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### Effects of Break-Up on Youth

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#### KEYWORDS

Break-up; dumper;  
dumpee; relationship  
and psychological  
effects

#### A B S T R A C T

When a serious relationship ends and it was either unexpected or unwanted, both the dumper and dumpee go through various psychological effects. The present study aimed at understanding the extent to which a break up in a romantic relationship impacts the lives of male and female students. The study was conducted on 100 high school and college students in the age range of 15 yrs. -25 yrs. Google forms were used as a means of data collection. The methodology adopted for this research was descriptive survey method. A self-developed questionnaire consisting of 20 items with multiple options was developed. Descriptive analysis and percentage analysis were computed for comparison and to observe the general trends as indicated by the data. The results of the survey show that the effects of breakup have both positive and negative impacts on both males and females. However, the attitudes and beliefs of males and females differ in certain aspects.

### Introduction

When a relationship ends, there follow many psychological effects on both the dumper and the dumpee. It evokes a sense of trauma when it's unwanted or unexpected. Common psychological effects of a break-up include pain, identity shift, obsession, confusion, dread, guilt, grief postponement etc. However gender differences have a major role to play in the way individuals experience when a romantic relationship ends. Males may experience loss of prospect of freedom. Whereas, females may feel depressed and scared (Corra, 2009). It starts from a very young age, both males

and females experience various emotions specifically attraction towards the opposite gender being the most prominent one during adolescence. In adolescence, separation among two loved ones creates a lot confused emotions.

However, the length of the relationship determines how hard the end of a relationship hits. Boys usually tend to be angrier in comparison to girls. Girls experience emotions within them but boys react very loudly. These relationships for adolescents equate to social acceptance to

them. Suicidal tendencies are greater in adolescents especially in the age group 15yrs-24yrs (Dittami *et al.*, 2007).

In young adults, the pain felt by the individuals after the break-up is real, an experience of rejection, betrayal and abandonment is processed in the brain in the same way like physical pain is identified. In adolescents it may certainly lead to major depression as they lack the ability to handle and manage emotions. It's very common for individuals to crave for their ex-partner and dwell on their memories with the partner. Most often individuals go through feelings of shock, bargain with their partners and deny the fact that they have been separated and feel angry, sad and grieve about it. This is why individuals trying to cope up with breakup have a lot of difficulty concentrating, lack energy and motivation and their sleeping pattern changes (Corra *et al.*, 2009). The one who decides to call off the relationship goes through different set of emotions like anxiety and dread and ending a relationship and the possible consequences involved. Usually the person feels guilty for hurting someone who was so close to them, but feel it cannot be avoided.

The dumper is usually perceived the stronger person and therefore goes through isolation even though they need support. However break ups are equally difficult for both the dumper and the dumpee. It also helps them cope and learn better things about themselves. If not dealt with these painful emotions appropriately it can lead to further psychological problems that may require professional help to be solved. Males feel excited about being able to have new mates in their life, leading them to dating sites (Schumaker, 2016). However later they may feel frustrated as they realize how difficult it is to feel comfortable with someone new. Men are also more inclined to feel jealous

when their ex-partner shows interest in someone new. However, women feel distressed, sad, anxious and have troubles sleeping. Often when the other partner is unfaithful, there is a desire for revenge in women (Corra *et al.*, 2009). In all age groups closure plays a major role and has significance in the way individuals shape their life in terms of self-esteem and self-awareness. It's always better to seek professional help if the individual is found to dwell in the past.

Field *et al.*, (2005), investigated breakup distress in university students using the "Break-up distress scale". In the first study, 37% of the variance in the breakup distress scale, scores were explained by depression, feelings of betrayal, having less time since the breakup and higher relationship ratings. In a second study, intrusive thoughts contributed to 28% of the variance in breakup distress. In this sample of university students, depression and sleep disturbances were also related to breakup distress. Other negative emotions and behaviours associated with breakup distress included anxiety, anger, disorganized behaviour and inferior academic performances. Studies reveal insecurity and loss of intimacy as the most significant problems in individuals going through breakup distress. Greater breakup distress was reported by female students.

Samios *et al.*, (2014) conducted a study to find the benefits of non-marital breakup in 140 participants. Regression analysis found that benefit finding related to positive outcomes and that benefit finding of depression relationship was moderated by the impact of the event. This study provides empirical support for benefit in a non-marital relationship breakup.

Cockshaw *et al.*, (2013) aimed to explore the romantic concerns of adolescents

seeking assistance from a youth counselling service, and determine associations between these concerns with age, gender and mental health outcomes. A unique sample of 46,123 adolescent counselling sessions was analysed. Romantic Relationship breakups were the most common concern for both male and female adolescents of all age groups post relationship concern were more likely to be associated with mental health issue (36%) self-harm (22.6%) and suicide (9.9%). these findings contribute to the development of targeted intervention and support.

