



PERCEPTION OF LEARNED HELPLESSNESS IN RELATIONSHIPS AMONG FEMALE EMERGING ADULTS

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Abstract

Female emerging adults are facing strained relationships due to learned helplessness. However, the factors that lead to learned helplessness are obscure. Research has consistently demonstrated the perception of learned helplessness in relationships among female emerging adults in India. This study employed exploratory qualitative design, as such 10 female emerging adults, who are out of their relationship, from various parts of India were sampled. Results demonstrate the major 5 factors of learned helplessness in relationships as, perceived style of learned helplessness through parents and society, battered women and learned helplessness, Emerging adulthood and learned helplessness, the role of media in shaping learned helplessness, and mental health problems due to learned helplessness. The study provides new insights into the concept of learned helplessness in relationships and helps to perceive the dilemma in relationships.

Keywords: Learned helplessness, Relationships of females, Emerging Adults, Romantic relationships.

1. Introduction

When our mothers were our age, they were betrothed, and they could prognosticate them in advance. They have some idea of what is going to happen in their life in the future. I ... on the other end, I have a triple degree, I don't have a ring on my finger, I enjoy a very exciting time and I can see my future beyond zero. Emerging puberty is a term referring to 18. Describes the period of evolution from up to 25. Twenty is now a black box.

There are loads of commotion going on. Half of the people in their twenties go to newcomers' residences every year. Adults go by an average of 4 to 5 jobs in their twenties. When all of this is combined, the twenties are different than they were half a century ago. They are in one a period of exploration and instability rather than settling into adult life people are trying to do various options before making a transitional commitment to adult life. It is a worldwide accident.

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The giving-up reaction, the quitting reaction, that results from the conviction that nothing you do matters is known as "learned helplessness. "The term "learned helplessness" refers to a condition in which a person develops a sense of helplessness following a traumatic setback or a pattern of failure. The concept of learned helplessness is Fundamental to many findings in the field of psychology, especially in positive psychology. Learning disabilities can occur in humans and animals. The notion of helplessness is studied by experiments performed on dogs. Both humans and animals often have little or no control over what happens to them and thus undermine their ability to help themselves. No one on earth is born with a sense of control over what happens to them, so they cannot be considered normal. It is a way of learning. Man sees that he has no control over what happens to him. it is widely believed that the idea of getting helpless can give meaning to adults who deal with stressful times that lead to depression. (Seligman, M.E.1972) Like animal observation, one can feel depressed if one learns to be helpless in a stressful event. This means that the depressed person is depressed because they have accepted the fact that some things in the area are out of control, and that whatever they do does not help the situation.

Especially Woman. Learned helplessness has been linked to partner abuse for the first time since Walker Proposed the concept of damaged woman syndrome. According to Walker, a model it is believed that women do not have the power to change their situation due to repeated abuse. (Walker L.E.2002) As dogs have learned

in the actual helplessness study, no one knows when they will occur even more shocking were those who were powerless to control this punishment and who ultimately failed attempts to prevent preventable trauma (Overmeyer & Seligman, 1967), Affected Women learn to be helpless and take it lightly from repeated abuse, unexpectedly and uncontrollably They have no control over their circumstances. This study helps to get a clearer understanding of what is going on in their relationships.

This helps them to find out their problem and get out of this situation or prevent poisoning Relationships.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Emerging Adulthood

Emerging adulthood is one of the terms used to portray a time between the age of 18 to 28(Arnett,2000). It is also considered an age of exploration. When Arnett proposed this particular term,emerging adulthood (Arnett,2000) his main goal is to emphasize the age periods from late teens to the mid-twenties. Emerging adulthood also experiences many problems. Some longitudinal study about emerging adulthood (Galambos, Barker, & Krahn, 2006) demonstrates that increased self-esteem and a decline in depressive symptoms usually happened during the period of emerging adulthood. This age group also enjoys their freedom from new obligations and restraints and they eventually work hard towards self-sufficiency. An increase in social cognitive maturity also enables them to understand themselves and



then eventually lead a good life that can be better than that of their adolescents.

