه و بعد در نهایت اگه باشه علاقه... ولی رابطه ای که تو دوستیه.. اول اشنایی... بعد علاقه است بعد تو ش مسکه... این سکس به نظر من اوجشه... یعنی فقط لذت جسمانی نیست... به نظر من لذت خیلی از نظر روحی هم می تونه با</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The problem with marriage is the fact that first is marriage and then sex and then love and passion, but in friendship, first is acquaintance, then love and then sex , that is not just physical satisfaction, that is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude : different between marriage and friendship (the former first marriage then love and the latter, first love and then marriage )</li> <li>• I prefer Bf for marriage not suitor</li> </ul>



	<p>طرفش ارتباط برقرار کنه تا اینکه بگند از امروز شما زن و شوهرید بودید کار داریم.... سکس داشته باشیم... اونطوری خیلی سختتره تا اینکه امم یکی رو به تدریج بپذیره... خیلی رابطه ای که تدریج باشه خیلی ننت بخش تره تا رابطه ای که سریع بخواد انجام بده... و برای من با اینکه خیلی اعتقادات مذهبی دارم و اولش خیلی برام سخت بود و هنوز هم نمیکم برام خیلی آسونه... ولی نمی تونم از طریق ازدواج یکی رو به هویی بپذیرم باید حتماً "تدریج بهش علاقمند بشم بنابراین چاره ای نمی بینم جز اینکه با یکی دوست بشم و باهاش روابط داشته باشم و بعد باهاش ازدواج کنم... تا اینکه فقط بخوام با خواستگار ازدواج کنم... نمیکم اصلاً خواستگار برام نه اصلاً نه من فقط دوست پسر میخوام نه هیچکی... ولی نتونستم تا حالا هیچ خواستگاری رو بپذیرم ولی دوست پسر رو حتی اگر هم شرايطش هم با من خیلی هم خوانی نداشته خیلی راحت تر پذیرفتم</p> <p>• خوب حالا با توجه به صحبت هایی که کردی داشتن دوست پسر رو باهاش موافقی... خوب تا چه حد این رابطه پیش بره... ایا رابطه جنسی هم... داشته باشند ؟</p> <p>• خوب بخاطر شرایط اجتماعی نه</p> <p>• یعنی فقط با هم برند بیرون ؟</p> <p>• نه خوب... به نظر من اگه می خان رابطه جنسی داشته باشند باید تا حدی باشه که... پرده بکار نشون حفظ بشه</p> <p>• فکر میکنی اگه از طریق مقعد و دهان نزدیکی داشته باشند مشکلی نیست ؟</p> <p>• ببینم این به خود اممش ربط داره... من دوست ندارم</p> <p>۱۷-۱۶)</p>	<p>emotional satisfaction, I like to communicate emotionally and then have sex this way has more enjoyment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have religious beliefs and that was first hard for me, but now I can say that I can not accept easily someone for as suitor I can accept easier BF</li> <li>• Because of societal circumstances I don't agree to sex between boys and girls, if they want to have sex the girls should keep her virginity(16-17)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't agree sex because of societal norms at least girls should take car of virginity(16--17)</li> </ul>
pre 28	<p>• ببین کم و بیش از گوشه و کنار میشنوم که دختر و پسر دارای دوست پسر هستند و تماس های جنسی هم حتی دارند نظر خودت راجع به روابط دختر و پسر چیه ؟ تا چه حد باید باشه ؟</p> <p>• کلا که من از اول هم ازدواج به شکل خواستگاری رو اصلاً قبول ندارم فکر میکنم دو طرف باید از قبل با هم آشنا شند... این به طرف قضیه... حالا اشنایی در حد اینکه اخلاق هم دستنویس بیاد نه مسائل جنسی... ولی از به طرف هم از گوشه و کنار میشنوم که فلاتی با فلاتی چهار سال دوست بودند دو سال نامزد بودند هیچ مشکلی نداشتند رفتند زیر به سقف طلاق گرفتند وقتی سوال میکنی میبینی که توی مسائل جنسی با هم مشکل داشتند... و یعنی یک نفر به من گفت که ۹۰ درصد زندگی اون مسئله است که باعث میشه کنار هم بموندن یا زنا هم جدا شند یا هر دو تا نشون برند سراغ یکی دیگه اینها مسائلیه که الان مسائلی هست که تو ذهنم هست که ایا باید باشه یا نباشه... اگه باشه خب به سری حرمتها شکسته میشه به سری ارزش اون زن میاد پایین</p> <p>• (پس نظر خودت اینه که رابطه دوستی بین دختر و پسر باید وجود داشته باشه برای شناخت قبل از ازدواج ولی تماس جنسی رو هنوز روش شک داری ؟