### **Aim**

The present study aimed at understanding and investigating the extent to which a break-up impacts the lives of male and female students.

### **Objectives**

The following were the objectives of the study:

To investigate students attitudes towards breakup.

To examine gender differences in attitudes towards break-up

To assess the reaction of students after a break-up

To find out whether break-ups interfere with student's ability to function in areas of life such as academics, relationships with others and personal functioning.

### **Materials and Methods**

The methodology adopted for this research was descriptive survey method.

### **Sampling**

Convenient sampling method was used for the study. The sample consisted of 100 college and high school students, from 4 schools and 5 colleges in Chennai city. The sample consisted of 50 boys and 50 girls of the age group 15yrs-25yrs. The data was collected online using Google forms.

### **Tool**

In order to investigate the impacts of break-up, a self-developed questionnaire consisting of 30 items with multiple options was developed.

### **Statistical analysis**

Descriptive analysis and percentage analysis were computed for comparison and to observe the general trends as indicated by the data.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Item no. 1**

“He/she was never serious about me.”

#### **Interpretation**

In comparison to males, females (30%) strongly agree that their boyfriend was never serious about them. Whereas, males tend to be undecided (26).

#### **Item No. 2**

I feel lost after my break-up

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of both males (34%) and females (36%) agree that they feel lost after their breakup.

**Item 3**

I feel my relationship wouldn't have come to an end if I compromised

**Interpretation**

Majority of females (30%) agree that their relationship wouldn't have come to an end if they compromised.

Whereas males disagree with it.

**Item No.4**

I tend to harm myself/things I love because I am so angry with life.

**Interpretation**

Female (30%) are found to indulge in more of self-harm or destructive behaviour in comparison to males.

**Item 5**

I regret wasting time on a relationship

**Interpretation**

Males and females equally agree to the statement that they regret wasting time on a relationship (30%).

**Item 6**

I did everything possible to save my relationship but he/she never cared

**Interpretation**

Both (34%) males and females strongly agree that they did everything possible to save their relationship but their partner never care. Females show a slightly higher tendency to feel so.

**Item 7**

I involve in religious activities and feel spiritual.

**Interpretation**

Females (38%) involve themselves a lot more in religious activities and feel spiritual in comparison to males.

**Item 8**

I tend to search for someone else because I was too dependent on him/her.

**Interpretation**

Majority of males (36%) disagree that they tend to search for someone else because they were too dependent of their girlfriend.

Whereas, females moderately agree that they tend to search for someone else (28%).

**Item 9**

I tend to catch up with my friends to fill the gap.

**Interpretation**

Majority of females (50%) agree that they catch up with their friends to fill the gap. Whereas, a few males (32%) tend to catch up with their friends.

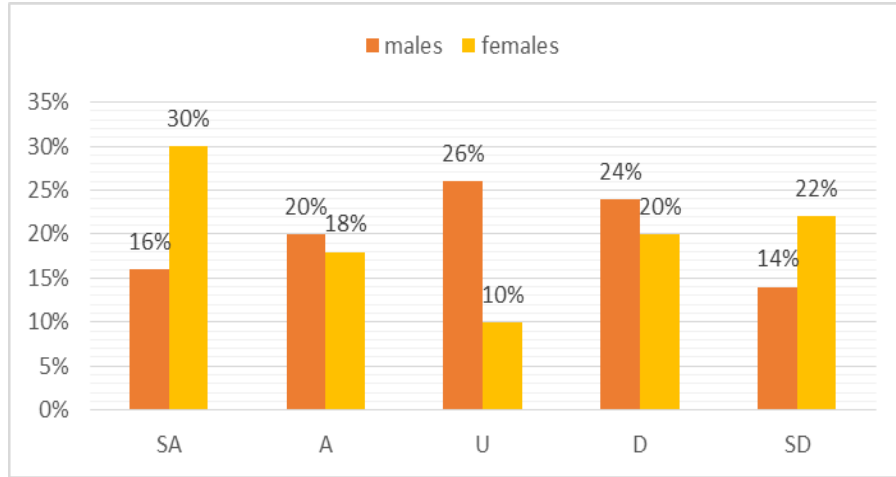
**Item 10**

I have sudden spells of crying.

