

**FEAR OF INTIMACY AND ATTACHMENT AMONG UNMARRIED INDIVIDUALS IN  
KERALA**

*Dissertation submitted to Kerala University*

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of*

**MSc. Counselling Psychology**

By

**V S PARVATHY (Reg. No. 60422115022)**

*Under the guidance of*

**Dr. Ammu Luckose**

Assistant Professor of the Department in Counselling Psychology



Department of Counselling Psychology  
Loyola College of Social Sciences  
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram  
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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled “**Fear of Intimacy and Attachment Among Unmarried Individuals in Kerala**” is an authentic work carried out by V S PARVATHY, Reg. No. 60422115022 under the guidance of Dr. Ammu Luckose during the fourth semester of M.Sc. Counselling Psychology programme in the academic year 2022-2024.

**Ms. Jesline Maria Mamen**

Head of the Department

Department of Counselling Psychology

Loyola College of Social Sciences

Thiruvananthapuram

Submitted for the examination held on.....

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do hereby declare that this research work '**FEAR OF INTIMACY AND ATTACHMENT AMONG UNMARRIED INDIVIDUALS IN KERALA**' was carried in the Department of Counselling Psychology, Loyola College of Social Sciences, supervised by Dr. Ammu Luckose and submitted to Kerala University as a part of partial fulfillment of the Postgraduate Bachelor's Degree in Counseling Psychology of the year 2022-2024. This work is bonafide and has not been submitted by me for the award of any degree, diploma, titles and recognition before.

Sreekariyam

Date

Name: V S Parvathy

Reg. No. 60422115022

Department of Counseling Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between fear of intimacy and attachment styles among unmarried individuals in Kerala, focusing on the dimensions of closeness, dependence, and anxiety. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 202 participants (101 males and 101 females) aged 18-35 through an online survey employing the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) and the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS). The results revealed a significant positive correlation between fear of intimacy and attachment anxiety ( $r = 0.553, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that higher attachment anxiety is associated with greater fear of intimacy. Conversely, a significant negative correlation was observed between fear of intimacy and attachment dependence ( $r = -0.306, p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that individuals who rely more on others experience less fear of intimacy. No significant gender differences in fear of intimacy were found, suggesting similar levels of relational anxiety across genders. However, differences were noted in attachment dimensions, with females scoring higher on closeness and anxiety, and males on dependence. The study underscores the critical role of attachment anxiety in shaping fears of intimacy and highlights the potential impact of gender differences in attachment patterns. These findings have implications for counseling practices aimed at addressing attachment insecurities and improving relational satisfaction among unmarried individuals. Future research should explore longitudinal changes in attachment patterns, expand to diverse populations, and investigate additional psychological variables influencing intimacy fears.

**Keywords:** Fear of intimacy, attachment styles, attachment anxiety, attachment dependence, gender differences, unmarried individuals, Kerala.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Kerala is popular for its rich societal values and customs, and has traditionally considered marriage to be the foundation of social life. Marriage is not considered as a relationship between the ones who are getting married, but it is seen as a union of families, customs, and cultural expectations among keralites. It was an institution admired and respected, with deep-rooted beliefs in its sanctity. However, during recent times, there was a change in views on the concept of marriage and commitment among the younger generation of kerala.

One of the most noticeable signs of this change is the rising number of unmarried individuals in Kerala, particularly among youths. This showcases a wide change in the social attitude towards the concept of marriage, a widely acknowledged life timeline—education, work, marriage, and family—no longer has the same weight in society. Many young people are reevaluating the assumption that marriage is an essential step in adulthood and placing a higher value on personal development, education, and job advancement than they did on traditional marital expectations.

Numerous sociocultural and economic variables that have reshaped Kerala's marriage institution are to blame for this shift. The changing marriage patterns are mostly due to the high emphasis on education, especially among women. Women are now more empowered to pursue careers and become financially independent thanks to higher education levels, which has caused some to slow down the marriage or even completely reevaluate its importance. In addition, new lifestyles and beliefs that prioritize individualism and personal freedom over shared family responsibilities have been brought about by Kerala's economy's modernization and globalization.

Comparing current patterns with Kerala's historical marital perspectives is crucial to comprehending the magnitude of this change. Keralan households have traditionally arranged weddings, placing a high value on a match in social class, caste, and religious background. Individuals had very little influence over the choice of mate; families made the decisions that complied with cultural and societal norms.

Marriage was once seen to be an unavoidable and integral aspect of life. It served as the main means of maintaining familial relationships, achieving social rank, and carrying out religious obligations. Concepts of honor, duty, and community were closely linked to the institution of marriage, and people frequently put these before their own goals or ambitions.

However, the landscape of today is very different. The younger generation in Kerala is becoming more and more skeptical of the conventional expectations around marriage due to the rise of globalization, technology, and shifting social conventions. A change from the past is seen in the increasing focus on individual choice, love marriages, and the acceptance of many types of relationships, including cohabitation.

The societal, cultural, and financial aspects of Kerala's evolving views on marriage are multifaceted. The impact of modernity and globalization is one of the most important variables. Kerala is becoming more and more exposed to diverse cultures, values, and lifestyles as it becomes more integrated into the global economy. Younger generations are gradually embracing more liberal attitudes on relationships, marriage, and personal autonomy as a result of this exposure to new ideas.

The development of social media and technology has also been a major factor in the formation of these new viewpoints. Young people in Kerala now have access to a wider range of

ideas, conversations, and alternative lifestyles that defy conventional norms thanks to online platforms. To further support the shifting perspectives, social media has developed into a platform where people can share their experiences, discuss marriage, and interact with like-minded others.

The change in marriage patterns has been influenced by economic reasons as well. Many young people are delaying marriage because of the growing focus on career growth, financial independence, and economic stability. Women from Kerala in particular have shifted toward a more professional outlook and have goals outside of the home and marriage. Significance of marriage has been reevaluated as a result of this change in priorities, with many people opting to postpone getting married until after they have fulfilled their career aspirations or to stay single.

This trend has also been influenced by the living expenses and the financial obligations that come with marriage. Many people are choosing to put off getting married until they are in a better financial situation due to the escalating costs of housing, weddings, and education. Many people view this postponement as a sensible choice, one that reflects the increasing significance of financial stability in contemporary partnerships.

Relationship and commitment-related psychological characteristics change along with how society views marriage. The fear of intimacy and the fear of attachment are two ideas that are becoming more and more important in Kerala's conversation about contemporary relationships.

The anxiety or avoidance of intimate, emotional, or physical relationships with other people is referred to as fear of intimacy. People who have this anxiety may find it difficult to build meaningful relationships and frequently stay out of circumstances that could make them

feel exposed emotionally. Many things, such as traumatic experiences in the past, rejection anxiety, or the need to preserve one's independence, might give rise to this dread. Conversely, fear of attachment is defined by a person's unwillingness or avoidance of developing safe emotional connections and dependency in interpersonal interactions. This concern frequently shows up as a reluctance to fully commit to a partner's emotions or to long-term partnerships.

As modern ideas of autonomy, self-fulfillment, and individualism clash with traditional expectations of marriage and relationships, these anxieties are becoming more prevalent among Kerala's single youth. These anxieties are becoming more common, which emphasizes how difficult it is for people to navigate the conflict between their own desires and those of society in today's relationships.

One particular type of phobia that entails extreme anxiety or terror associated with the thought of marriage or long-term commitment is called "gamophobia," or the fear of marriage. Although gamophobia is a recognized clinical disorder, it is frequently discussed in relation to more general anxieties of closeness and attachment. Investigating the evolving dynamics of marriage and commitment in Kerala requires an understanding of the connection between gamophobia and these more generalized anxieties.

One way to interpret gamophobia is as a severe form of intimacy and attachment anxiety. The idea of marriage can cause extreme anxiety in those who have gamophobia, which can result in avoidance behaviors or serious relationship problems. This fear frequently stems from deeper psychological problems, such as a fear of being vulnerable, a fear of losing one's independence, or a dread of being in a relationship that has caused harm in the past.

Though gamophobia is a distinct disorder, phobias related to intimacy and attachment are more widespread and can impact a wider spectrum of people. These anxieties might not always result in a total rejection of marriage, but they might make it harder to establish and preserve intimate partnerships. As people struggle with the evolving norms and expectations, these anxieties are becoming more pertinent in Kerala, where societal expectations surrounding marriage are changing.

Several factors led to the decision to shift the focus of this study from gamophobia to fear of intimacy and connection. Firstly, it is difficult to perform an extensive study on gamophobia due to the restricted availability of research instruments that accurately detect this particular fear. On the other hand, standardized measures and surveys that are designed to evaluate fears of closeness and attachment are accessible, enabling a more thorough and dependable analysis of these concerns.

Second, a wider spectrum of relationship worries that are quite pertinent to Kerala's current societal situation are included in the fear of intimacy and attachment. These anxieties are a reflection of the complexity of contemporary relationships, in which people are placing a higher value on self-actualization, professional aspirations, and personal liberty than they once did on traditional obligations like marriage. The study intends to have a more thorough understanding of the psychological elements driving relationship dynamics in Kerala by concentrating on these worries.

Finally, studying intimacy and attachment anxiety facilitates a more sophisticated investigation of the ways in which these phobias materialize in various age groups, genders, and socioeconomic contexts. This method offers a more comprehensive view of the evolving

marriage and commitment landscape by shedding light on the various experiences and difficulties that single people in Kerala face.

Many sociological and psychological theories have made fear of intimacy and attachment their central theme. According to John Bowlby's attachment theory, early encounters with caregivers influence people's expectations and behaviors in relationships for the rest of their lives (Bowlby, 1988). Since insecure attachments can cause worries about proximity and dependency, this idea is crucial to understanding how attachment patterns might result in fears of intimacy in adulthood (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Apart from attachment theory, social anxiety theories offer an alternative perspective on fear of intimacy. People who experience high levels of social anxiety may be reluctant to establish personal relationships because they fear being judged or rejected (Schwartz, 2012). Cultural norms that prioritize traditional relationship structures often intensify this anxiety, which may cause people who believe they do not fit these norms to fear intimacy more intensely (Ramaswamy, 2022).

More research has been done recently on how cultural expectations affect apprehensions about closeness and connection. For instance, Anderson (1998) discovered that anxieties of commitment are exacerbated in societies with strong familial and communal bonds, particularly when it comes to cultural pressures and the idealization of sexual relationships. Motwani (2023) elaborated on this by looking at the Kerala environment, where changing gender roles and educational attainment are impacting relationship habits and making young people more afraid of being attached.

Kerala offers a distinctive cultural setting where modernism and traditional values coexist. The state's unique social structure, which affects relationship dynamics, is a result of its matrilineal tradition, high literacy rates, and academic accomplishments. The conflict between contemporary goals and conventional expectations has influenced how individuals, especially young people, see marriage and intimacy.

The way that people approach relationships has been significantly impacted by the shifting gender roles in Kerala. In the past, Keralan women were supposed to get married young and take on household responsibilities. These expectations have changed, though, with many women now placing a higher value on their personal and professional aspirations than an early marriage due to the focus placed on education and career growth (Thomas, 2023). Because of the perceived volatility of contemporary relationship norms, men's views have also changed as they navigate new demands in partnerships. This has frequently resulted in anxieties of intimacy and connection (Rajagopal, 2020).