This period helps an individual to be a good adult, even though it has pleasures major life events happen during this period like marriage, permanent employment, etc. and also living by themselves, paying their bills, rent, etc. make them more responsible and later they can be a responsible adult. Emerging adulthood differs from other periods in their life by the life choices people make in emerging adulthood.

There are rapidly changing roles and responsibilities in emerging adulthood, not only education and relationships but also migration from the parents, extended family, financial independence, spirituality, and civic responsibility (Arnett 2015) all these things also contribute towards creating a foundation for adult life. (Masten et al., 2004; Schulenberg, Maggs, & O'Malley, 2004). Emerging adulthood is frequently seen as a period of self-focus and individualistic cultures in most countries, but in a country like India, community interests are placed high over self-interest and social cultures over individuals (Arnett, 2011; Seiter & Nelson, 2011) An important concept related to life choices is developmental tasks. The success or failure of achieving these developmental tasks is predictive of the individual's adjustment to future tasks.

All gender experiences the same depressive symptoms as they reach emerging adulthood. In general, women show an increase in depressive symptoms and lower levels of self-esteem in emerging adulthood. The third marker of psychological well-being is the extent to which young people refrain from expressing their anger

through loss of temper, yelling, and fighting. After all, the regulation of emotions such as anger is important for adaptive functioning. Expressed anger, which is the behavioral manifestation of anger arousal, can result in verbal or physical abuse (Eckhardt, Norlander, & Deffenbacher, 2004).

2.2 Romantic Relationships

Most of the findings reveal that the ultimate goal of a romantic relationship is experimentation before marriage, to establish a long-term relationship culminating in marriage. (Gala, Kapadia, 2014). Formation of an intimate relationship is a crucial developmental task and an integral part of identity formation during emerging adulthood, in the Indian context, most romantic relationships' ultimate aim is to end up in marriage. It is not only restricted to the mutual fulfillment of the two individuals but it will extend to the family members too... Nowadays increasing affluence, focus on education, various career options, etc. leads to the extension of marriage. These trends are commonly found in contemporary cities in urban India (Chopra, 2011). In general, romantic love is a concept associated with western culture and family arranged marriages in eastern cultures in India. However, romantic attachment is universal. In India, most emerging adults opt for love marriage with self-chosen partners, but in most cases, parents play a major role. Most Indian parents won't accept love marriages. Young emerging adults are forced to leave their partners due to pressurized parenting (Netting 2010).

Other than in any other country, puberty in India is implied towards the cultural idea of 'being loyal towards



parents and 'respecting elders' as values. Inability to break these values they end up in a breakup and avoid romantic commitment. Many statistics and demographic studies when emerging adults get married and move to new life phases like marriages, they have moved to the end of the third decade of life (Arnett, 2004; Settersten & Ray, 2010). the statistics in the 1970s show that the percentage of married males decreased from 82 percent to 52 percent and for females, it decreased from 88 percent to 65 percent. (Oppenheimer, 2003; Russell & Furstenberg, 2005). 44 percent of men and 33 percentage of women are still unattached, and spouseless in United America. Emerging adulthood consists of a lot of responsibilities even though, it is crucial and important to manage a dynamic relationship when a long-term or a lifelong relationship is considered (Levinson, 1978). There are not so many research papers available on the quality of romantic relationships and depression, but a substantial body of literature available on this topic. Depressive symptoms are associated with relationship conflict and very less use of constructive tactics to resolve conflict (Coyne, Thompson, & Palmer, 2002; Whiffen, Foot, & Thompson, 2007; Whisman, 2001; Whisman & Uebelacker, 2009). Depression can be correlated with less satisfaction (Whisman, 2001), less support (Wade & Kendler, 2000) less security in the relationship (Whiffen, Kallos-Lilly, & MacDonald, 2001), and divorce and end of romantic relationships (Kessler, Walters, & Forthofer, 1998). further results in the study depict higher rates of depressive symptoms due to less growth in the use of positive problem-solving in emerging adults' romantic relationships.