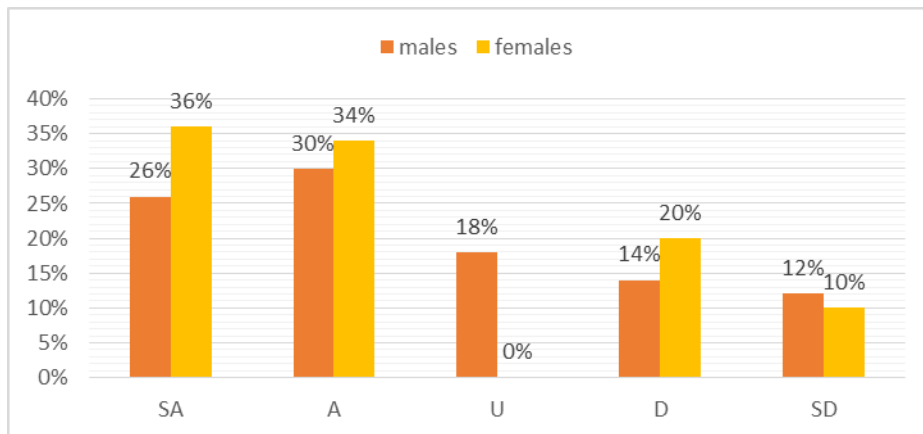
**Interpretation**

Majority of females (42%) agree that they have sudden spells of crying in comparison to males (30%).

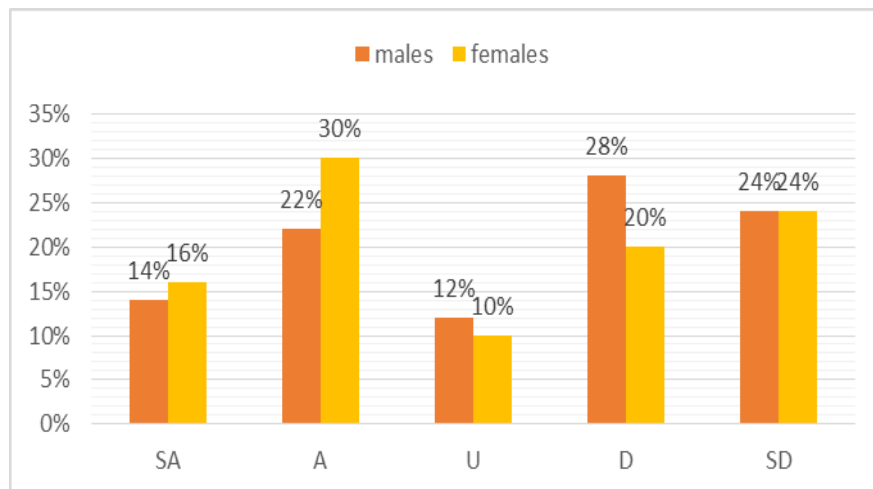
Graph.1 Shows the responses for the statement



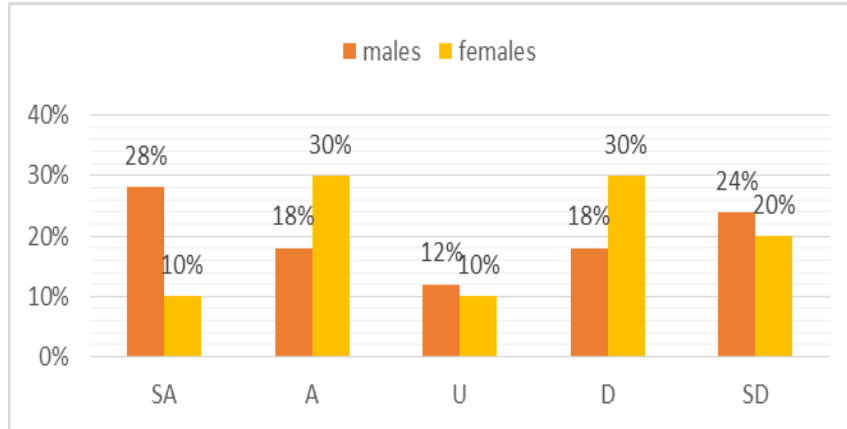
Graph.2 Shows the responses for the statement



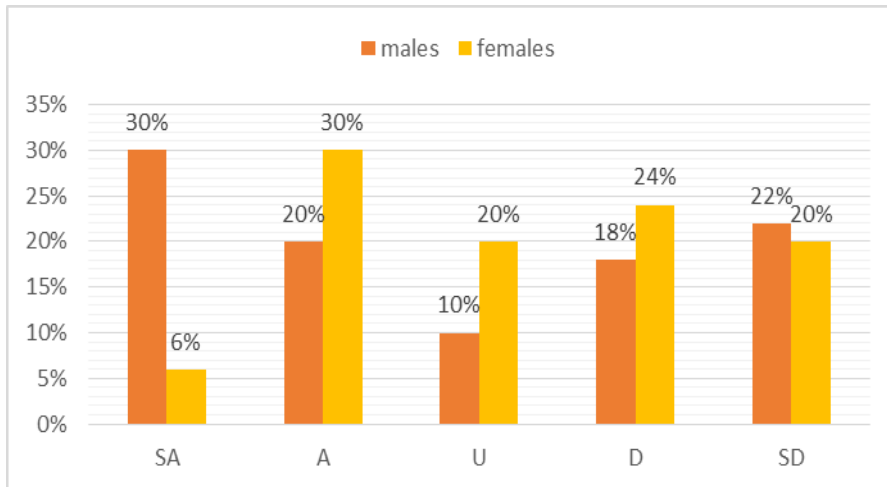
Graph.3 Shows the responses for the statement