Research has indicated that the way relationships and marriage are portrayed in the media exacerbates these anxieties. Idealized portrayals of commitment and love are frequently promoted by the media, which can lead to inflated expectations and anxiety over falling short (New Indian Express, 2023). These media effects can heighten anxieties of intimacy, especially for those who feel they do not fit into traditional or idealized relationship models, in Kerala, where parental pressure and societal scrutiny are prominent (Arya, 2023).

In Kerala, there is an increase in single people and a decrease in marriage rates, which are indicative of larger socio economic shifts. According to psychologist Nithin A.F., there are a number of reasons for these tendencies, such as worries about domestic abuse, marital discord,



and the need for financial independence (Nithin, 2023). As people consider the advantages and disadvantages of committing to a relationship in a society that is undergoing rapid social change, these worries are intimately related to anxieties of intimacy and commitment (Thomas, 2023).

The primary concern of this study is the growing aversion to closeness and attachment among Kerala's single population. A reluctance to enter into close, committed relationships is the hallmark of this problem, which has been more noticeable in recent years due to broader socioeconomic trends in the state. Kerala has long been associated with upholding traditional family values, getting married young, and leading a community-focused existence. But people's perceptions of commitment and relationships have clearly changed as a result of fast modernization, urbanization, and gender role changes. An increasing number of people are opting to be single or are delaying marriage for an extended period of time due to this growing fear of intimacy, which might show itself as emotional detachment, avoiding close relationships, or reluctance to commit.

This problem is especially important in light of Kerala's changing social environment. The shifting views on marriage and relationships have significant ramifications when the state experiences socioeconomic changes. The unmarried population's fear of intimacy and connection is not just a personal problem; it may also have an effect on societal cohesiveness, mental health, and stable relationships. Fear can prevent people from building deep relationships, which can result in feelings of loneliness and isolation as well as a higher risk of mental health conditions including depression and anxiety. Furthermore, the unwillingness to enter into committed partnerships may threaten the integrity of social institutions that depend on marriage and family ties, which could result in more significant problems for society as a whole with regard to social support networks and community involvement.

The underlying social fabric of Kerala could be disrupted by the declining marriage rates and increased dread of intimacy, as the state's social cohesion has traditionally been strengthened by strong familial ties and communal networks. This tendency has significant potential ramifications. As people battle with loneliness and the emotional pressure of avoiding contact, mental health concerns may become increasingly common. As fewer individuals get into committed long-term relationships, the number of stable family units may decline, thereby jeopardizing the stability of relationships. The raising of the following generation may be impacted by this as fewer kids may grow up in typical family settings. Furthermore, a less cohesive society may result from a decline in social cohesiveness, with people living more alone and participating in fewer community activities. These changes may have major long-term impacts on societal well-being in a state like Kerala, where social support and community involvement have historically been vital to individual well-being.

Even though this problem is becoming more and more important, there is a clear lack of research on fear of intimacy and attachment in the Keralan context. Although research on attachment disorders, fear of intimacy, and associated psychological problems is widely published, there is a dearth of study that is specific to Kerala and takes into account its particular cultural, social, and economic circumstances. A lot of the material that has already been written generalizes results from other contexts, which might not apply fully to Kerala because of its unique social structure, high literacy rate, and matrilineal legacy. Moreover, a significant portion of research has concentrated on gamophobia, or the fear of marriage, which, although connected, falls short of capturing the more general problems of fearing intimacy and commitment that might arise outside of a married relationship.

To fully comprehend the underlying origins and effects of this trend, a thorough examination of Kerala's modernity, cultural norms, and shifting gender roles must be done. These factors all have an impact on the fear of closeness and connection. Examining how society norms, the media, and education shape these anxieties is also necessary, especially in light of the gender differences in them. Furthermore, studies ought to look into how this anxiety affects people's mental health and general well-being on a psychological level as well as how it affects social structures and interpersonal dynamics in Kerala.

It is important, for a number of reasons, to concentrate on the fear of attachment and intimacy rather than gamophobia. First off, compared to gamophobia, which is primarily associated with the fear of marriage, the ideas of fear of intimacy and attachment are more general and cover a larger spectrum of relationship dynamics. This research can address the underlying emotional and psychological problems that may contribute to gamophobia but also impact other kinds of relationships, such as friendships, family ties, and non-marital romantic partnerships, by looking at fear of intimacy and attachment.

Furthermore, there are validated tools for measuring the well-established notions of fear of intimacy and attachment in psychological research. This makes it possible to do more thorough, empirically based research that can offer deeper understanding of the problem. Furthermore, these ideas apply more widely to comprehending contemporary relationships, particularly in a society like Kerala that is changing quickly and where modern goals and lifestyles are posing a growing threat to traditional values.

The purpose of this study is to fill in these research gaps by concentrating on the fear of intimacy and attachment in the Keralan context and by shedding light on the social and

psychological elements that underlie these anxieties. Additionally, it aims to serve as a basis for the creation of focused treatments and regulations that can lessen the detrimental impacts of these anxieties on people, interpersonal relationships, and society at large. In order to address a growing worry in Kerala's changing socioeconomic scene, this research is both necessary and urgent given the possible ramifications for social cohesion, mental health, and stable relationships.

The study's objectives included expanding knowledge of the ways in which fear of intimacy interacts with different attachment dimensions and demographic factors. The first objective of the study is to determine how the fear of intimacy attachment characteristics such as close, depend, and anxiety relate to one another and how these factors affect intimate relationships. Second, the study aims to determine whether there were any appreciable variations in the degrees of fear of intimacy among individuals with various attachment styles, including secure, anxious, and avoidant. The third objective is to investigate whether there are any gender variations in the experience of fear of intimacy, and whether these differences apply to how men and women approach an intimate relationship. The fourth and final objective is to ascertain whether gender variations exist in attachment characteristics such as close, depend, and anxiety, as well as whether males and females show these attachment traits in different ways.

The study is aimed to investigate the connections between fear of intimacy, attachment characteristics and styles, and gender. The study will look into four main hypotheses. First hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference between fear of intimacy and characteristics of attachment, such as close, depend, and anxiety. The second hypothesis states that there will be no significant differences between fear of intimacy and attachment styles, such as secure, anxious, and avoidant. Third hypothesis states that there will be no significant

difference between fear of intimacy and gender. The fourth and final hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference between attachment characteristics (close, depend, anxiety), and gender.

The study's target population is Kerala's unmarried population between the ages of 18 and 35, who are more and more struggling with feelings of attachment and intimacy. In particular, the study looks at these fears or anxieties in light of Kerala's changing cultural environment, which is characterized by high literacy rates, progressive gender roles, and shifting social expectations. By focusing only on this age range, the study aims to investigate the manifestation, prevalence, and effects of these anxieties on social and personal well-being. Understanding the gender disparities and the impact of Kerala's particular social and cultural norms will be the main goal.

This study holds great importance in various fields such as psychology, sociology, public policy, and counseling psychology. Its relevance is especially noteworthy in the context of Kerala. The study has the potential to make multiple significant contributions by examining the anxieties associated with intimacy and connection among single people in this area.

This work provides a rare opportunity for furthering the knowledge of how cultural and social contexts impact psychological phenomena like fear of attachment and intimacy in the field of psychology research. Research on a particular demographic in Kerala might contribute to the improvement of current theories and frameworks, especially in the areas of social anxiety and attachment theory. This localized viewpoint offers insightful information on how cultural norms influence psychological experiences, and by incorporating cultural factors into psychological theory, it can benefit psychology as a whole.

The study's conclusions are essential for creating focused, culturally aware mental health treatments. Mental health practitioners might use the findings to customize counseling and therapy strategies that meet the unique anxieties and concerns of single people while Kerala undergoes fast social change. By supporting this population's emotional health and improving the efficacy of interventions, this tailored approach can increase the relevance and influence of mental health services in the community.

From a sociological viewpoint, the study sheds light on how relationship behaviors are shaped by the intersections of cultural norms, gender roles, and intimacy anxieties. Comprehending these processes can aid sociologists and policymakers in identifying and resolving the difficulties encountered by Kerala's single population. This information can help create social situations that are more supportive and advance our understanding of the ways in which changing cultural norms affect interpersonal interactions and behavior.

The finding has important ramifications for public policy as well. The research can provide insight into the anxieties associated with intimacy and attachment, which can help Kerala establish policies pertaining to marriage, education, and gender equality. The results can be used by policymakers to develop initiatives that assist single people, lessen social pressure, and foster better relationships. Furthermore, addressing this population's mental health needs through well-informed policy-making can improve social well-being in general.

The study is particularly noteworthy for its significance in the field of counseling psychology. It can provide therapists a more nuanced perspective of the unique anxieties and difficulties Kerala's single population faces. Using this understanding to incorporate cultural and environmental aspects into therapeutic procedures might increase the efficacy of counseling

practices. Furthermore, by using these findings to inform counseling practices, therapists can better support their clients' emotional health and relationships by addressing intimacy and attachment-related concerns. Counselors must possess this specialized understanding in order to offer empathetic and effective assistance in a cultural environment that is changing quickly.

**Need and Significance:**

Given the changing patterns of relationships, especially among single people who are choosing to live with someone instead of being married, this study is quite important. The main goal is to comprehend how these patterns are influenced by different attachment traits, such as reliance, anxiety, and proximity, as well as fear of intimacy. Although a great deal of research has been done on the dynamics of relationships among married couples, less is known about the effects these psychological aspects have on single people, especially when it comes to their commitment to long-term partnerships.

This study attempts to close these gaps by offering insightful information about the relationship patterns among singles and the relationship fears associated with various attachment styles and fear of intimacy. Our theoretical understanding of how these factors interact and impact the establishment and maintenance of relationships will be strengthened by the results. Practically speaking, the study's findings might guide the creation of focused therapeutic therapies that assist people in controlling and overcoming their anxieties, enhancing their mental health and relationship happiness. The results of the study could also have an impact on social policies and initiatives created to help single people deal with the difficulties of modern relationships. In summary, this study will contribute to our knowledge of the psychological obstacles that prevent people from establishing and maintaining healthy relationships. It will also

inform future research and interventions that are specifically designed to meet the requirements of single people in diverse cultural contexts.

### **Statement of the problem**

This study intends to address the growing concern among Kerala's single population regarding fear of intimacy and attachment problems, especially in light of changing gender roles and cultural norms. Though delayed weddings and cohabitation are becoming more common, little study has been done on the psychological effects of fear of intimacy and various attachment patterns on singles in this particular cultural context. These anxieties may have a substantial negative influence on forming and maintaining relationships, which may result in psychological problems like depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

There hasn't been enough in-depth investigation of how attachment traits (including dependency, anxiety, and closeness) and fear of intimacy are related, or if these dynamics are gender-specific. Furthermore, little is known about how these variables interact with the various attachment types (avoidant, nervous, and secure) in Kerala's distinct social and cultural milieu. This study intends to close this research gap and offer insights that can improve relationship counseling, mental health therapies, and social policies catered to the needs of single people in Kerala by examining these relationships and disparities. The research will investigate the ways in which these psychological elements impact relationship patterns and provide useful suggestions for efficiently resolving these issues.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Theoretical Review

**John Bowlby's Theory of Attachment:** The foundational paradigm in developmental psychology, John Bowlby's Attachment Theory, highlights the significance of early attachments in influencing emotional and social development over the course of a person's life. According to Bowlby's (1969) theory, newborns seek out proximity to their primary caregivers as a means of comfort and safety because of the attachment system, an evolutionary process. In times of stress, this mechanism comes on and directs the baby toward the caregiver for comfort and security. Because they guarantee the provision of care and emotional support, Bowlby's thesis emphasizes how important these early encounters are to the infant's survival (Bowlby, 1982).