Other important reasons are unequal power dynamics, sexual exploitation, feeling of anger jealousy, suspicion, etc. (Davila, Steinberg, Kachadourian, Cobb, & Fincham, 2004). Social scientists have also found that intimate social romantic relationships affect women's mental health more than that of men. gender difference has a great role even though it is a married relationship or they are unmarried. Emotional distress and weak mental health are most commonly seen in women. but recently it is closely seen and can be associated with both genders.

It is surprising to see those intimate romantic relationships have also a good point in reducing these symptoms as well. Valued identity and self-worth are the building block of relationships in emerging adulthood.

2.3 Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness is a condition seen in both animals and men, when they are being, adapted to anticipate torment, languishing, and discomfort without finding a method for getting away from it, they condition themselves in such a way that they can escape from that particular situation and they think it is meaningless to make an effort to come out of that particular situation. This eventually makes them feel they are helpless. This is not innate trait humans are born with, but developed through continuous exposure to unpleasant events or situations. In the 1960s and 70s, Seligman and Steve Maier conducted the initial experiments to form the basis of this theory.



Seligman and Maier tested the response of dogs toward electric shocks. To conduct this experiment they created two chambers, and these two chambers were separated by a low chamber. one chamber is electrified and the other one is not electrified. They placed Dogs in the box and then turned on the electric shock at one side of the electric chamber. They observed a very strange thing, some of the dogs didn't even try to escape to the next side of the chamber to escape from the electric shock. they found out that these dogs are the ones who are exposed to shock with no way to escape from them. the dogs who jumped to the next chamber are the ones who are not received such treatment before.

Later Seligman and Mayer gathered new sets of canines and partitioned them into three groups. Group one dogs are strapped into the harness for a while but not given any electric shocks. Group two dogs are the ones strapped in a similar tackle but they are given electric shocks which they can prevent by pressing a panel with their noses. group three dogs are likewise positioned in a similar saddle and they are given shocks that they can't avoid. After this initial experiment, all the dogs were kept in the same box which has two chambers.

When they are given electric shocks dogs in groups one and two were very quick and they jumped into the next chamber. But the dogs in group three didn't even attempt to jump to the next chamber. Dogs in group three found out that it is meaningless to attempt to escape because they are previously exposed to such situations. (Seligman & Groves, 1970). And then they conducted the same experiments with rats. They have divided into three groups as that of dogs one received escapable

shocks another group inescapable and another group with no shocks. when electric shocks were exposed to them the rats which received escapable shocks escaped by pressing on the handspike (lever) in the box, the inescapable rats pressed the lever but still cannot escape as before (Seligman & Beagley, 1975), and then the third group of rats didn't even attempt to escape, though they showed learned helplessness. Some of the research papers hypothesized that females tend to show more learned helplessness than that of man. (Leunes, Nation, Turley.1980) Learned Helplessness in females is more due to insolvable pretreatment, prior experiences which are uncontrollable, and failures and they produce motivational deficits in females, but males were not much affected by failures they consider it as unstable, but controllable.

Universal helplessness is a perception of helplessness every person can experience where they tend to believe inefficacious to the situation, she is in. whereas learned helplessness is a circumstance where they feel others can escape from that situation but they can't find a solution to escape from that particular situation (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

3. Methodology

Participants

The participants were included on the basis of the aim of the study. The study involved a semi structured question, in English, therefore one of the most important inclusion criteria was to have participants who spoke English.



Further, based on existing research on Female Emerging adults in India, participants of the study were from Karnataka, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Delhi. The mean age of the participants was between 18 and 25.

One of the most important aspects of including participants was the experience of Learned helplessness. Participants were first explained the definition of 'Learned Helplessness in Romantic Relationship'. The participants who had verbally reported that they had experienced the same in their romantic relationship, were part of study.

Procedure

To identify participants, a form was circulated across social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp as well researcher's personal contacts. 12 participants agreed to be a part of study, however, ten were chosen to be a part of the study, who met the inclusion criteria, mentioned by the researchers of the study. A semi structured interview question was prepared by the researchers of the study. After expert validation, the interview was conducted via telephonic interview after seeking consent and detailed debriefing. Following the interview, the researcher provided the participants with a debriefing sheet with contact details of a mental

health professional, to aid the support service to be provided to them the interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants and were transcribed and further Thematically analyzed in the light of Review of Literature.