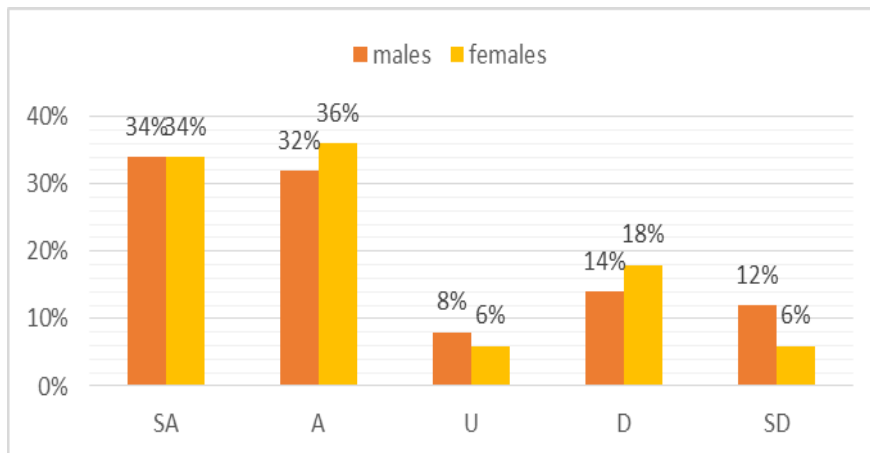
Graph.4 Shows the responses for the statement



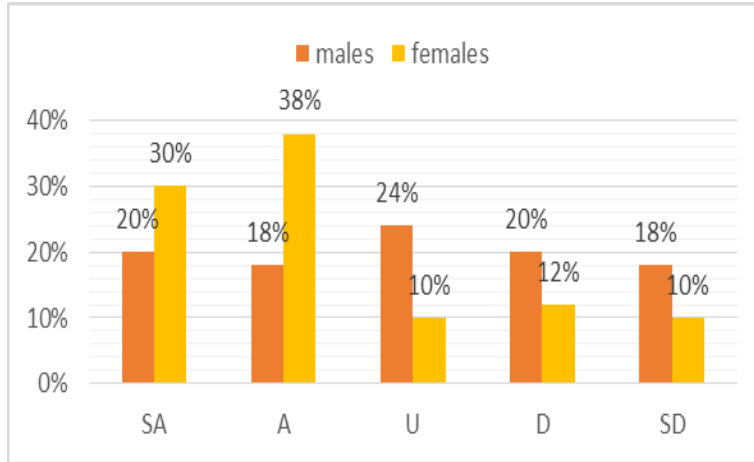
Graph.5 Shows the responses for the statement



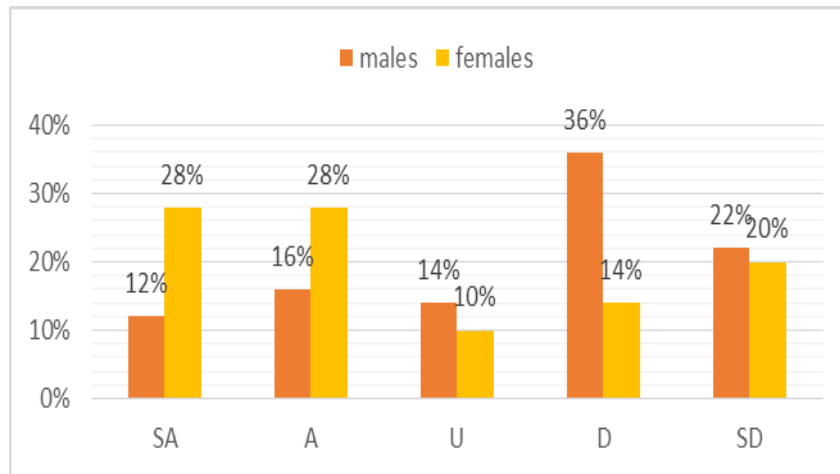
Graph.6 Shows the responses for the statement