Internal working models and attachment patterns are key ideas in Bowlby's theory. According to Bowlby (1969), internal working models are mental images created during early caregiver interactions that affect how people view others and themselves in relationships. Different attachment styles, such as avoidant, anxious-ambivalent, secure, and disordered, might result from these models. Positive relational outcomes are typically the consequence of secure attachment, which is defined by a strong link and comfort in the caregiver's presence (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). On the other hand, avoidant attachment is characterized by emotional detachment and independence, whereas anxious-ambivalent attachment entails clinging and obsession with the caregiver. Children with disorganized attachment experience uncertainty and conflicting behaviors as a result of inconsistent or fearful caregiving (Main & Solomon, 1986).

Bowlby's research emphasizes the idea of important periods for attachment development as well as the biological underpinnings of attachment behaviors. According to his argument, early experiences providing care are essential for the development of safe attachments, which have a significant impact on subsequent relationship patterns (Bowlby, 1988). Bowlby (1973) examined how emotional suffering and behavioral problems might arise from attachment relationship disruptions. The influence of loss and separation on attachment has also received a lot of attention.

The theory has had a significant influence on a number of disciplines, including parenting, clinical practice, and developmental psychology. It improves relationship dynamics by assisting clinicians in comprehending and addressing attachment-related issues in adults, which informs therapy methods (Holmes, 1993). Bretherton (1992) highlights the significance of responsive caring in fostering stable attachments and promoting healthy emotional development. These implications also extend to parenting and educational activities.

### **Empirical Review**

The study by Collins and Read (1990) on “Adult Attachment, Working Models, and Relationship Quality in Dating Couples” examines the complex links between adult attachment dimensions, self- and other models of working beliefs about relationships, as well as relational satisfaction in dating partners. Aggregate adult attachment style measures In three studies, the authors created a multidimensional Adult Attachment Style Dimensions (ASD) scale that comprises comfort with closeness, reliance on others and fear of abandonment/anxiety. Their second study, which investigated how these AStandard Deviations related to more general working models (with self-esteem or expressiveness; trust and beliefs about human nature: styles of loving) then established that there were indeed multiple specific inter-correlations with

self-worth, practical empathy links between those measures. The third study examined how AStandard Deviations affect current dating relationships and found that attachment styles were similar between partners, but that they resembled the caregiving style of the opposite-sex parent. Among women, there were unique longitudinal main effects for comfort with closeness and distinct interactive linkages between attachment anxiety about abandonment and changes in relationship supportiveness across Waves 5 to 6. The present investigation underscores the centrality of interpersonal differences in attachment to relationship functioning and outcomes, providing important implications for conceptual models within this area of psychology as well as application that calm leads to practical applications in romantic relationships.

Using the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) to measure fear in previous and present relationships among a sample of 60 participants (30 male and 30 female) aged 19 to 39 years, Amy Regina Anderson's (1998) study investigates the association between fear of intimate relationships and sexual intimacy. Contrary to some previous research that suggests women may have more social anxiety than males, the study finds no significant gender differences in fear of relationships. The study's limitations, including its homogeneous sample of white working people and reliance on self-reported data, may limit the generalizability of the findings, but overall, this discovery adds richness to the literature on gender variations in social anxiety. The findings' limited age range further restricts their applicability to other age groups. Furthermore, the study did not take into consideration a variety of contextual elements that may have an impact on social anxiety, such as cultural influences or varying life stages. In order to close these gaps, future studies should take into account a range of racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds as well as longitudinal methods for monitoring changes in social fear over time. An all-encompassing understanding of the dynamics of social anxiety and its correlation with gender

and other variables may be achieved by assessing the ways in which variables such as gender reassignment and societal changes impact socialization.

The Fear-of-Intimacy Scale (FIS) and the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) are tools used in the study “Fear of Intimacy Among Dating Couples” by Thelen, Vander Wal, Thomas, and Harmon (2000) to examine the fear of intimacy among heterosexual dating couples. The researchers discovered that men had higher FIS scores than women, which suggests that men are more likely than women to fear closeness in romantic relationships. The study also found a positive correlation between the FIS ratings of partners, indicating that fear of intimacy is a common feeling in relationships. The relationships between intimacy indices and FIS scores showed that fear of intimacy affected both wanted and real intimacy for both genders. The link between FIS scores and desired intimacy, however, was much lower for females than it was for real intimacy, indicating that women's relationship desires may be influenced differently by fear of intimacy than by actual experiences. Interestingly, females who had ended their dating relationships at the 6-month follow-up scored higher on the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS), suggesting that fear of intimacy may play a role in relationship breakdown. These results show significant gender disparities in the ways that this fear emerges and influences the course of relationships, as well as useful insights into the function of intimacy fear in dating relationships.

A study by Reis and Grenyer (2004) titled "Fear of Intimacy in Women: Relationship between Attachment Styles and Depressive Symptoms" demonstrated a positive correlation between depressive symptoms and communication, with a particular emphasis on the function of affect and fear in mitigating suffering in both men and women. Prior research has demonstrated a connection between attachment and depression, particularly a strong correlation with a reliance

on connections for one's own needs. Conversely, fear of attachment implies avoiding relationships out of a fear of being rejected. The precise connection patterns that are often linked to MDD are still unknown, especially when it comes to gender disparities. Researchers examined the connection between communication and self-reported depressive symptoms using data from three separate trials of hospitalized patients and college students with serious depression diagnoses. Results revealed that among female participants, fear of commitment was linked to a higher number of depressive symptoms; this implies that social avoidance brought on by rejection anxiety is a significant factor in the rise in sadness. Specifically, the absence of these correlations among those who were male raises the possibility that there are gender variations in the onset of depressive symptoms associated with attachment. Although this research sheds light on the connection between attachment and symptoms of depression, other studies contend that the findings are equivocal. Initially, depending solely on self-reports for attachment and depression severity could lead to bias and impede a comprehensive comprehension of individuals' attachment styles and depressive experiences. Furthermore, it is unclear if these results apply to the larger population of melancholic men due to the small number of male participants in the clinical group. Furthermore, this study's influence precludes the examination of the long-term correlation between depressive symptoms and relationships, which in turn precludes the identification of strong causation and physical weakness. In order to show how attachment and depression interact, future research should include longitudinal designs and a variety of techniques, accounting for gender competency, current approaches, the impact of social support, and depression treatment. Examining these research could result in a deeper comprehension of the mechanics behind depression and offer suggestions for treatments to lessen depressive symptoms in people with communication problems.

The Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology published a study by Cash, Thériault, and Annis (2005) titled "Body Image in an Interpersonal Context: Adult Attachment, Fear of Intimacy and Social Anxiety" that examined the relationship between older adults' attachment processes, body image, and interpersonal stress. The study looked at the connections between anxiety, social anxiety, attachment patterns, and body image dimensions in 103 male and 125 female college students. The study discovered a favorable correlation between physical evaluation, investment in body image, and emotional stress, as well as a link between personality variations and body image difficulties. Anxiety over intimate intimacy was significantly correlated with body image, especially in women. Individuals with issues related to body image had less stable attachment styles and higher levels of stress associated with aging. Although this study provides insightful information about the impact of body image on interpersonal relationships, it also emphasizes the need for more research. Future research should use longitudinal techniques to monitor changes over time as they explore the underlying mechanisms of body image and how it affects relationship dynamics. Furthermore, examining the impact of culture on one's self-perception and body image may improve treatment protocols and health outcomes pertaining to self-efficacy and body image.

Marina Blagojevic (2010) explores the changing views of youth on marriage in her study "The Attitudes of Young People Towards Marriage: From the Change of Substance to the Change of Form," concentrating on a student body in Belgrade in 1985. The research examines answers to a free-form inquiry concerning opinions on marriage generally and in relation to society. Blagojevic's findings are not meant to be generalized because of the qualitative character of the study and the non-representative sample; rather, they are meant to provide insights and

spark ideas for additional research. The study draws attention to the richness and diversity of young people's perspectives on marriage and raises the possibility that a range of societal, cultural, and individual variables may have an impact on these beliefs. The change in attitudes, especially among the younger population, suggests a more widespread evolution in the meaning and comprehension of marriage, departing from conventional conventions and toward more personalized interpretations of duties and responsibilities in marriage.

The study "Fear of intimacy in romantic relationships during emerging adulthood: the influence of past parenting and separation-individuation" by Marianne Elizabeth Lloyd (2011) examines this fear with an emphasis on the separation-individuation process and the impact of previous parenting experiences. Lloyd emphasizes that intimacy is an important turning point in maturity and a crucial element of love partnerships. But fear of intimacy, which is defined as a person's anxiety-driven reluctance to discuss intimately meaningful ideas and feelings with a partner, presents a serious obstacle. The study looks into how this dread is impacted by overprotection, perceived maternal care, and a person's process of individuating and separating from their parents.

The study "Examining psychopathy from an attachment perspective: the role of fear of rejection and abandonment" by Henk Jan Conradi, Sanne Ditte Boertien, Hal Cavus, and Bruno Verschuere (2015) examined the concept of psychopathy through the lens of attachment theory and uncovered the unique mechanisms underpinning this disordered behavior. Psychopathy is typified by egocentrism and a lack of genuine connection, which makes mental comprehension challenging. The writers examine the distinctions between psychology and communication by utilizing connection theories, with a particular emphasis on the dread of being rejected and abandoned. They discovered a significant correlation between avoidance, negative feelings, and

interpersonal connections through a study including a sizable sample of college students. The association between various characteristics of psychopathy and attachment anxiety has been found to exhibit distinct patterns. While apathy had negative correlations, grandiose-manipulative and impulsive-irresponsible variables showed positive correlations. These results point to a dual deficit hypothesis in which adult psychopathy develops as a result of distinct developmental pathways, such as acquired indifference and parental maltreatment or neglect. Conradi and colleagues' work sheds light on interactions at the microscopic scale. Understanding the connection between attachment type and psychopathy aids in comprehending the complexities of this illness. The study explains the connection between related dimensions and psychopathy theories by illuminating different facets of psychopathy and its underlying mechanisms. This study does, however, also emphasize the need for more investigation and clarification. While these results show some evidence of unique patterns of interactions among different psychological diseases, more study is required to clarify underlying mechanisms, impacts, and future directions. Further studies should look into the function of additional variables in communication and its connection to psychological harm, such as heredity and early experiences. Through examining these studies, scientists can get a more comprehensive grasp of the origins and effects of mental illness, which will eventually lead to the development of better intervention techniques and therapies for those who are dealing with this issue.