Thema in objectives of the semi structured interview are

- 1.To understand the perception of learned helplessness in relationships of female emerging adults
- 2.To understand the different situations, they performed learned helplessness
- 3.To understand how the participant reacted in such situations
- 4.The set of open-ended questions was used for the semi-structured interview.

Design

This study employed an exploratory qualitative design. This helped in having a better vision of learned helplessness. This study further explored the perception of learned helplessness among female emerging adults between the age of 18 and 25. This further tried to explore the possible ways to overcome it.



Qualitative research focuses on attempting to understand the complexity of the situation rather than trying to manipulate and control different variables. Qualitative research has been more common in anthropology and sociology than in psychology but the interest in qualitative methods has grown among psychologists in recent years. (Crawford and Kimmel, 1999). The method of data analysis in a qualitative study can be either in the form of a case study, focus group discussion or an interview.

Qualitative interviews differ from quantitative interviews both in terms of format and goals. These interviews can take the form of oral or life histories or may be oriented on a narrower topic.

An interview study of convicted and imprisoned rapists helped clarify the rapists' motivations and attitudes toward a woman (Scully, 1990). This kind of interview might not yield a uniform set of data, but can help us gain an understanding of the common patterns of motivation and attitudes among therapists' Responses.

Analysis Of Data

The qualitative data was recorded and transcribed before deriving themes. Inferences were drawn

from the themes and later reflected in the light of the review of the literature. Descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage were utilized. The interviews were audio-recorded after the participant gives consent to do so. After the audio data was collected, it was transcribed. The data was later converted into themes and was reflected in light of the review of literature, theories, and observations made by the researcher.

Ethical considerations

Consent: Obtaining permission from the participant.

Confidentiality: The data collected from the participant will not be disclosed to anyone without the participant's permission and will be used for research purposes only. Freedom to withdraw from the study at any point in time: The participant has the freedom to quit the research without completing it.

Debriefing: The researcher will explain the nature of the study after the participant completes giving data. This is done to avoid answers from the participants that can be socially desirable as they could influence the purpose of the study and the results.



Thematic Analysis Table

Themes	Subthemes	Examples
Parental and societal controls	<p>Parents to take decisions in relationships</p> <p>Parents put limitations in relationships</p> <p>Parents attitude towards relationship</p> <p>Parents influence on relationship</p> <p>Positive influence and attitude the society of society</p>	<p>Parents absolutely know about my relationship and that was kind of a proposal a marriage proposal and my parents took it forward and I was just 19 that started when the whole thing this happened..... Relationship they were like once you get into an age where you feel like you are You want to Marry this person, they will do the marriage that then right now we're just talking about marriage like you were interested in the future time you can get married (P6)</p> <p>when I was staying with my parents like they didn't know about this relationship, so I wasn't really like comfortable taking the scholars away, and he was a mindful about the timing as well. He calls me any time he wants it can be late at night, early in the morning, but over time, and I'm not always available whenever he needs me to, and instead of understanding that (p 3)</p> <p>As I mentioned he told me not to tell this to anyone. So, this is the first reason my relationship was I did not reveal to my parents, first of all I revealed to my parents, my friends where completely againstthis, (p5)</p>
Battered women and learned helplessness	<p>Societal concepts about women</p> <p>Limitations misunderstand as possessiveness</p> <p>Parents and social training to women to be submissive</p> <p>Gender prioritization</p> <p>Women to be submissive and males to be dominant</p>	<p>What we usually see in the society is that we should be submissive to the the husband of the boyfriend or it might be so they were a little dominant so I think ok I need to adjust for everything but those are just comments in my life made a lot of adjustment with that particular guy and you know that truly cause a lot of down to me he would be angry if I tell him that this particular patient being friendly with me I think if I tell him anything about me talking to a colleague or working with a colleague for doing my practical exams it if it was a male friend get the same model in my exams so I must obviously have to see him shirtless or maybe I have to see him short but basically how it works in the medical field so he would be like super angry (p6)</p> <p>seen from</p>
Role of media in shaping Learned Helplessness	<p>Influence of Facebook and other social media platforms</p> <p>The portrayal of women after the breakup in a negative way</p> <p>Positive messages perceived in negative manner</p>	<p>but then in a social media, also the people who break up are the ones who are portrayed in a bad manner. I Malayalam there is a term called the and it is only referred to girls. It's the who just used the man and left him if a girl who broke up that is highlighted in a bad life, and either they want me to be the one who broke up with him and didn't want me to be the one that is portrayed in the bad light. (p3)</p> <p>social media, like all the songs, all the quotes, everything is about fighting for love. Don't give up all of and all those things, but then they're like my relationship with giving up is more g, because our relationship was long distance, we communicate through WhatsAppour Facebook chats, there was some</p>

