



ATTITUDE OF EDUCATED URBAN YOUTH TOWARDS RAPE MYTHS

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Abstract

Pakistan, being a signatory to almost all international conventions on human rights, stands committed to ending violence against women. Additionally, various national progressive legislation and policies for the protection of women's rights have been initiated during the last couple of years, but the statistics of cases of violence against women in Pakistan are bothersome. Women enduring this agony and mortifying experience may have to face all sorts of negative attitudes of people around them. This study investigated gender differences among university students in their perceptions towards rape myths about female rape victims. Students' perceptions were measured using the indigenous Rape Myth Scale by collecting data from 385 students from the three universities of Lahore. Additionally, information about the demographics of students regarding academic disciplines, residential areas and socio-economic backgrounds of families were also collected. Data was analyzed by using the t-test and ANOVA. The results revealed a significant gender difference in the perception of respondents, all of whom were educated about rape myths. Male students were found to believe more strongly that a woman's willingness is present in rape, women's strong character would prevent them from getting raped, and women's behaviour and dress attracted rapists. Furthermore, the results indicated that academic discipline, residential city and parental socioeconomic background of

students were found to play an influential part in determining their perceptions towards rape myths.

The findings imply a need to incorporate a gender-sensitive education programme as a part of the curriculum across disciplines at the university level, in order to nurture gender sensitization in society. In this regard, parents, teachers and media, along with policymakers, can play a meaningful role in curbing the incidence of rape by transforming the social mindset of blaming the rape sufferer.

Keywords

Gender, rape myths, academic faculty, urban youth, rape victims