The fear of intimacy in early adult relationships stemming from divorced parents is examined in the study "Fear of Intimacy in Romantic Relationship in Early Adult Women Stemming from Divorced Parents" by Arifin and Suprapti (2021), with a particular emphasis on how parental divorce affects these relationships. The researchers interviewed three women using a qualitative research approach and intrinsic case study techniques to investigate the effects of



parental divorce on the formation of intimate relationships. The fear of losing oneself and the fear of losing others are the two main components of intimacy fear that the study finds. Results show that women whose parents separated frequently display a fear of intimacy by being reluctant to divulge personal information and relying too much on relationships. This study emphasizes how parental divorce has a dramatic impact on people's relationship dynamics and how these experiences might make it difficult for people to build intimate, trustworthy relationships. The study offers insights into how fear of intimacy emerges differently across individuals but consistently correlates with the larger patterns of relational anxiety identified in similar circumstances through the use of theory-driven theme analysis and member checking.

The study "Alexithymia and Self Differentiation: The Role of Fear of Intimacy" by D. K. Scigala, M. A. Fabris, L. Badenes-Ribera, E. Zdankiewicz-Ścigala, and C. Longobardi (2021) illustrates how self-differentiation can be influenced by mediating factors like fear of intimacy and insecure adult attachment, which contributes to our understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying self-differentiation. While there has been evidence in the past that alexithymia can affect interpersonal functioning and emotional regulation, this study explains how these deficiencies translate into problems with self-differentiation—maintaining a stable sense of self amid relationship fluctuations. The research offers a more complex understanding of how these factors interact to influence self-differentiation by incorporating fear of intimacy and insecure adult attachment as mediators. The discovery that fear of intimacy both mediates the influence of alexithymia on adult attachment and directly affects self-differentiation raises the possibility that fear of intimacy plays a crucial role in explaining how emotional and relational problems show up as problems with self-concept. The study's emphasis on a non-clinical sample of gay and lesbian people significantly broadens the research context, but it

also emphasizes the necessity for more research on these relationships in various demographic and cultural contexts. The limitations, which include the cross-sectional design and the use of self-report measures, highlight the need for numerous assessment methods and longitudinal research in order to have a thorough knowledge of these dynamics. In summary, this research provides significant understanding of the intricate relationships among relational fears, emotional processing, and self-perception, opening new avenues for investigation and possible therapeutic approaches.

The study by Motwani (2023), "Fear of commitment and attachment styles in young adults: an explorative study" examines the intricate relationship between young people's attachment styles and their fear of intimacy, as well as how these elements affect romantic relationships. With the use of Collins' (1996) Adult Attachment Scale and Hanan Parvez's (2022) Fearful Attachment Questionnaire, the study sheds light on the complex interaction between fear and relationship dynamics. It emphasizes how stress has a significant impact on intimacy anxiety and shows how closeness and interdependence may not be directly linked to commitment, implying that passion is influenced by other factors. The study also shows that although fear of intimacy has a substantial impact on relationship quality, it also emphasizes the significance of comprehending the psychological mechanisms that underlie emotional suffering in romantic relationships. Still, the study has some significant shortcomings. It overlooks the possibility that emotional reactions in adulthood may be influenced by worries from infancy, which may have an effect on how we comprehend how emotional distress develops. Furthermore, it ignores how personality qualities or other psychological variables, such as past mental illness, contribute to the development of intimacy anxiety. The study also urges further research to address these open-ended questions and look into the involvement of many psychological variables in intimate

anxiety. Closing these gaps could result in a more thorough understanding of attachment stress and how it affects relationships, which would then guide the creation of focused therapies to assist people in better coping with social and emotional difficulties.

The study "Fear of relationship commitment and singlehood" by Apostolou and Tekeş (2023) explores the connection between the desire to stay single and the fear of intimacy, identifying important variables that influence people's hesitation to enter into committed partnerships. The study, which examined a sample of 453 Turkish speakers, found a correlation between assertiveness, sociability, and positive attitudes and fear of intimacy. This fear of intimacy can negatively impact the quality of relationships and result in increasing isolation. The results show that a greater fear of intimacy is linked to lower relationship quality as well as lower agreeableness and openness. On the other hand, those who score highly on agreeableness are more adept at handling social situations and preserving connections, which suggests that agreeableness reduces anxiety and enhances the quality of relationships. The study also emphasizes how important personality traits are in determining social behavior and how intricately social and psychological components interact to shape relationship dynamics. The study does, however, admit a number of shortcomings, such as the lack of temporal depth within the sample and its dependence on self-reported data. These drawbacks point to the need for more study to examine how cultural differences and other psychological variables affect intimacy anxiety. Subsequent research endeavors ought to bridge these gaps by integrating heterogeneous cultural contexts and scrutinizing the influence of variables like antecedent mental health disorders or personality attributes on the formation of intimacy phobias. Longitudinal studies may shed light on the factors underlying the establishment and maintenance of relationships by enabling a fuller understanding of how fears of intimacy and associated attitudes change over

time. In the end, closing these gaps may help create more successful programs that encourage wholesome relationships and lessen commitment anxiety in a variety of demographics.

The study "Exploring the Association between Attachment Style, Psychological Well-Being, and Relationship Status in Young Adults and Adults—A Cross-Sectional Study" by Sagone, Commodari, Indiana, and La Rosa (2023) looks into the relationships between adult attachment styles and psychological well-being, with a focus on variations across age groups and relationship statuses. The researchers compared individuals in stable intimate relationships with singles in a broad sample of 393 Italian young people and adults using the Psychological Well-being Scale and the Attachment Style Questionnaire. The results showed that people in stable relationships had higher psychological well-being on average, indicating that close relationships act as a buffer against emotional instability. On the other hand, attachment styles associated with avoidance, discomfort with proximity, and seeing relationships as secondary were more common in singles and were associated with lower levels of wellbeing. Psychological well-being was found to be substantially negatively correlated with an attachment style characterized by the desire for approval, but positively correlated with an attachment type characterized by confidence in singles. Similarly, a large negative association was discovered between psychological well-being and the attachment demand for acceptance in stable partnerships. This study emphasizes the critical role that attachment styles play in shaping psychological health and the value of intimate relationships in promoting emotional stability and well-being at various phases of life.

The relationship between self-esteem and fear of intimacy in emerging adults who have experienced parental divorce is examined in the study "Self Esteem and Fear of Intimacy in

Emerging Adults with Divorced Parents" by Sekar Kinasih Nanda Kurniawan and Fitri Ayu Kusumaningrum (2023). The results demonstrate a strong negative relationship between fear of intimacy and self-esteem, which is in line with other studies that have demonstrated a link between higher levels of intimacy anxiety and lower self-esteem. The Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) are used in the study to measure these dimensions. Additionally, the study investigates the potential influences of gender and the age of parental divorce on these associations. The findings are consistent with past research, including studies by Devirianty et al. (2014) and Obeid et al. (2020), which similarly found a negative relationship between intimate anxiety and self-esteem. Furthermore, the study expands upon the research of academics such as Tolstedt & Stokes (1984), who highlighted the significance of emotional valence in attaining closeness, and Chodorow (1978), who proposed that socialization patterns may contribute to men's heightened fear of intimacy. While acknowledging the need for future research to address additional influencing factors like the quality of parental relationships post-divorce, the study advances our understanding of how self-esteem can function as a protective factor against the fear of intimacy in emerging adults with divorced parents.

Sradha S. Anand and Anjana Sinha's study (2024) on the topic "Social Anxiety and Fear of Intimacy Among Young Adults" adds to the body of knowledge by analyzing the connection between young people' social anxiety and intimacy-related phobia. Previous studies have demonstrated that social anxiety, which is typified by a fear of being judged and scrutinized, can make it difficult for people to build strong connections and frequently result in the avoidance of personal contact. These categories have been measured using the Fear of Intimacy Scale and the Social Interaction Anxiety Scale in numerous comparable research. The results consistently show that socially anxious people have difficulty with intimacy because they are afraid of being

vulnerable and rejected. Previous research has also looked at how gender differs when it comes to closeness and social anxiety, but the findings have been conflicting, with some showing gender-specific patterns and others finding no discernible differences. The theory that social anxiety has no effect on intimacy anxieties is challenged by Anand and Sinha's study, which is consistent with the body of evidence indicating a strong link between social anxiety and fear of intimacy. This research contributes to our understanding of how cultural and environmental factors may influence the dynamics between social anxiety and intimacy by concentrating on a particular cultural context—young adults in Bangalore, India. The results of the study highlight the significance of treating social anxiety in therapeutic interventions to enhance young people's close relationships—a subject that is gaining traction in both clinical and social psychology.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Aim**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the link between the fear of intimacy and attachment in the unmarried individuals of Kerala. Moreover, the study aims to investigate the differences in these anxieties between males and females.

#### **Variables Under Study**

- **Independent Variable:** Gender.
- **Dependent Variables:** Fear of intimacy, fear of attachment.

#### **Operational Definitions of Variables**

- **Fear of Intimacy:** a psychological or emotional state in which a person has unease, worry, or anxiety before establishing intimate relationships.
- **Fear of Attachment:** the unwillingness or fear of developing an emotional attachment to another person, which is frequently motivated by worries about dependence and vulnerability.

#### **Objectives of The Study**

- To find the relationship between fear of intimacy and attachment styles among unmarried individuals living in kerala.
- To find the relationship between fear of intimacy and attachment characteristics like close, depend, and anxiety among unmarried individuals living in kerala.

- To find the difference in fear of intimacy among males and females.
- To find the difference attachment characteristics like close, depend, and anxiety among males and females.

### **Hypotheses of The Study**

- Ho1: There is no significant difference between the fear of intimacy and characteristics of attachment such as close, depend, and anxiety.
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between the fear of intimacy and attachment styles such as secure, anxious, and avoidant.
- Ho3: There is no significant difference between males and females in fear of intimacy.
- Ho4: There is no significant difference between males and females in attachment characteristics (close, depend, and anxiety).

### **Research Design**

In order to evaluate the frequency, psychological effects, and gender disparities in fear of intimacy and attachment, the study employs a cross-sectional survey approach. By using standardized questionnaires, quantitative analysis will be used in the research.

### **Participants**

The participants will be unmarried individuals aged 18-35 residing in Kerala.

### **Tools Used For The Data Collection**

#### **Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS):**

The Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS), a 35-item self-report tool created by Descutner and Thelen (1991), is intended to gauge a person's fear of intimacy in both previous and present



relationships. The three interactional features measured by this scale are negativity (respect for those nearby), emotional valence (good feelings regarding the exchange of personal information), and content (exchanging personal information). On a 5-point Likert scale, which went from "not at all true to my characteristics" (1) to "good for my characteristics" (5), participants scored each item. Greater social interest is indicated by higher scores. fear.

By assessing social anxiety in both past and present relationships, the FIS improves our understanding of interpersonal connections. Rescoring items 3, 6–8, 14, 17–19, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, and 30 allowed for a more realistic representation of the subtleties in the responses. The scale exhibits strong stability during a test-retest duration of one month, good reliability, and a mean consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.93 and 0.89 for the Pearson correlation..