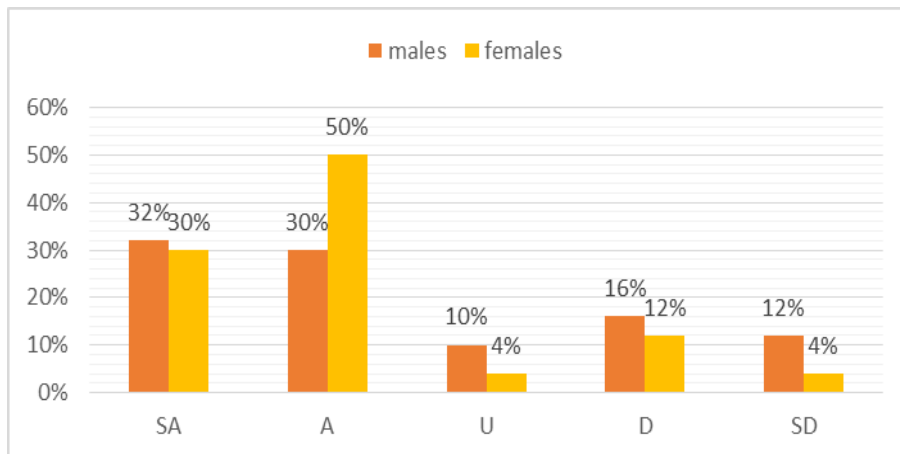
Graph.7 Shows the responses for the statement



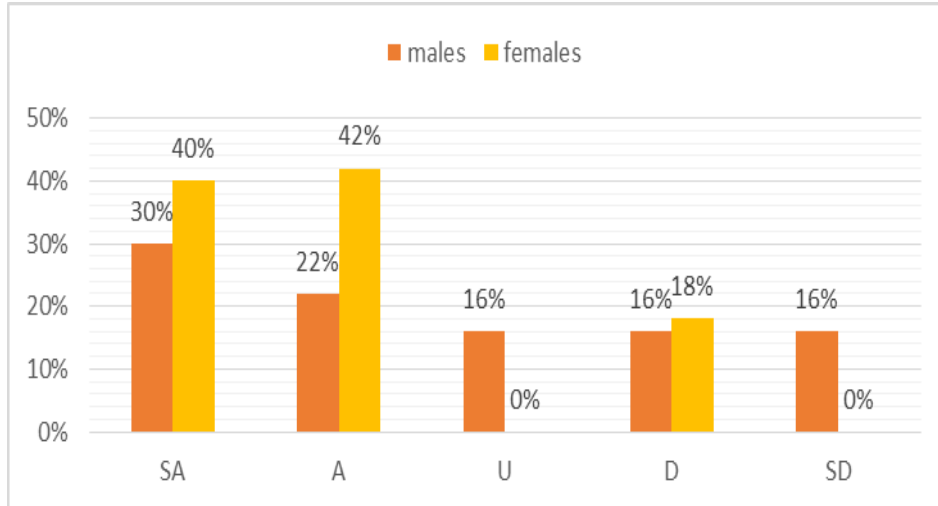
Graph.8 Shows the responses for the statement



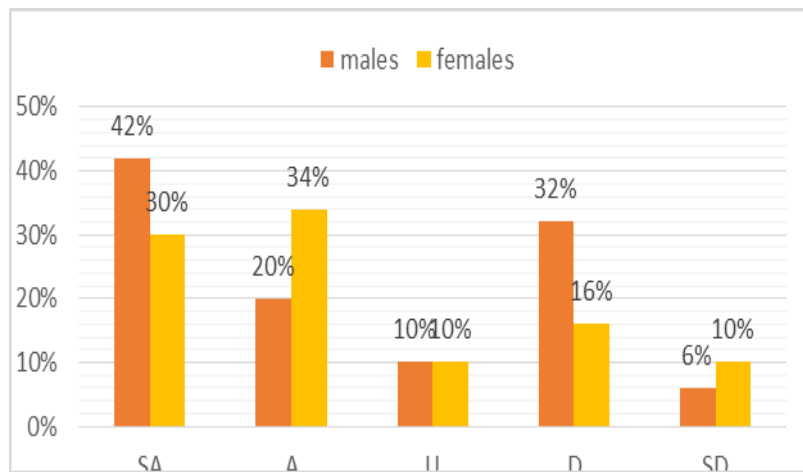
Graph.9 Shows the responses for the statement



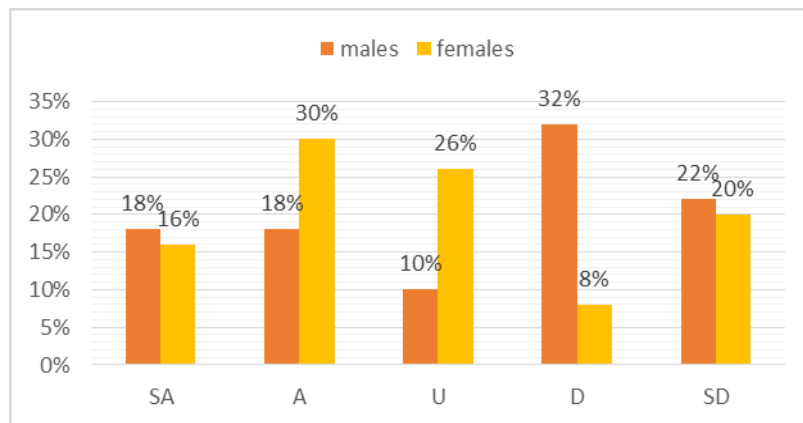
Graph.10 Shows the responses for the statement