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		<p>communication mistake. If I intended in a positive, he would take it in a negative way, for both of the persons, but then that is not shown anywhere as a young girl in my head. It was like the person who breaks up as a bad person, (p3)</p> <p>because our relationship was long distance, we communicate through WhatsApp and Facebook chats, there was some communication mistake. If I intended in a positive, he would take it in a negative way, (p5)</p>
<p>Learned helplessness and mental health problems</p>	<p>Depression Anxiety Helplessness</p>	<p>I was in the almost depression to half a year I was in depression and the I think the best part of me is that I was clearly the mental depression but then at home no one knows able to make out anything that maybe into depression because I never wanted my parents to know how I feel about this thing but I have been through mental depression (p6)</p>
<p>Physical and Cognitive Controls</p>	<p>Emotionally compelling to send nudes Emotionally compelling to go out Emotionally compelling to attend calls</p>	<p>the was kind of talking like I am going to be your husband so it is time to send me nudes anyway I will see the Someday know all these things and I did it.....obviously, I did it... I send him nudes 100 times... maybe more than 100 times because he kept forcing Me (p6)</p> <p>calls...It's really common these days, and so there's nothing to be uncomfortable about. He was kindly like disregarded mine this thing, so he emotionally manipulated me a lot and delivered me into doing a lot of things that he wanted me to do it. (p3)</p> <p>and even if I tell him, I don't want to work. You'll be like only hand the one in this relationship who planned everything you don't like me that much. So emotionally like try to make me do what he wants me to do. (p3)</p>
<p>Demisexual</p>	<p>Lack of emotional connection in sex</p>	<p>so, you know the demi sexual is, you can't be sexual with anyone unless you have an emotional connection with them. Okay, like you can't, it's just not for you. I'm like that. I can't have a physical. I can't I can't let someone even hold me until I'm completely comfortable with them, but then he didn't have the time or even put the effort to invest in my emotional relationship, and for him, it was all about for me. It's the other way, so he wouldn't even try to make my emotional needs satisfied before wanting</p>

4.DISCUSSION

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Data analysis involved systematically analyzing the data and derivation of themes and subthemes from the semi structured interview. The transcribed interview was first analyzed by second author. Second analysis involved the presence of both first and second author, for careful theme and sub theme derivation. The theme and sub theme derived is as mentioned below:

Theme 1: Parental and societal controls

Emerging adults have a pattern of learned helplessness due to parental and social control, which causes several interpersonal issues. The participant claims that parents still make decisions in their relationships even when they are dating. A participant claims that parents determine how much time their children should spend with their partners and that parents from the Indian culture in particular do not hold relationships in high regard. Emerging adulthood is a stage of life where a person learns to make decisions on their own, but they are unable to do so or are not taking the initiative to do so since, starting in childhood, they are trained to rely on their parents to make all of the important decisions in their lives. Therefore, even if they have the option to make decisions about their lives and choices about specific things when they reach maturity, they won't usually do so. This amply demonstrates adults' trained helplessness.