The link between the construct and the correlational analysis supports the construct validity FIS viewpoint. Measures such as the Jourard Self-Disclosure Questionnaire, Miller Social Closeness Scale, and Need for Cognition show a negative link, whereas the UCLA Loneliness Scale, which illustrates the relationship between social anxiety and loneliness, shows a positive correlation. More proof of the FIS's construct validity was found in its association with social desirability results.

In a subsequent design, the researchers tested gender differences in FIS scores using t-tests. This allowed them to ascertain whether relationship fear differed significantly between men and women. The data gathered by FIS sheds light on human social behavior and emphasizes the significance of treating social anxiety in both social and clinical contexts.

**Adult Attachment Scale (AAS):**

Based on the works of Hazen & Shaver (1987) and Levy & Davis (1988), the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) was created in the 1990s. The "secure," "secure," and "avoidant" attachment patterns of adults are measured by means of this scale, which was created by dividing the first three definitions provided by Hazen and Shaver (1987) into eighteen items.

The 18 items on the 5-point Likert-type scale of the Attachment Assessment Scale (AAS) are designed to evaluate attachment styles in relation to stability, anxiety, and avoidance. "Anxiety" subscale scores are low, and subscale values are high. High anxiety subscale scores and moderate connection and dependency subscale scores are indicative of "anxious" communication. Conversely, "avoidant" communication scored lower on the social, successful, and stressful subscales.

The three subscales on the scale—closure, reliance, and anxiety—each have six items. Relationship comfort is measured by the CLOSED subscale, while perceived trust in others is measured by the DEPENDENT subscale. The anxiety subscale gauges feelings of inadequacy or rejection. Six items on average per subscale were included in the initial scoring instructions, and items with an asterisk required multiple scores. Determine the subscale mean value. As an alternative, compute stress (own model) and avoidance connectivity (other model) using the straightforward matching method. Only stress and tolerance indicators with particular properties for each dimension are used in this strategy.

Validity and Reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were reported as Near 0.69, Fail 0.75, and Anxiety 0.72 by Collins & Read (1990). Test-retest correlations at two months showed that the scale's long-term dependability was sufficient: 0.68 for "Off," 0.71 for "Addiction," and 0.52 for "Girl".

### **Procedure of Data Collection**

Data will be collected through online and offline surveys using validated instruments such as the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) and the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) questionnaire.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Results**

Figure 4.1 Gender

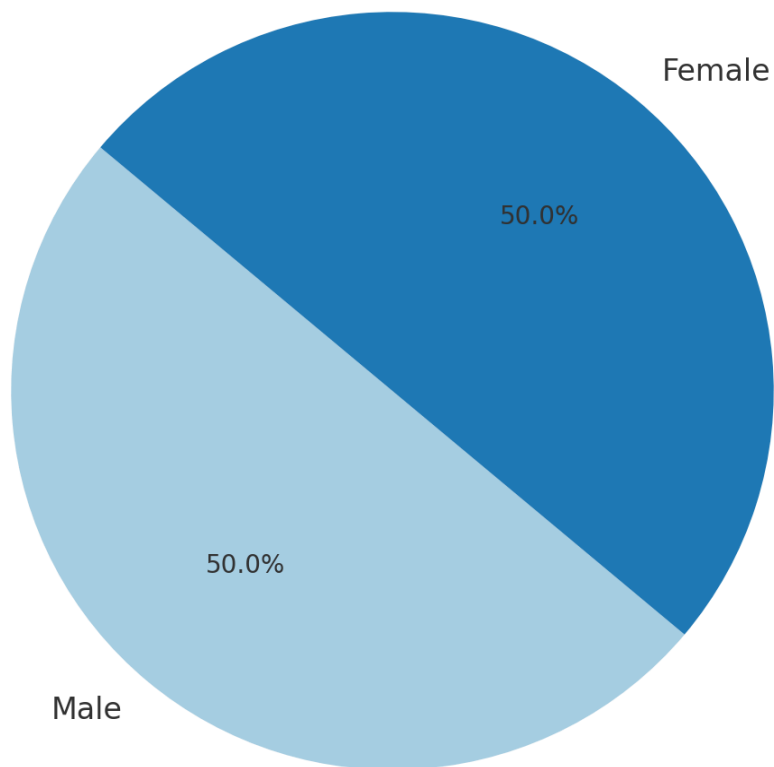


Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of genders, both samples of males (50%) and females (50%) distributed equally, with each representing 101 participants.

Figure 4.2 Educational Level

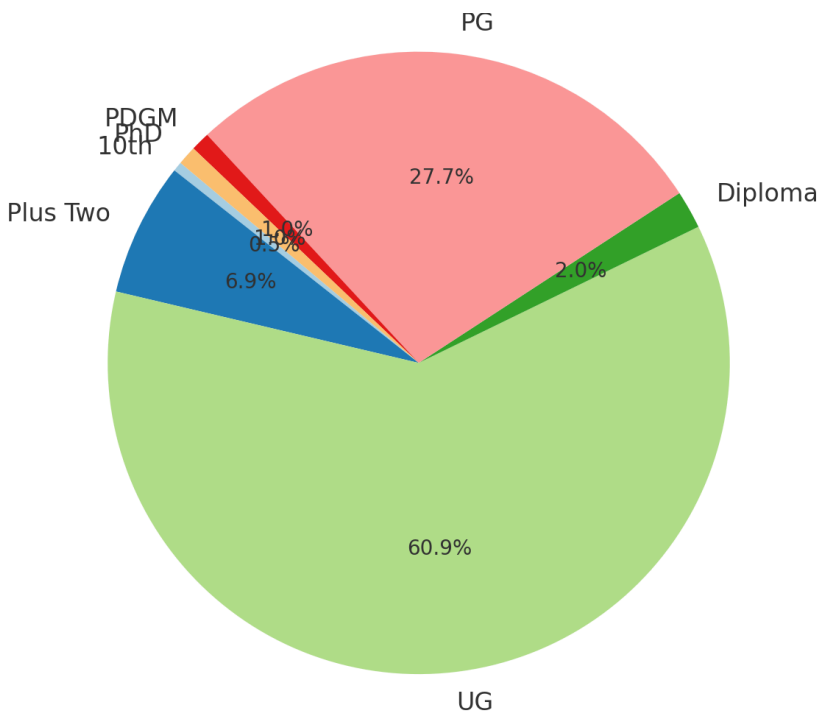


Figure 4.2 shows the educational level of the samples. Undergraduate (UG) degrees account for the largest proportion of participants (61.2%) in the sample, followed by postgraduate (PG) degrees (27.9%), in lower amounts being held by Plus Two (6.9%), Diploma (2%), PDGM (1%), and PhD (1%) holders.

Figure 4.3: District

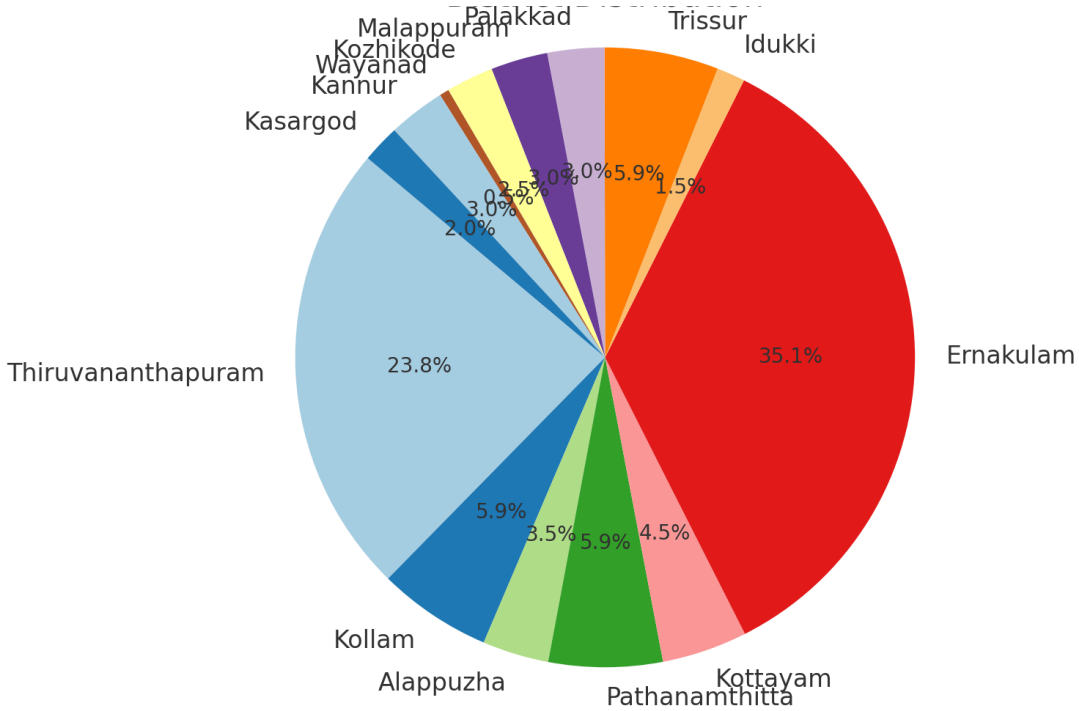


Figure 4.3 shows the district distribution. There are participants from several districts, with Ernakulam having the largest percentage (35.3%), followed by Thiruvananthapuram (23.8%). While Idukki (1.5%), Wayanad (0.5%), and Kasargod (2%) have far lesser representation, other noteworthy districts include Kollam, Pathanamthitta, and Trissur (each approximately 6%).

Figure 4.4 Religious Affiliation

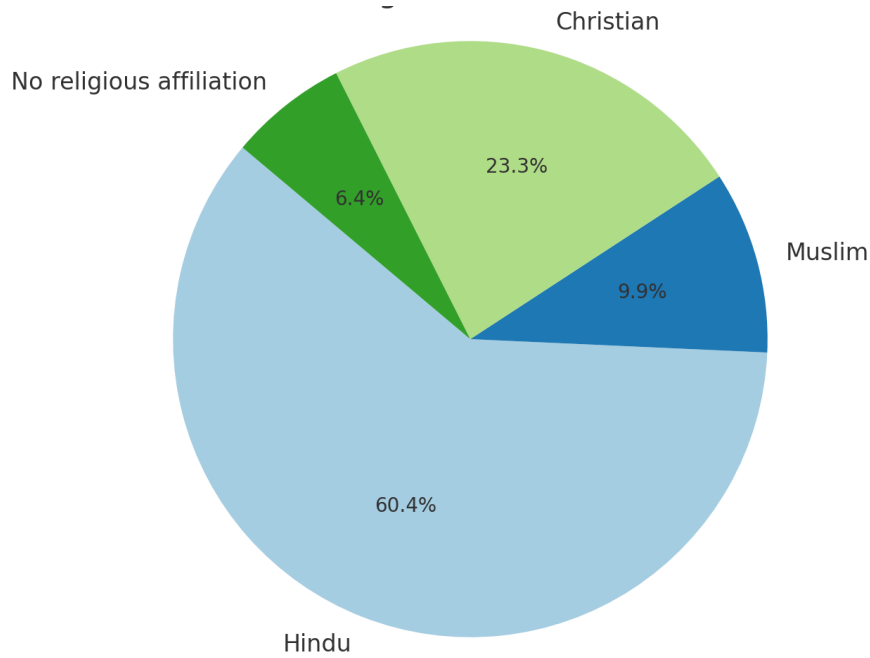


Figure 4.4 shows the religious affiliation of the participants. Six percent of the sample does not identify with any religion, followed by Muslims (10%), Christians (23.4%), and Hindus (61%).

