

by Female Trouble Survey
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Within the women's community, over half (56%) of the 539 lesbian and bisexual women surveyed experienced discrimination, harassment, or physical assault from other women because of their participation in consensual s/m. This survey only dealt with the discrimination or violence occurring within the lesbian community against S/M women.

Harassment is the most common form of attack against s/m practitioners in the lesbian community. 44% of the S/M women reported some form of violence against them, with one-third of the reported incidents of harassment had occurred in the last year (1993).

30% of the S/M women in the survey experienced discrimination in the lesbian community because of their s/m orientation. This discrimination included being refused membership or being ejected from social, recreational, political, education, spiritual groups within the lesbian community.

Incidents of physical assault in the lesbian community because of S/M orientation were reported by 25% of the women. This includes being slapped, punched or kicked by other women because of their s/m orientation.

Of the 367 s/m women who were victims and/or witnesses of violence at some point in their lives, only 22% felt safe enough to report the incidents to police or event organizers, group leaders, bar staff, etc. Only 25% stated that their complaints had been handled satisfactorily. This reputation within the lesbian community for not supporting victims of violence, harassment and discrimination prevents s/m women from fully participating in the community.

In the forward of the Female Trouble analysis, Jad Keres writes: "The S/M women who have taken part in this survey have something important to tell us. Listening to them does not require an understanding of their sexual expression nor approval of their lifestyle. It does require a willingness to still the persistent noise of hard-held opinions and unyielding dogma. As a community, will we finally allow the voices of all women to be heard and heard consistently or will we continue to blatantly censor and dismiss the lives of women we do not understand or approve of? As a community, will we finally acknowledge and stop the political violence that has preyed upon S/M women or will we continue to ignore the real bloody consequences of the 'Sex Wars'?"

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