Graph.11 Shows the responses for the statement

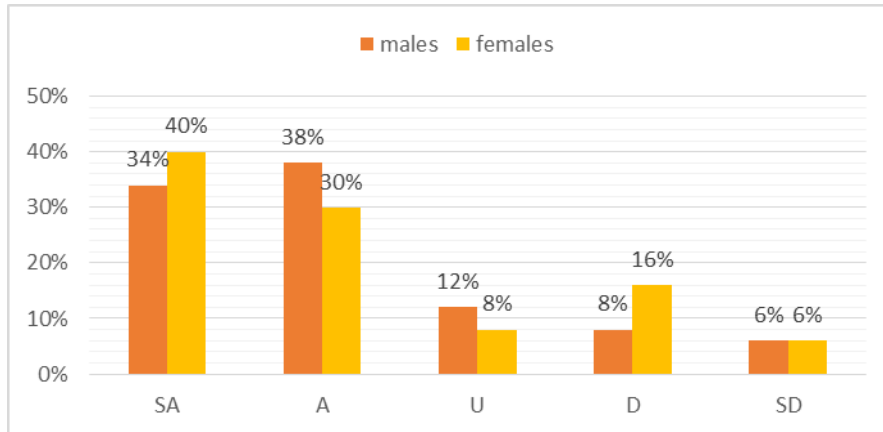


Graph.12 Shows the responses for the statement

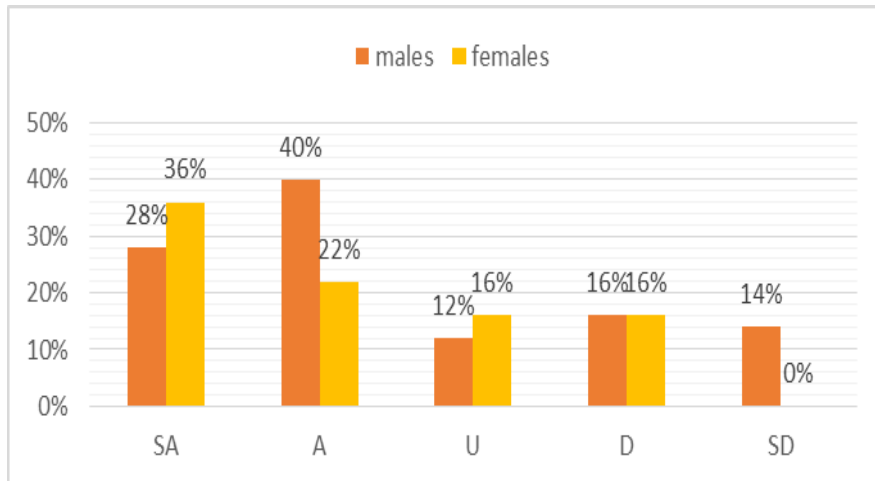




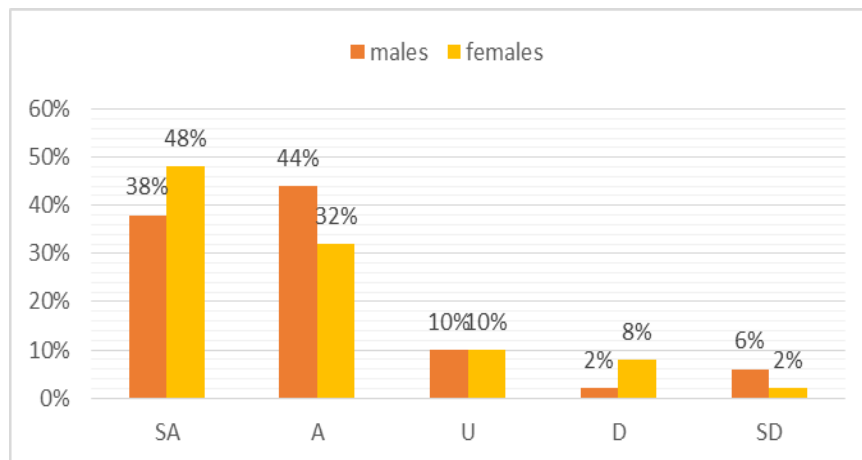
Graph.13 Shows the responses for the statement