Figure 4.5 History of Romantic Relationship

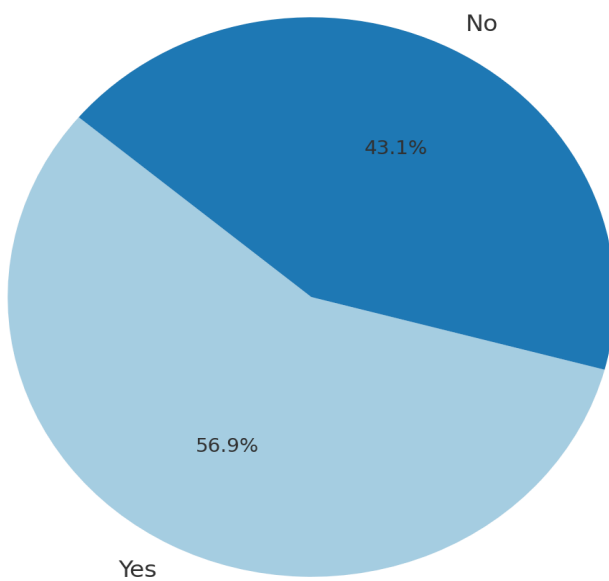


Figure 4.5 shows the history of romantic relationships of the participants. Of the participants, a considerable percentage (57%) stated that they had previously been in romantic relationships, whereas 43% said they had never been in one.

Table 4.1 Test of normality of the sample

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Shapiro-Wilk test</b>	
	<b>Statistics</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>FIS</b>	.985	.028
<b>AAS Close</b>	.987	.056
<b>AAS Depend</b>	.989	.115
<b>AAS Anxiety</b>	.976	.002

---

Using the Shapiro-Wilk test, Table 4.1 displays the sample's test normality. The Shapiro-Wilk test ( $W(202) = 0.985$ ,  $p = 0.028$ ) for the Fear of Intimacy Scale variable shows that the data are not regularly distributed. In a similar vein, the Shapiro-Wilk test results for the Adult Attachment Scale Close variable subscales approach significance ( $W(202) = 0.987$ ,  $p = 0.056$ ), indicating a minor departure from normalcy. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $W(202) = 0.989$ ,  $p = 0.115$ ) indicate that there is no significant deviation of the data from a normal



distribution for the subscale of the Adult Attachment Scale Depend variable. Nonetheless, the Shapiro-Wilk test ( $W(202) = 0.976$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) shows a substantial departure from normality for the Adult Attachment Scale Anxiety subscale. Therefore, in order to account for the data's non-normal distribution, non-parametric tests were employed for additional analysis.

Table 4.2 Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficients Among Variables

<b>Variables</b>		<b>Age</b>	<b>FIS</b>	<b>AAS Close</b>	<b>AAS Depend</b>	<b>AAS Anxiety</b>
<b>Age</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1.00	0.001	0.237	-0.189	0.042
	Sig.		0.989	0.001	0.007	0.551
<b>FIS</b>	Correlation Coefficient	0.001	1.00	0.202	-0.306	0.553
	Sig.	0.989		0.004	0.00	0.00
<b>AAS Close</b>	Correlation Coefficient	0.237	0.202	1.00	-0.656	0.455
	Sig.	0.001	0.004		0.00	0.00
<b>AAS Depend</b>	Correlation Coefficient	-0.189	-0.306	-0.656	1.00	-0.591
	Sig.					

	Sig.	0.007	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>AAS</b>	Correlation	0.042	0.553	0.455	-0.591	1.00
<b>Anxiety</b>	Coefficient					
	Sig.	0.551	0.00	0.00	0.00	

---

Table 4.2 shows the Spearman's rho correlation coefficients among Age, Fear of Intimacy Scale, the subscales of Adult Attachment Scale, that is, Close, Depend, and Anxiety. Age was positively correlated with the subscale Close of the Adult Attachment Scale ( $r = 0.237$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). In contrast, Age was negatively correlated with the Depend subscale of the Adult Attachment Scale ( $r = 0.189$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). There were no significant differences found between Age and subscale Anxiety of the Adult Attachment Scale ( $r = 0.042$ ,  $p = 0.551$ ) or Fear of Intimacy Scale ( $r = 0.001$ ,  $p = 0.989$ ). The Fear of Intimacy Scale was found to be significantly positively correlated with the subscale Close of the Adult Attachment Scale ( $r = 0.202$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). In addition, Fear of Intimacy Scale was positively correlated with subscale Anxiety of the Adult Attachment Scale ( $r = 0.553$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). There was a significant negative correlation in between the Fear of Intimacy Scale and the Depend subscale of the Adult Attachment Scale ( $r = 0.306$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Fear of Intimacy and subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Close

<b>AAS Close</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>Low</b>	15	92.533	7.6333	1.9709
<b>Moderate</b>	171	98.415	9.3530	0.7152
<b>High</b>	16	100.875	13.4456	3.3614
<b>Total</b>	202	98.173	9.7233	0.6841

<b>Comparison</b>	Sig.	Reject the
	0.49	null
		hypothesis

Table 4.3 shows descriptive statistics for Fear of Intimacy and subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Close. For individuals with Low factor of Close (N = 15), 92.533 was the mean score with Standard Deviation of 7.6333 and Standard Error of 1.9709. Individuals with Moderate factor of Close (N = 171) had a higher mean score of 98.415, Standard Deviation and Standard Error of 9.3530 and 0.7152. The High factor of Close (N = 16) indicated the highest mean score of 100.875 with an Standard Deviation of 13.4456 and Standard Error of 3.3614.

Table 4.4 Fear of Intimacy and subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Depend

<b>AAS Depend</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>Low</b>	60	91.133	7.4685	0.9642
<b>Moderate</b>	102	99.578	8.1124	0.8032
<b>High</b>	40	105.150	10.0551	1.5899
<b>Total</b>	202	98.173	9.7233	0.6841

<b>Comparison</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Reject the null hypothesis</b>
	0.01	

Table 4.4 shows the Fear of Intimacy and subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Depend. For the group with Low Depend (N = 41), 101.634 was the mean score, the Standard Deviation of the mean was 9.6844 and Standard Error of the mean was 1.5125. The group with Moderate Depend (N = 145), had a mean score of 97.972, with a Standard Deviation of 9.6083 and Standard Error of 0.7979. High Depend group (N = 16) shows the lowest mean score of 91.125, with a Standard Deviation of 6.6621, and a Standard Error of 1.6655.

Table 4.5 Descriptive Statistics for Fear of Intimacy and subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Anxiety

<b>AAS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>Anxiety</b>			<b>Deviation</b>	
<b>Low</b>	60	91.133	7.4685	0.9642
<b>Moderate</b>	102	99.578	8.1124	0.8032
<b>High</b>	40	105.150	10.0551	1.5899
<b>Total</b>	202	98.173	9.7233	0.6841

<b>Comparison</b>	Sig.	Reject the
	0.00	null
		hypothesis

Table 4.5 shows the descriptive statistics for Fear of Intimacy and subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Anxiety. For the Low Anxiety (N = 60), the mean score was 91.133, the Standard Deviation of the mean was 7.4685, and the Standard Error of the mean was 0.9642. The Moderate Anxiety group (N = 102) had a mean score of 99.578, with a Standard Deviation of 8.1124 and the Standard Error of 0.8032. The High Anxiety group (N = 40) exhibited the highest mean score of 105.150, with a Standard Deviation of 10.0551, and a Standard Error of 1.5899.

Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistics for Fear of Intimacy and Attachment Styles of Adult Attachment Scale

<b>AAS</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>Attachment</b>			<b>Deviation</b>	
<b>Style</b>				
<b>Secure</b>	1	84.000	-	-
<b>Anxious</b>	30	103.967	9.4376	1.7231
<b>Avoidant</b>	140	97.393	8.9545	0.7568
<b>No clear</b>	31	96.548	11.4013	2.0477
<b>attachment</b>				
<b>style</b>				
<b>Total</b>	202	98.173	9.7233	0.6841
<b>Comparison</b>			Sig.	Reject the
			0.01	null
				hypothesis

Table 4.6 shows the Fear of Intimacy and Attachment Styles descriptive data from the Adult Attachment Scale. The four categories of attachment styles are Secure, Anxious, Avoidant, and No Clear Attachment Style. Due to the small sample size, the Standard Deviation and Standard Error for the Secure Attachment Style group (N = 1) were not reported, despite the

mean score of 84.000. The Anxious Attachment Style group, consisting of 30 individuals, had an average score of 103.967, a standard deviation of 9.4376, and a confidence interval of 1.7231. The Avoidant Attachment Style group (N = 140) had an average score of 97.393, with a Standard Deviation of 8.9545 and a Standard Error of 0.7568. The group without a distinct attachment style (N = 31) had an average score of 96.548, with a standard deviation of 11.4013, and a standard error of 2.0477.

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics for the Fear of Intimacy by Gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std.Error</b>
<b>Male</b>	101	98.030	8.7195	0.8676
<b>Female</b>	101	98.317	10.6751	1.0622
<b>Total</b>	202	98.173	9.7233	0.6841

Table 4.7 shows the descriptive statistics for the Fear of Intimacy by gender. The mean score for the male (N = 101) participants on Fear of Intimacy was 98.030, with a Standard Deviation of 8.7195, and a Standard Error of 0.8676. The mean score for the female participant was slightly higher at 98.317, with a Standard Deviation of 10.6751, and a Standard Error of 1.0622.

Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics for the Adult Attachment Subscale by Gender

<b>AAS Subscale</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
<b>AAS Close</b>	Male	101	17.941	3.2858	0.3269
	Female	101	18.723	2.8288	0.2815
	Total	202	18.332	3.0832	0.2169
<b>AAS Depend</b>	Male	101	17.376	3.8597	0.3841
	Female	101	16.089	3.9067	0.3887
	Total	202	16.733	3.9269	0.2763
<b>AAS Anxiety</b>	Male	101	16.426	6.0106	0.5981
	Female	101	18.178	6.2664	0.6235
	Total	202	17.302	6.1872	0.4353

Table 4.8 shows the descriptive statistics for the Adult Attachment Subscales (Close, Depend, Anxiety) by gender. In the subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Close, the mean scores of the male (N = 101) participants was 17.941, with a Standard Deviation of 3.2858, and a Standard Error of 0.3269. The female (N = 101) participants had a higher mean score of 18.723, with a Standard Deviation of 2.8288, and a Standard Error of 0.2815. In the subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Depend, the mean score of the male (N = 101) participants was 17.376,



with a Standard Deviation of 3.8597, and a Standard Error of 0.3841. The female (N = 101) participants had a lower mean score of 16.089, with a Standard Deviation of 3.9269, and a Standard Error of 0.3887. In the subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Anxiety, the mean scores of the male (N = 101) participants was 16.426, with a Standard Deviation of 6.0106, and a Standard Error of 0.5981. The female (N = 101) participants had a higher mean score of 18.178, with a Standard Deviation of 6.2664, and a Standard Error of 0.6235.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the link between the fear of intimacy and attachment in the unmarried individuals of Kerala. Moreover, the study aims to investigate the differences in these anxieties between males and females. The Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) and Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) were employed to gather data from a total of 202 participants, consisting of 101 males and 101 females aged between 18 to 35 years, living in Kerala. Fear of intimacy is a psychological or emotional state in which a person has unease, worry, or anxiety before establishing intimate relationships. Fear of attachment is the unwillingness or fear of developing an emotional attachment to another person, which is frequently motivated by worries about dependence and vulnerability. The Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) measures the degree to which people experience anxiety or fear about forming close relationships. The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) assesses patterns of attachment-related behaviors and feelings in adult relationships, such as comfort with closeness, dependency on others, and anxiety about abandonment.

