

Cultural frameworks of male-to-male sex in Pakistan

In terms of the cultural frameworks that construct South Asian sexual behaviours, the following points need to be remembered:

- Marriage is considered a duty and family obligation, not one based upon personal desire and choice.
- Marriage is also seen as compulsory.
- To be single is seen as an aberration. Cultural beliefs dictate that a person is not an adult until married.
- The central objective of marriage is the production of children, specifically male children.
- Sexual pleasure for one's wife based upon desire, or lust, is sometimes considered shameful. The Wife holds a special place in this regard. She is the Mother. A place of honour, for it is she who is charged with the responsibility of upholding family tradition, and the rearing of children. Sex with one's wife is sometimes seen as a duty.
- This leads to a concept of sexual pleasure being permissible outside of the marriage context.
- Since there is no identity structure around the gender choice for sexual pleasure, what matters is more to do with the sense of malehood and concepts of masculinity.
- Thus, concepts of identity revolve around ideas of penetration. The penetrator is still "manly", the penetrated is "not a man". It is a penetrative sexuality
- Further what matters is not the pleasure of the partner, but the pleasure of the self. Sexual behaviour becomes one of sexual discharge.
- Gender segregation, female virginity, loss of honour, and so on often make it easier to access other males for sex than females.
- Such accessibility is also made easier because of the extended family systems, and the homosociability of South Asian cultures.
- The sense of shame and dishonour arises from a public (community) perception about personal behaviour and the need to fulfil one's (public) duty.
- Since the concept of sexuality and sexual behaviours is bound up within concepts of sexual discharge, this often leads to frequent sexual partners, rather than forming continuous sexual liaisons with a single person.
- Often the gender of the sexual partner may be irrelevant.
- This can be expressed by the statement "The person has a relationship with his wife, but has sex with others".
- Women are much more supervised and policed by family and community, than men.

- This makes it somewhat difficult for women to carry out socially illicit sexual encounters/relationships.
- The penalties for women are of a much greater intensity.
- It is easier for women to access other women than men.
- Within these contexts, women's sexual and reproductive health is to a large extent dependent upon male sexual behaviours and the methodologies of their practice. Their constructions are framed by space, time, availability, gender roles, personal desires, opportunity and so on.