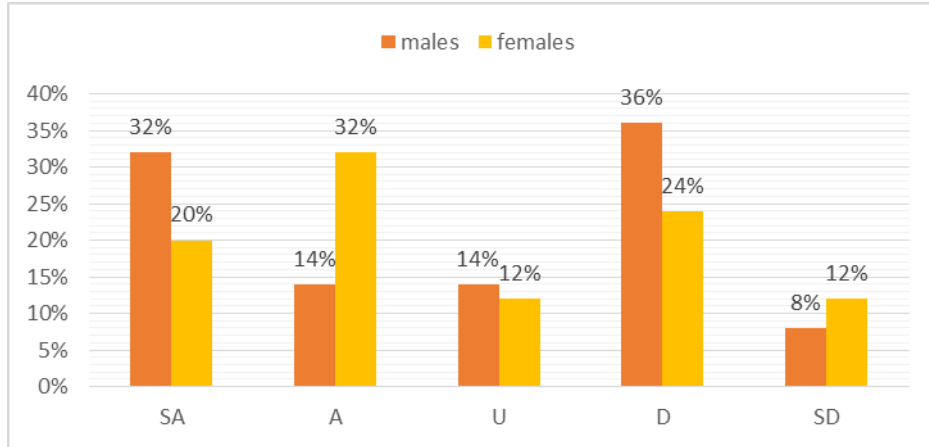
Graph.14 Shows the responses for the statement



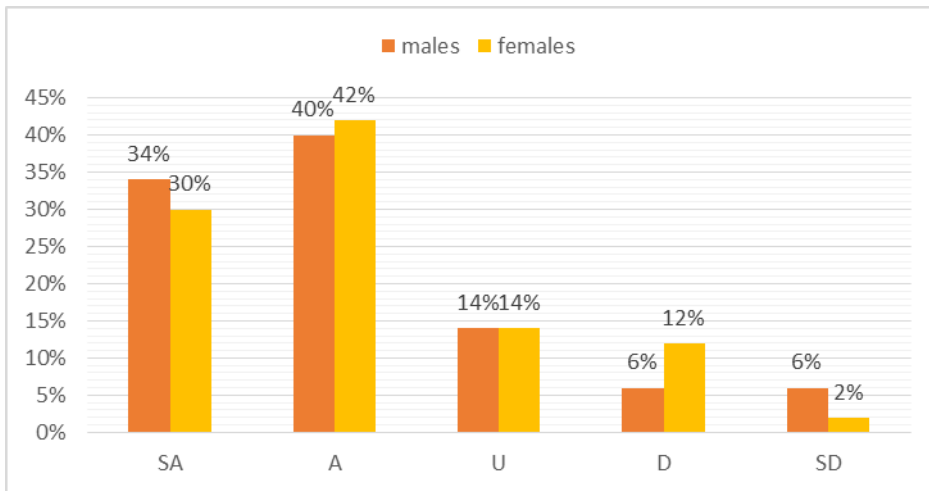
Graph.15 Shows the responses for the statement



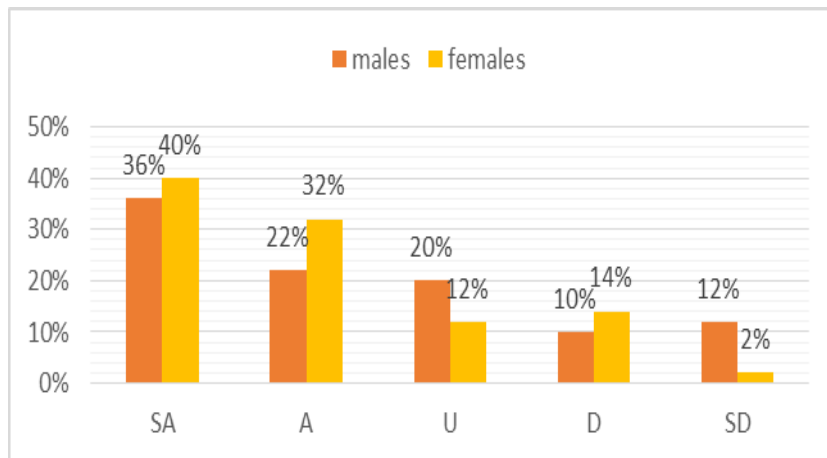
Graph.16 Shows the responses for the statement



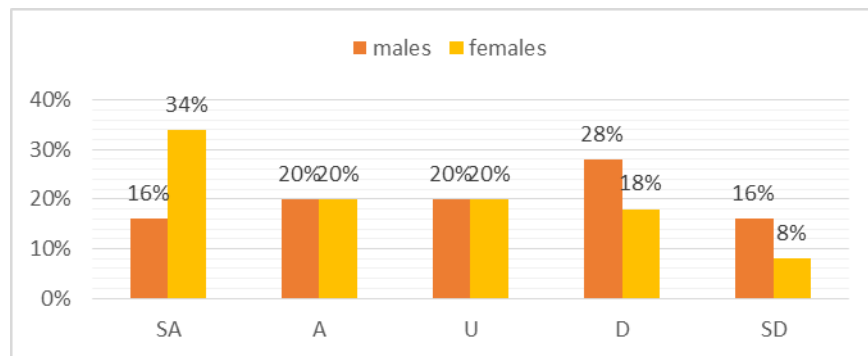
Graph.17 Shows the responses for the statement



