

# Searching for the ‘Perfect’ Body: Experiential Voices on Perception of Body Image in Young Undergraduate Women

Ankita Basu

*Daulat Ram College University of Delhi Delhi*

---

**Abstract**—Research on body image has often concentrated more on the ‘body’ per se rather than how women actually experience their body. The body and experiences of the body are closely interlinked. An intensive study on body image was conducted on 80 young women undergraduates of 18-21 years. The respondents were divided on the basis of their negative (dissatisfied) and positive (satisfied) body image scores. These two groups responded to the query ‘ . Using thematic analysis the two data sets was captured in terms themes of body image perceptions, and coping strategies often used by young women to counter their negative body image and positive body image. Overall results indicate that the young women reported as being satisfied with their body image, but those with negative body image state socio-cultural pressures to conform to a ‘perfect’ body size and report about disturbing negative affect and its influence on their self and relationships with others in the social milieu. Physical appearance in terms of height, weight, facial outline, flat stomach and the like emerged to be of immense concern to the young women. The influence in terms of distress, anger, frustration as expressed by the young women participants reflect the angst of maintain external appearances. The study has inputs of awareness and promotion of health, youth psychology, counseling and identity politics.