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Female Masturbation Among Girl-Mothers in Urban Cameroon: Sexual Identity or Social Rejection?

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ABSTRACT

In urban Cameroon, many young people have no formal employment. Survival activities affect all social strata, including girl-mothers or young-mothers. During a study carried out on the ‘resilience of women and girls in the face of rising prices for basic necessities in Cameroon in 2023’, the aim was to question and support women in their activities or to create new ones that would enable them to meet their personal and family needs by organising them into a group or specialised association. During the fieldwork, we focused on single girls who had already given birth once. Through the content analysis data, which came from individual interviews at home, direct observations and a few surreptitious methods over the course of a week from morning to night, all the respondents (82) said that they no longer wanted to be financially dependent on men; the 53 girl-mothers surveyed said that they had been disappointed, abused and abandoned by men and young boys; for them, life as a couple is a waste of time and sex is an opportunity for weakness and subordination to men. For this reason, more than half (37) of these women resort to masturbation to forget sentimental, situational or survival stress, in order to strengthen their autonomy and become ‘women-authors’ in terms of productivity and participation in social progress.

Keywords: resilience, stress, survival, young-mothers