A person can make decisions on their own as an adult, but parents have experiences and a wealth of knowledge. Particularly in India, parents believe that academics should come before romantic relationships with their children. They have a bad attitude toward partnerships primarily because of this.

Additionally, couples tend to receive a bad rap in society. They frequently have the opinion that romantic connections in adolescence are terrible. The findings suggest that people, particularly women, have a constant fear of what society will think. Indian society has a well-known pattern like this. Our grandparents' parents raised them by instilling in them the idea that romantic connections are bad before marriage. As adults, they tend to have this belief, which they then pass on to their children, perpetuating the pattern. Although it will take a long time to favourably modify the attitude toward romantic partnerships, this attitude has been shifting recently.

Theme 2: Battered women and Learned Helplessness

For both men and women, society always imposes a set of standards and guidelines. When it comes to all aspects of relationships, women are typically more flexible and subservient. One of the participants claims that these societal factors have made their interpersonal connections more problematic. She was born and raised in a family where her father is very domineering and her mother is quite submissive; this is typical of practically all Indian families. She was thus taught to be subservient by her mother beginning in her early years. Her partner exploited her as a result of this. In Indian society, gender priority is highly prevalent. One of the participants says she was repeatedly beaten and mistreated by her spouse, but she endured all of that in the beginning since it was perceived as love by society. Later on in her relationship, she tends to think that all of these things are necessary to preserve a long-term connection. It took her about 2 years to realize the abuse she was experiencing, which led her to end their relationship.



Since Walker (1979) put forth the idea of Battered Woman Syndrome, learned helplessness and intimate partner violence have been linked. Walker (2000) asserts that because of a pattern of ongoing violence, abused women feel powerless to alter their circumstances. The dogs in the initial research on learned helplessness exhibited the same behaviour. They didn't know when they would be shocked again, therefore they had no control over when it would happen. battered women who are unable to leave their houses who ultimately failed in their attempt to escape inescapable shocks (Overmeir & Seligman, 1967) People learn to feel helpless and believe they have no control over their situations when they are mistreated repeatedly, unpredictable, and uncontrollably.

Theme 3: Role of Media in Shaping Learned Helplessness

Social media has a significant influence on emerging adults. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other social media sites. This may have an impact on how someone thinks. According to the findings, social media negatively affects how people think. We frequently observe women being extremely subservient to men and men being quite powerful on social media. In an Indian setting, a woman's primary responsibility is to look after her spouse and to submit to and obey them. Thus, those who witness this train their minds to become as they are designed to be. Therefore, when they are dealing with particular circumstances or behaviours from their partners, they don't even attempt to escape them.

However, social media presents women as the primary cause of all breakups, and following a breakup, women are often portrayed poorly. To prevent this, they stay in

the relationship rather than attempting to end it and try to bury their sorrow to uphold the commitment for a long period. Different words are used to describe women after a breakup in some languages and within specific social media user groups. Social media promotes the idea that although women should be very meek and obedient, men should be highly domineering, angry, and violent. These kinds of connections are seen as permanent and based on deep love. People are unaware of the harmful effects that are about to occur as a result of spreading ideas and themes similar to these through social media. People, particularly famed emerging adults, tend to trust these statements and train their minds to be extremely tolerant of whatever occurs.

These kinds of messages and themes are frequently seen by women. They educate their minds to be tolerant of things in this way. As a result, women are often mistreated and forced to live as servants to males. Their hopes are dashed by this. They might be getting specific chances to leave that position or relationship. Anyone close to them, including their parents or friends, can be informed. However, women frequently find that pointless and commit suicide or suffer from emotional damage as a result. As a result, social media plays a big part in how women learn to be helpless. It's crucial to produce and disseminate materials that inspire people to enter into partnerships they believe will be beneficial for them.