</p> <p>• بله ولی الان جامعه ما شده فقط سوء استفاده کردن دختر از پسر سوء استفاده</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't agree to traditional marriage, I think boys and girls should be acquainted with each other to get to know each other, I do not mean to have sex</li> <li>• From the other hand we hear that two people have been friends fro 4 years and two years fiancé but when they marry and live under one ceiling they realized that they have problems because they can not satisfy each other and 90% of the life is based on sex that determines that they live or separate, that is a paradox for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude</li> <li>• Positive on relation</li> <li>• paradox for premarital sex</li> <li>• Boys and girls abuses each other in Iran (give and receive)</li> </ul> <p>Rational :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acquainting each other</li> <li>• not having sex</li> <li>• sexual experiance is necessary for guaranteeing marital life</li> <li>- rational for hesitation of sex:</li> <li>• diminishing girls' self-</li> </ul>

	<p>کنه پسر از دختر... به حرف خیلی زشتی که این دو تا دختره توی استخر داشتند بهم میزدند این بود که... پسرهای این دوره زموونه آمو مثلا به آب معنی مهمون میکنند بعد از آتم به لب میخوانند بعد چلو کباب میدند بعد از آتم به چیز دیگه میخوان اینجوری شده دختر هم بدش نمیداد میگه ...          • یعنی به حالت بده بستون شده ؟          • بله احساس میکنم توی جوامع اروپایی این حالت سو استفاده رو نداره که حالا من اینو بگیرم اینو بدم ...          )۱۰(</p>	<p>that sex should be or should not be among boys and girls before marriage , well if they have sex , some values will be broken and the girls' value will become diminished (8)          • I think in Iran girls and boys abuses each other, I was hearing two girls talking in pool that boys guest you for a mineral water and want kiss you and guest you a meal and want more and the girls like it , I don't think that is the case in other European countries that give and get</p>	<p>respect after sex(8)          •</p>
pre 29	<p>• خوب حالا نظرت راجع به روابط با جنس مخالف چیه ؟ آیا دختر و پس ها باید رابطه داشته باشند تا چه حد و چرا ؟          • خب به هر حال باید رابطه داشته باشند چون بالاخره به شناختی میده قبل از اینکه به اسمی بیاد رو آتم یا تو شناسنامه آتم اسم کسی بره... ولی نوع رابطه ... بستگی به طرفین داره .. اگر از به نزدیکی کامل لذت میرند چرا نداشته باشند ...          • در حد تماس جنسی کامل فکر میکنی مجازه ؟          • مجازه اگه طرفین بخوانند          (۹)</p>	<p>• I agree to relations before marriage this give some knowledge about the boy before that his name come into our id card (marriage)          • Type of relation is dependent to both , if they both want , even complete sex is ok(9)</p>	<p>Attitude : positive to friendship          Rational:          Get to know each other for better marriage          The extend of relations is determined by the person , their willingness is important even for sex(9)</p>
pre 30	<p>• واقعا" تته دلت اینطوریه ؟ یعنی دوست نداری با کسی دوست بشی ؟          • چرا ته نلم دوست دارم ولی اعتماد نمی تونم بکنم          • فکر میکنی اینکه نمی تونی اعتماد کنی ریشه در چی داره ؟          • من سال اول که رفته بودم دانشگاه خیلی حس خوبی داشتم فکر میکردم من مثلا بین این همه دانشجو یکی از یکی خوشش میاد و اونهم از من خوشش میاد بعدش با هم دوست میشیم و بعدش هم ازدواج ... ولی به شش ماهی که گذشت فهمیدم که نه اینجوری نیست مثلا پسر ها میان به مدت با به دختری دوست میشن وبعد که خوشگتر و نیشون تموم شد ولش میکنند میرند سراغ یکی دیگه ...          • از کجا اینو فهمیدی ؟          • می بینم یعنی به عینه دارم میبینم ... یعنی هیچکی نیست که واقعا" رابطه اش از الان که شروع میشه بشه برای زندگی آینده ....          • یعنی سطحیه و خیلی زود گذر و مقطعیه ؟          • بله مگه اینکه واقعا" دوست داشته باشه</p>	<p>• I personally would like to get Bf but I cannot trust boys because at first when I entered in the university I thought if I like a boy and he does as well here we can think or marriage but I realized all friendship from boys is with motives other than marriage , they want to be with you for entertaining and pleasure , they are very shallow , I saw among my friends, I think I cannot trust them , maybe in</p>	<p>Attitude:          • Agree with Bf with marital motives(13)          • Boys are not trustable          • Change of attitude towards friendship and having BF when entered into the university with regard to boys motives(from marriage to only entertainment)(5)          • Girls who have sex, don't think of future , marriage</p>



	<p>• مبینی یعنی به چشم مبینی یا برات تعریف میکنند ؟</p> <p>• نه برام تعریف میکنند دوست صمیمی خورم تو همون ماههای اول با په نفر دوست شد الان سر دو سال بهم زد تمام روابطشونو من خبر داشتم</p> <p>• پسره با چه انگیزه ای داشت ؟</p> <p>• برای ازدواج اومده بود جلو</p> <p>• خوب روابطشون تا چه حد پیش رفت ؟</p> <p>• چون دختره مذهبی بود میگفت حتی حق نداری حتی دست به من بزنی په بار دست همو گرفته بودند و گفته بود که ...</p> <p>• پس فکر میکنی اعتماد نمیشه کرد ؟ میدونی فکر میکنم هنوز زورده اگه ۳-۷ سال دیگه بگتره فکر میکنم شاید موقع ازدواج بشه خوب اونموقع آشنا میشیم</p> <p>• الان یعنی اگه موقعیت ازدواج پیش بیاد روش فکر نمیکتی ؟</p> <p>• چرا اگه خیلی خوب بود روش فکر میکنم</p> <p>• (۵) حتی اگه مامانم اجازه بده بگه دوست بشیم اول طرف رو خوب میشناسم ببینم ببرد ازدواج میخوره یا نه</p> <p>• پس تو هیچ رابطه ای رو غیر از رابطه ای که به قصد ازدواج باشه رو قبول نداری ؟</p> <p>• نه</p> <p>• (۱۳) دخترهایی که دارای روابط با جنس مخالف هستند حالا بعضی رابطه دوستی دارند بعضی رابطه جنسی دارند چه فرقی با تو دارند ؟</p> <p>• همه چیز رو آسون میگیرند زیاد فکر نمی کنند به عواقب کار</p> <p>• از نظر ظاهری چه فرقی میکنند ؟</p> <p>• ظاهرشون .. موی رنگ کرده .. ارایش غلیظ .. به خودشون میرمندن</p> <p>• انگیزه هاشون چه فرقی میکنه با شماها .. یعنی اینکه ازدواج برایشون مهمه یا مهم نیست ... بر من خوندن برایشون مهم نیست ؟</p> <p>• نمی دونم همیشه برام سواله که مثلا اینجور افراد نمی خواهن ازدواج کنند چه جوریه مثلا پسره راضی میشه بیاد به اینها اعتماد کنه ... ولی فکر میکنم پسرهایی هستند که خیلی بی غیرت باشند باینده اینها رو بگیرند</p> <p>• یعنی این دخترها بعداً برای ازدواج مشکل پیدا میکنند ؟</p> <p>• بله مشکل پیدا میکنند شاید هم با په پسری ازدواج کنند که سر دو ماه طلاق بگیرند پسره هم عین اونها باشه ... یعنی برایشون زندگی مهم نباشه ...</p> <p>• خوب تیپ ختو اینگیسورن چطوره ؟</p> <p>• یا ختو دشون خیلی محدودشون کردند که عقده ای شدند توی اولین تماسی که با جنس مخالف داشتند گفتند زود بریم با طرف دوست بشیم مثلا ... یا اینکه از اون طرف خیلی از دانشون گذاشتند که راحت می توفند ارتباط داشته باشند</p> <p>(۱۳)</p>	<p>another 2-3 years when I get ready for marriage , I may think more about that (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't agree to relations without marital motives(13)</li> </ul>	<p>and its problems, they ruin their future, their family either restricted them very much or have been liberal(13)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think those girls who have sex don't think of consequences of sex and I always think whether they are not going to marry</li> </ul> <p>Think they ruin their future, the boy should be not very jealousy to get them , they may be divorced in 2 months , their family either restricted them so much or left them free(13)</p>		