The demographic information provides various important details about the study sample. A fair viewpoint in the examination of closeness and attachment is ensured by the gender

distribution, which is evenly divided between males and females as shown in Figure 4.1. The majority of participants have undergraduate or graduate degrees, indicating a highly educated population that may have an impact on progressive views regarding partnerships as shown in Figure 4.2. Participants' opinions on intimacy and cohabitation may be impacted by the district distribution, which is biased toward urban areas with more contemporary social attitudes, such as Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram (Figure 4.3). The participants' religious affiliation is consistent with the general population of Kerala, where the majority identify as Hindu, but a sizable minority identify as Christian, Muslim, or not affiliated with any religion. Participants' views on conventional values pertaining to marriage and relationships may be influenced by their religious affiliations (Figure 4.4). Furthermore, more than half of the participants indicated that they had previously been in romantic relationships, indicating that past relationship experiences may have had a substantial influence on the development of their fear of intimacy and attachment (Figure 4.5). This thorough demographic review draws attention to the ways that individuals' attitudes regarding intimacy and attachment within the Keralan cultural setting may be influenced by factors like education, urbanization, religion, and past romantic relationships.

Test of normality of the sample using Shapiro-Wilk test showed deviations from normality for the Fear of Intimacy Scale and in the subscale of Adult Attachment Scale Anxiety, while the other two subscales such as Close and Depend varying levels of deviations from the normality. Therefore, non-parametric tests were used for further analysis to accommodate the non-normal distribution of the data.

The correlation was calculated using Spearman's rho correlation coefficients (Table 4.2) that indicated a positive relation between the fear of intimacy and attachment subscales of close ( $r = 0.202$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) and anxiety ( $r = 0.553$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and showed a negative relationship on depend ( $r = 0.306$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which states that there is no significant difference between the fear of intimacy and characters of attachment such as close, depend, and anxious. The positive correlation shown between close and anxiety imply that those who have higher levels of fear of intimacy are more likely to face problems related to anxiety; they may struggle more to feel emotionally close to others. This results in line with earlier findings that indicate a strong correlation between elevated fear of intimacy and anxiety (Collins & Read, 1990; Thelen et al., 2000). Tables 4.3 and 4.4 provide additional evidence that a lower dependence on partners is correlated with a higher fear of intimacy. Specifically, Table 4.3 shows that individuals with a high factor of Close had the highest mean in fear of intimacy score ( $M = 100.875$ , Standard Deviation = 13.4456), while Table 4.4 shows that individuals with a low dependencies had the highest fear of intimacy score ( $M = 101.634$ , Standard Deviation = 9.6844). Conversely, people who were more dependent on others showed less fear of intimacy. Table 4.5 indicates that there is a substantial positive correlation between anxiety and fear of intimacy. Those with high anxiety scores also showed the greatest fear of intimacy scores ( $M = 105.150$ , Standard Deviation = 10.0551). Overall, these findings support the strong correlation between attachment traits and fear of intimacy, rejecting  $H_0$  by showing that higher levels of dependence are associated with lower levels of fear of intimacy and higher levels of fear of intimacy are associated with closeness and anxiety.

The descriptive statistics on attachment styles as shown in table 4.6 indicated that the individuals with the anxious attachment style had the highest mean score on fear of intimacy ( $M = 103.967$ , Standard Deviation = 9.4376) when compared to the individuals with avoidant attachment style ( $M = 97.393$ , Standard Deviation = 8.9545) and the individuals without distinct attachment style ( $M = 96.548$ , Standard Deviation = 11.4013). Therefore rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_02$ ), which stated that there would be no significant difference between the fear of intimacy and attachment styles such as secure, anxious, and avoidant. The higher mean score for the group with anxious attachment style is consistent with earlier studies that found anxious attachment style to be a predictor of increased fear of intimacy and challenges in relationships (Reis & Grenyer, 2004; Thelen et al., 2000).

The results of descriptive statistics of the fear of intimacy and gender as in table 4.7 showed that there was no significant difference in the levels of fear of intimacy between male ( $M = 98.030$ ) and female ( $M = 98.317$ ) population. This implies that when it comes to developing close relationships, all genders experience the same amount of fear. These findings support earlier research showing little to no gender differences in experiencing fear of intimacy, suggesting that worries about intimacy and vulnerability are felt by both sexes equally. Men and women both experience fear of intimacy, but their underlying relationship uneasiness may be different, with men highlighting their fear of reliance and women often emphasizing their emotional vulnerability (Thelen et al., 2000). Thus, accepting the null hypothesis ( $H_03$ ), which states that there is no significant difference between males and females in fear of intimacy.

The results of descriptive statistics of the attachment factors and gender shown in table 4.8, proposed that there are no significant variations in attachment qualities (close, depend, and anxiety) between males and females. There were gender disparities in a few of the subscales. Males scored higher on attachment subscale depend ( $M = 17.376$ , Standard Deviation = 3.8597), whereas females scored considerably higher on attachment subscale close ( $M = 18.723$ , Standard Deviation = 2.8288) and attachment subscale anxiety ( $M = 18.178$ , Standard Deviation = 6.2664). These findings may imply that women may be more likely to feel anxious and emotionally connected in relationships than men, probably as a result of socialization factors that value women's emotional expression and nurturing. However, because they may have different relational expectations or coping mechanisms, men may exhibit higher levels of reliance. These results reinforce the literature that already exists, which discovered that men typically report having more trouble expressing emotional dependency, while women are more likely to score higher on anxious attachment (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). Thus, accepting the null hypothesis ( $H_03$ ), which states that there is no significant difference between males and females in attachment characteristics (close, depend, and anxiety).

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

#### **Summary of The Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the link between the fear of intimacy and attachment in the unmarried individuals of Kerala. Moreover, the study aims to investigate the differences in these fears between males and females. The primary objective of this study was to look at the connection between young adults in Kerala who are unmarried and their fear of intimacy, attachment characteristics (close, depend, and anxiety) and also the attachment styles (secure, anxious, and avoidant).

The study is based on the attachment theory, which holds that a person's early experiences with attachment influence their adult relationship patterns. In the context of intimate relationships, attachment types (secure, anxious, and avoidant) have been extensively examined. Insecure attachment (anxious or avoidant) is frequently associated with a greater fear of intimacy. However, little research has been done on how these larger cultural factors affect intimacy anxieties and attachment behaviors in Kerala, a state with a fast changing cultural environment characterized by high rates of literacy, progressive gender roles, and shifting societal norms around marriage. This study fills a vacuum in the literature by concentrating on Kerala's distinct social setting and its population of young adults who are single.

The study sought to investigate important research questions on unmarried individuals in Kerala's fear of intimacy and attachment dimensions. It specifically looked into whether fear of intimacy in this population is significantly correlated with attachment characteristics such as dependency, closeness, and anxiety. The study also looked at whether there are gender variations that matter when it comes to fear of intimacy and attachment styles.

The study used a quantitative research approach to look at Keralan singles' attachment types and fears of intimacy. Convenience sampling was used to choose a total of 202 participants, 101 of whom were male and 101 of whom were female, between the ages of 18 and 35 years. This ensured a balanced representation across different socioeconomic backgrounds. Data on these variables were collected at a particular moment in time by the research using a cross-sectional approach. The Adult Attachment Scale (AAS), which assesses closeness (comfort with emotional intimacy), dependence (reliance on others), and anxiety (fear of abandonment), and the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS), which measures participants' fear of forming intimate relationships, were the two main instruments used to collect data through an online survey.

### **Major Findings of The Study**

The analysis of the link between fear of intimacy and attachment dimensions in Kerala's unmarried population produced a number of important conclusions. The study findings revealed a noteworthy positive association ( $r = 0.553$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between fear of intimacy and attachment anxiety, suggesting that persons with elevated levels of attachment anxiety are predisposed to experiencing heightened levels of fear of intimacy. According to this research, people who worry

about being left out or having doubts in a relationship are more likely to experience anxiety related to closeness.

On the other hand, a noteworthy inverse relationship was discovered between the fear of intimacy and attachment dependence ( $r = -0.306$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that people who depend more on others had lower levels of fear of intimacy. This may suggest that those who rely on their relationships for emotional support don't worry as much about forming strong bonds. Regarding gender differences, the study discovered no statistically significant differences in fear of intimacy scores between males ( $M = 98.03$ ) and females ( $M = 98.317$ ), indicating that the fear of intimacy is similar for both genders. Significant variations were discovered in the connection dimensions, though: males scored higher on dependence while females scored higher on closeness and anxiety. Furthermore, the study revealed that persons with anxious attachment styles demonstrated the greatest levels of fear of intimacy ( $M = 103.967$ ), with those with avoidant attachment styles following closely behind ( $M = 97.393$ ), underscoring the noteworthy influence of attachment styles on fear of intimacy.

The results of this study validate the body of research that emphasizes the importance of attachment insecurity in relational anxiety by confirming the strong link between attachment anxiety and fear of intimacy. Higher attachment anxiety sufferers typically have an increased fear of intimacy, which is consistent with earlier research (Collins and Read, 1990), which highlights the link between anxious attachment and trouble establishing intimate connections. This finding supports the notion that people who fear rejection or abandonment frequently experience intimacy issues as a result of underlying insecurities, which makes it challenging for them to



trust people or feel at ease in emotionally intimate relationships (Collins & Read, 1990; Reis & Grenyer, 2004).

One noteworthy finding, especially in light of established gender norms, is that the study did not identify any significant differences between the genders when it came to fear of intimacy. The findings of this study demonstrate that men and women in Kerala have comparable degrees of fear of intimacy, despite societal standards that frequently suggest men avoid intimacy more and have higher relational anxieties. This might be a reflection of the distinct societal context of Kerala, where men and women are increasingly negotiating changing gender roles and relationship expectations. Due to Kerala's progressive social developments—such as more emphasis on gender equality and better literacy rates—both genders may be equally impacted by these changes, which could result in a more balanced feeling of relational anxiety (Thelen et al., 2000).