Theme 4: Learned Helplessness and Mental Health Problems

Many of the participants asserted that they learned impotence from their relationships, which led to mental

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anguish, hopelessness, etc. Stress-related mental disorders like major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and acute and post-traumatic stress disorder are more prevalent in women than in males. (Nemeroff et al., 2006; Somers et al., 2006; Stein et al., 2002; Steiner et al., 2005; Holden, 2005; Kessler, 2003; Kessler and colleagues, 1995; Kornstein, 1997) Although the causes of these gender discrepancies are unknown, some coping mechanisms and responses to demanding life situations may be to blame (Kendler et al, 2001b; Klein and Corwin, 2002; Maciejewski et al, 2001; Nemeroff et al, 2006; Sherrill et al, 1997). Gender differences in these illnesses are brought on by the existence of certain genes in men and women. The existence of various quantities of sex hormones during maturity (i.e., activational effects) or early development (i.e., organizational effects) is frequently implicated in gender variations in these illnesses (Altemus, 2006; Joffe and Cohen, 1998; Rubinow et al, 1998; Steiner et al, 2003). Differences in the mental state between the sexes are also influenced by genetic and societal variables (Barr et al, 2004b; Breslau et al, 1997; Kendler, 1998; Kendler et al, 2001a; Meagher and Murray, 1997).

A psychological characteristic known as "learned helplessness" (LH) is thought to be the result of recurrent exposure to unpredictable and unpleasant situations (Seligman 1975). LH entails a large decrease in connecting action with a favourable outcome, which results in a substantial decrease in the number of responses to external forces (Miller 1988). In battered women who are hesitant to leave an abusive relationship, LH encourages submission and submissiveness (Aguilar

and others; Ball and Wyman 1977–1978; Nightingale 1994; Walker 1996).

Theme 5: Physical and Cognitive Changes that cause Learned Helplessness

Learned helplessness results from numerous physical and mental changes. A participant claims that she feels uncomfortable doing some things since her boyfriend has been physically forcing her to do them. For instance, her partner instructed her not to wear certain red and blue gowns because he doesn't want people to stare at her while she is wearing them. He also set some restrictions on her wearing leggings. She initially believed that she was doing it out of the concern and obeyed him even though she didn't enjoy it, but with time, this conduct developed into learned helplessness. He also forbade her from eating specific foods since he didn't want her to gain weight.

Even though she enjoys eating, she avoided doing so, which subsequently taught her powerlessness. The companion also tries to steal control over her thoughts. He manipulates her thinking and forces her to think in oppositional ways, such as when they were dating and each of them belonged to a different faith. According to the participant, he attempted to control her thinking by getting her to think contractually. She altered her thinking to suit his needs. One of the participants said that her partner had asked her to send him nudes. She initially refused, but after he began to pressurize her emotionally, she gave in and sent him nudes. Later, she was unable to escape that particular circumstance. She thinks it's pointless to make a chance to come out of that toxic relationship



5 . Limitations and Implications

Although the researcher had aimed to collect the data of only females, the data will give detail only on females

Limitations

- Only the learned helplessness of females between the age of 18 and 25 is provided
- The semi-structured interview was restricted to English-speaking people
- It lacked a quantitative investigation of the topic
- The sample size was restricted to 6

Implications

- The following are some of the implications of the study
- The study of learned helplessness especially the factors that lead to learned helplessness will provide a newer understanding of the concept
- This helps the readers to understand the exact reason behind learned helplessness in their relationships.
- This study provides newer insights into the role of social media in developing learned helplessness in relationships
- The results can be used to spread awareness about learned helplessness among individuals especially females, by understanding the concept they can find out the situation they are undergoing and can come out of that relationship
- Follow-up study can be done on a larger sample to have a better understanding of the topic
- A quantitative tool can be developed to have a better understanding of the concept.

5. CONCLUSION

The study leads to the conclusion that there are mainly 5 factors that lead to learned helplessness in relationships.

They are perceived style of learned helplessness through parenting and societal

controls, battered women and learned helplessness, physical and cognitive changes that lead to learned helplessness, learned helplessness and mental health problems emerging in adulthood and learned helplessness, and finally social media and learned helplessness

It was indeed a learning experience for the researcher. This study can be used by psychiatrists, social workers, and psychologists who deal with the relationship problems of emerging female adults. This will help them to have a newer insight into the concept of learned helplessness in relationships.

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