

Women's Sexual Experience in Pakistan: Associations of Patriarchy and Psychological Distress

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Abstract : Sexuality is a social construct which is considered as the most confidential affair among individuals where women tend to refrain themselves more from sexually explicit behavior than men. Patriarchy has an elevated influence on the expression of female sexuality. While women's sexual experiences are suppressed men are entitled to pleasure themselves according to their desire. The purpose of this study is to explore how the internalization of patriarchy affects women's sexuality. Similarly, it was investigated how women sexuality is associated with psychological distress. The sample consisted of 100(age 20-40) married women. Participants were selected through a combination of convenient and snowball sampling. Women were asked to provide data regarding patriarchal beliefs, sexual awareness and DAS (depression, anxiety, and stress). Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analyze was conducted to examine the nature of the relationship between patriarchal beliefs, sexual awareness and psychological distress in married women. There is a significant negative relation between sexual awareness and patriarchal beliefs ($r = -.391$, $p < .001$). There also lies a significant negative relation between sexual awareness and depression, anxiety, stress ($r = -.359$, $p < .001$) ($r = .301$, $p = .002$) ($r = -.221$, $p = .027$). The results reveal that women with strong patriarchal beliefs have less sexual awareness in terms of sexual consciousness, sexual monitoring, sexual assertiveness and sexual appeal consciousness. Similarly, women with strong patriarchal beliefs and less sexual awareness have high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Keywords : female sexuality, patriarchy, psychological distress, sexual awareness

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