The study also emphasizes a crucial difference between the roles that attachment dependence and anxiety play in connection to fear of intimacy. Attachment dependency appears to have the opposite impact, reducing fears of intimacy, whereas attachment anxiety seems to intensify these fears. The fear of intimacy is generally lower among those who feel more at ease depending on others for emotional support, which suggests that a safe sense of dependency in partnerships may act as a buffer against relational anxiety. This result is consistent with attachment theory, which holds that people who feel safe and dependable have less anxiety when forming intimate relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Comparing these findings with earlier studies, including Collins and Read's (1990), reveals that attachment behavior patterns are culturally consistent. But Kerala's particular sociocultural influences give these results a special dynamic. The combination of modern ideas of independence and progressive gender roles with traditional family structures characterize Kerala's cultural landscape, which is probably a major factor in how the state's populace expresses intimacy fears and attachment styles. Men and women must both negotiate traditional values while also adjusting to modern societal conventions in this difficult climate created by the changing expectations in partnerships, especially for unmarried individuals (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994).

With an emphasis on how attachment anxiety and dependence affect relationship dynamics, this study significantly advances our understanding of how attachment patterns shape intimacy fears among unmarried individuals in Kerala. The results demonstrate that those who have higher levels of attachment anxiety are also more likely to experience concerns of intimacy, a relationship that has been repeatedly demonstrated in other studies (Collins & Read, 1990; Reis & Grenyer, 2004). On the other hand, it seems that attachment dependence acts as a protective element, making people feel safer and less afraid to create close relationships. This suggests a possible direction for therapeutic therapies meant to encourage healthy reliance in relationships.

Conventional notions regarding gendered relational behaviors are challenged by the lack of major gender variations in fear of intimacy, especially in Kerala's changing socio-cultural milieu where men and women experience identical relational obstacles. This emphasizes how crucial it is to take local cultural changes into account while treating relational issues in therapy

and counseling, as it is possible that traditional gender distinctions are becoming less clear in this setting.

### **Implications of The Study**

It is crucial to address attachment anxieties in therapeutic settings since there is a strong correlation between attachment anxiety and fear of intimacy. Counseling approaches that manage attachment anxiety and promote stable attachment patterns, including Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) or Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT), may be helpful for clients who suffer from a fear of closeness. Reducing intimacy fears and improving relationships can result from addressing these attachment anxiety.

The lack of gender disparities in intimate fear is indicative of changing dynamics in Kerala's cultural milieu, where marriage and relationship conventions are customarily viewed through a modified lens. Men and women alike are having difficulty navigating personal relationships in a society that is moving toward more progressive views on gender roles and expectations in relationships. According to this study, in this changing environment, fears of intimacy may be experienced at comparable degrees by both genders. The findings emphasize that, as Kerala's social landscape continues to change, it is critical to take cultural variations into account when addressing relational behaviors and attachment patterns.

The results have wider policy ramifications, especially for relationship and mental health counseling programs. Young adults' fears of intimacy can be lessened by educational programs that support emotional intelligence, healthy attachment, and relationship-building techniques. By

incorporating these programs into community-based or educational mental health services, people can start building better interpersonal interactions at a young age. Furthermore, given that relationship dynamics are evolving quickly in places like Kerala, these findings may help guide policy conversations about expanding access to mental health and relationship counseling.

### **Limitations of The Study**

Although sufficient for the statistical analyses performed, the 202 participant sample size is relatively small. Moreover, the study's exclusive focus on unmarried individuals in Kerala restricts how broadly the results may be applied. Increasing the sample size to include people from diverse areas or relationship statuses (married or cohabiting, for example) might yield a more thorough knowledge of how attachment and intimacy anxiety appear in various situations.

A cross-sectional design is used in the study to collect data at a certain moment in time. This method provides a snapshot of the association between intimacy fears and attachment patterns, but it makes it difficult to determine if one factor causes another or track changes in these variables over time. Monitoring the emergence of fear of intimacy and attachment patterns as people progress through various relationship and life phases might be better accomplished through longitudinal study.

Due to the fact that the data were gathered via self-report questionnaires, bias may exist, especially if participants provided false information about their own abilities or social desirability. The results could be impacted by the fact that people don't always accurately describe their fears of intimacy or attachment patterns. Multiple data gathering approaches,

including behavioral observations and interviews, could be useful in future studies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

While the study offers valuable insights into Kerala's cultural context, more research is required to determine the ways in which cultural elements interact with attachment and intimacy anxiety. Kerala's distinct fusion of modernity and tradition may have a different effect on relational behaviors than in other places. Future studies ought to look into how these cultural elements affect attachment styles in a larger range of demographic contexts, such as people from various social, religious, and cultural backgrounds.

### **Suggestions For Future Research**

Longitudinal designs could be used in future studies to monitor the evolution of fear of intimacy and attachment styles. Through tracking individuals across multiple stages of relationships, ranging from casual dating to committed partnerships, researchers can acquire significant understanding of how attachment traits change and impact intimacy apprehensions across distinct periods of romantic engagement. By providing a dynamic view on the evolution of relationships, such research would aid in identifying patterns of change and stability in attachment behaviors and how these changes link with changes in intimacy anxieties.

Expanding the scope of research to include a more diverse sample in terms of geography, relationship status (such as cohabitation and marriage), and cultural backgrounds would enhance the generalizability of findings. This broader approach would allow researchers to explore how

attachment and intimacy fears manifest across various demographic groups and cultural contexts, providing a more nuanced understanding of these relationships. Comparing findings across different settings could reveal how local cultural norms and relationship structures influence attachment behaviors and fears of intimacy.

To gain a deeper understanding of the influence of psychological variables on attachment patterns and fear of intimacy, future research should take into account the inclusion of self-esteem, social anxiety, and personality features. Further investigation into life events such as parental divorce or early trauma may provide a more profound understanding of the genesis and progression of intimacy anxieties. Through the investigation of these supplementary variables, scholars can cultivate a more all-encompassing depiction of the variables impacting attachment and intimacy, potentially revealing fundamental mechanisms that give rise to relational challenges.

Future research could examine the efficacy of therapy therapies aimed at addressing fear of intimacy and fostering stable attachment types. These research could evaluate the effectiveness of different therapeutic modalities in lowering intimacy anxieties and improving relationship satisfaction, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, attachment-based therapy, and mindfulness exercises. Prioritizing populations with notable relational challenges, such as those discovered by research, can aid in the creation of focused interventions that enhance emotional health and maintain stable relationships.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Informed Consent**

You are invited to participate in a research study titled "Fears of Intimacy and Attachment among Unmarried Individuals in Kerala." The purpose of this study is to examine the psychological aspects of intimacy and attachment within the unique cultural and social context of Kerala. Your participation will involve completing a series of questionnaires designed to assess your fears of intimacy and attachment. Participation is entirely voluntary. The study aims to contribute to a better understanding of these issues and inform potential interventions that could benefit individuals in similar contexts.

Your responses will be kept confidential and used solely for research purposes. Data will be anonymized to ensure your privacy, and only aggregated results will be reported. The study poses minimal risk, and any potential discomfort will be addressed promptly. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please feel free to contact. By participating, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the information provided and consent to take part in the study.

## Socio-Demographic Data

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Gender:
4. Educational Level:
5. District You Belong to:
6. Religious Affiliation:
7. Residence:
8. Socio Economic Status:
9. Family Structure That You Currently Belong to:
10. Sexual Orientation:
11. Have you been in a romantic relationship in the past?
12. If yes, how many?
13. Duration of last or current relationship:
14. Parental Marital Status:
15. How would you rate your current health status in comparison to your peers?
  - Very Good
  - Good
  - Fair
  - Poor
  - I Have Chronic Ailments

## Fear of Intimacy Scale

1 - not at all characteristic of me

2 - slightly characteristic of me

3 - moderately characteristic of me

4 - very characteristic of me

5 - extremely characteristic of me

Part A Instructions: Imagine you are in a close, dating relationship. Respond to the following statements as you would if you were in that close relationship. Rate how characteristic each statement is of you on a scale of 1 to 5 as described below, and put your responses on the answer sheet.

Note. In each statement "O" refers to the person who would be in the close relationship with you.

1. I would feel uncomfortable telling O about things in the past that I have felt ashamed of.
2. I would feel uneasy talking with O about something that has hurt me deeply.
3. I would feel comfortable expressing my true feelings to O.
4. If O were upset I would sometimes be afraid of showing that I care.
5. I might be afraid to confide my innermost feelings to O.
6. I would feel at ease telling O that I care about him/her.
7. I would have a feeling of complete togetherness with O.
8. I would be comfortable discussing significant problems with O.
9. A part of me would be afraid to make a long-term commitment to O.

10. I would feel comfortable telling my experiences, even sad ones, to O.
11. I would probably feel nervous showing O strong feelings of affection.
12. I would find it difficult being open with O about my personal thoughts.
13. I would feel uneasy with O depending on me for emotional support.
14. I would not be afraid to share with O what I dislike about myself.
15. I would be afraid to take the risk of being hurt in order to establish a closer relationship with O.
16. I would feel comfortable keeping very personal information to myself.
17. I would not be nervous about being spontaneous with O.
18. I would feel comfortable telling O things that I do not tell other people.
19. I would feel comfortable trusting O with my deepest thoughts and feelings.
20. I would sometimes feel uneasy if O told me about very personal matters.
21. I would be comfortable revealing to O what I feel are my shortcomings and handicaps.
22. I would be comfortable with having a close emotional tie between us.
23. I would be afraid of sharing my private thoughts with O.
24. I would be afraid that I might not always feel close to O.
25. I would be comfortable telling O what my needs are.
26. I would be afraid that O would be more invested in the relationship than I would be.
27. I would feel comfortable about having open and honest communication with O.
28. I would sometimes feel uncomfortable listening to O's personal problems.
29. I would feel at ease to completely be myself around O.
30. I would feel relaxed being together and talking about our personal goals.

Part B Instructions: Respond to the following statements as they apply to your past relationships. Rate how characteristic each statement is of you on a scale of 1 to 5 as described in the instructions for Part A.

31. I have shied away from opportunities to be close to someone.

32. I have held back my feelings in previous relationships.

33. There are people who think that I am afraid to get close to them.

34. There are people who think that I am not an easy person to get to know.

35. I have done things in previous relationships to keep me from developing closeness.

## Revised Adult Attachment Scale (Collins, 1996)

Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which it describes your feelings about romantic relationships. Please think about all your relationships (past and present) and respond in terms of how you generally feel in these relationships. If you have never been involved in a romantic relationship, answer in terms of how you think you would feel.

Please use the scale below by placing a number between 1 and 5 in the space provided to the right of each statement.

1 - Not at all characteristic of me

5 - Very characteristic of me

- 1) I find it relatively easy to get close to people.
- 2) I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others.
- 3) I often worry that romantic partners don't really love me.
- 4) I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.
- 5) I am comfortable depending on others.
- 6) I don't worry about people getting too close to me.
- 7) I find that people are never there when you need them.
- 8) I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.
- 9) I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.
- 10) When I show my feelings for others, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
- 11) I often wonder whether romantic partners really care about me.
- 12) I am comfortable developing close relationships with others.



- 13) I am uncomfortable when anyone gets too emotionally close to me.
- 14) I know that people will be there when I need them.
- 15) I want to get close to people, but I worry about being hurt.
- 16) I find it difficult to trust others completely.
- 17) Romantic partners often want me to be emotionally closer than I feel comfortable being.
- 18) I am not sure that I can always depend on people to be there when I need them.