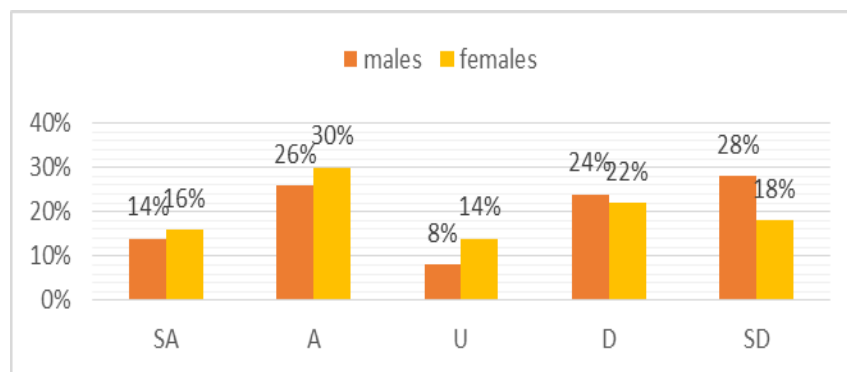
Graph.18 Shows the responses for the statement



**Graph.19** Shows the responses for the statement



**Graph.20** Shows the responses for the statement



**Item 11**

I feel I deserve better.

**Interpretation**

Majority of males (42%) feel that they deserve better in comparison to females (34%).

**Item 12**

I feel I'm unable to maintain healthy relationships.

**Interpretation**

Majority of females (30%) agree that, they feel they are unable to maintain healthy relationships. Whereas, majority of males (32%) disagree with the statement.

**Item 13**

I seek advice from my friends whenever I don't know how to go about it.

**Interpretation**

Majority of both males (48%) and females (40%) agree that they seek advice from their friends whenever they don't know how to go about it.

**Item 14**

I feel so annoyed because I don't really know the reason.

**Interpretation**

Majority of males (40%) agree that they feel very annoyed because they don't really

know the reason. Females (36%) have similar feelings.

#### **Item 15**

I get flashbacks of all the moments we spent together.

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of both males (44%) and females (48%) agree that they get flashbacks of all the moments they spent together.

#### **Item 16**

When someone asks me about my ex, I make funny comments and laugh about it.

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of males (36%) disagree that when someone asks about their ex, they make funny comments and laugh about it. Whereas, majority of females (32%) agree that they make funny comments.

#### **Item 17**

I enjoy things alone, it's not bad.

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of both males (40%) and females (42%) agree that they enjoy things alone and it's not bad.

#### **Item 18**

I'm sure he/she will regret someday.

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of both males (36%) and females (40%) agree that their partner will regret someday.

#### **Item 19**

I wish to avoid relationships for as long as possible.

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of females (34%) agree that they wish to avoid relationships for as long as possible. Whereas, majority (28%) of males disagree with the statement.

#### **Item 20**

I feel my life is over, I cannot love someone else so much.

#### **Interpretation**

Majority of females (30%) agree that they feel their life is over and they cannot love someone else so much. Whereas majority of males (28%) disagree with the statement.

The results of the survey show that the effects of break-up have both positive and negative effects on both male and female students. However, the attitudes and beliefs of male and female students differ in a few aspects. In most of the cases the responses given by male and female students are similar.

Both male and female students feel lost, catch up with friends to fill the gap, have sudden spells of crying, feel that they deserve a better person, find themselves incapable of maintaining healthy relationships, seek advice from their friends regarding ways to move on and take time to decide. This shows that both male and female students experience emotional trauma and also use similar kind of coping techniques. However, aggressive urges are found to be higher in male students in comparison to female students. On the other

hand, female students tend to involve in religious activities. Female students also possess a sense of guilt, that their relationship wouldn't have come to an end if they compromised. Male students regret wasting time on a relationship. Whereas, females don't. Both male and female students believe that they put in all the possible efforts to maintain their relationship but their partners never cared. They also believed that in future their partner will regret about the break-up. Both male and female students do not wish to get their relationship or partner back because they feel it's the other person's mistake. Female students wish to avoid indulging in new relationships for as long as possible. Whereas, male students don't.

It is evident that students experiencing break-up need some kind of psychosocial intervention to help them to deal with the loss of a relationship. Students can be taught coping styles, life skills training can be given to students in schools and colleges to help them to deal with these love failures.

### **Limitations**

The research was done with only 100 students

The geographical area was restricted only to Chennai city.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

A larger sample could have been studied

Other psychological variables related to break-ups can be studied

#### **How to cite this article:**

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