



## Uncovering the Taboo: Men Victimization, an Increasing but Lesser Reported Phenomena in India

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### Abstract

One issue that receives less attention and reporting is violence against men in India. In addition to examine males through the lens of Victimhood, this research attempts to comprehend the nature of violence against men and its effects on society. However, because of social norms regarding masculinity and the shame associated with male vulnerability, male suffering is frequently concealed. The report intends to highlight the gaps in current policymaking and explain how male victimization has been overlooked. In addition to discussing domestic abuse against males, this essay also discusses how our Constitution's guarantees of their fundamental rights are being violated.

It aims to highlight the gaps in the current laws against domestic abuse, which are mostly focused on women, and push for their gender-neutralization from both the victim's and the offender's points of view. The overall goal of this paper is to dispel the taboo that "mard ko dard nehi hota" (meaning "Men don't feel pain") and look for a solution that advances gender equality and makes society safer and more equitable for people of all genders.

**Keywords:** Men victimization, domestic violence, gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, spouse violence, violence against men, women perpetrator, legal cases, and some acts and laws.

### Introduction

Throughout history, patriarchy has permeated many facets of cultures all across the world. Despite the basic perception of patriarchy, which places women at a disadvantage and males at a competitive advantage, no one truly gains from patriarchy.

India is seen as a male-dominated or patriarchal society. Therefore, when we hear terms like "violence" or "abuse" in India, we automatically assume that men are the ones who do these crimes and women are the victims.

As a result, Indians believed that only men could commit acts of aggression against women. In order to dispel this myth, it's critical to highlight the fact that men are also victims of abuse and violence.

Intentional aggression and injury toward oneself or others constitute violence.

When we talk about violence in this paper, we're talking about domestic violence. Domestic violence is when two people who share or have had a domestic relationship behave abusively toward one another on a regular basis. It can show itself as physical violence, verbal abuse, intimidation, sexual coercion, or financial resource restriction, and it can take many different forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, economic, psychological, or technological.

52.4% of men in the current survey reported having been victims of gender-based violence. Of 1000 men, 10.5% had

been victims of violence from their wives or intimate partners in the past 12 months, and 51.5% had been victims of violence at least once in their lives. Emotional abuse accounted for 51.6% of all spousal violence, with physical abuse coming in second at 6%.

### Historical Background

A number of regulations protecting women have been put into place to shield them from all forms of assault. However, things have gone the other way in recent years, with some women abusing the rules that were created specifically for them. A recent study that examined 136 sexual assault cases discovered that 52.2% of them were reported fraudulently.

There is no excuse for not acknowledging that men abuse women in intimate relationships. However, this is not a valid excuse for the absence of legislation protecting men from the same. Human rights and gender equality apply to everyone.

The Indian Constitution's Article 14 protects citizens' fundamental right to equal treatment, while Article 15 forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, race, sex, or place of birth. According to the Indian Constitution, every citizen is entitled to life and freedom.

Therefore, it is imperative that the issue be investigated in order for policymakers to comprehend its validity and alter the current legislation. By identifying and addressing male

victimhood, this study seeks to make society safer and more equitable for everyone.

Although the problem of male victimization is not new, it is becoming more prevalent and receiving less attention in India. Men have been victimized in many ways throughout history, from mental abuse to physical brutality.

However, cultural expectations of masculinity and the notion that men should be strong and emotionless have hampered the awareness and acceptance of male suffering.

Domestic abuse and other forms of violence were largely recognized as heterosexual, sociopolitical phenomena with a foundation in sexism, or gender, as a result of the feminist movement of the mid-1970s. However, by ignoring or dismissing men's experiences of abuse and violence, the emphasis on women's suffering also resulted in the erasure of male victimhood. Male victimization has gained more attention in recent years. Men's rights organizations like Purodh, Purodh Hakka Sanrakshan Samiti, and Patni Atyachar Virodhi Morcha started to emerge in cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, and Lucknow in the 1990s and early 2000s. These groups maintained that systemic discrimination against men, especially husbands, occurred in divorce, child custody, and anti-dowry legislation proceedings.

### Forms of Violence against Men

One member of a family or household committing violent acts against another is referred to as "domestic violence." It frequently alludes to abuse of a spouse or child. In addition to physical assault, domestic violence includes verbal, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse as well as threats.

- i). **Physical Violence:** Slapping, pushing, striking, and hurling items like crockery, cell phones, and utensils at the spouse are examples of physical abuse that is directed at men. Less frequently, beatings with weapons are also used. In a recent survey, 6% of men reported experiencing physical aggression, with slapping accounting for 98.3% of incidents.
- ii). **Sexual Assault:** Another type of male victimization that is frequently disregarded or ignored when talking about gender-based violence is sexual assault. Sexual assault against men can occur in a number of settings, such as homes, military installations, and prisons. However, because of stigma, shame, and a fear of not being believed, male victims of sexual assault frequently hesitate to come forward with their stories.
- iii). **Emotional Abuse:** Another type of violence against males that can have a lasting impact on the mental health and general wellbeing of male victims is emotional abuse. Verbal abuse, social exclusion, and domineering conduct are just a few examples of the various ways that emotional abuse manifests. Because emotional abuse is perceived as less serious than physical or sexual violence, men are frequently unwilling to disclose it.
- iv). **False Accusations:** Men may also fall prey to unfounded claims, such as those of sexual harassment, rape, or domestic abuse. Men frequently find it difficult to prove their innocence, despite the fact that such charges can damage a man's reputation and possibly result in jail time.
- v). **Economic Abuse:** Involves controlling finances, restricting access to money, or forcing financial dependence on partners or family members.
- vi). **Discrimination:** Men may also experience gender-based discrimination in the workplace, in the classroom, and in the medical field. This is sometimes disregarded or even

hailed as a type of "reverse discrimination," despite the fact that it can cause psychological distress and even bodily injury.

- vii). **Social and Cultural Violence:** In environments that prioritize hyper-masculinity, men who defy gender norms may experience assault, bullying, or exclusion.

Furthermore, if a man is unable to provide his family with opulent happiness, trips, meals, and outings, he is neither a good parent nor a decent husband. A man is expected to be that "good" father, spouse, or son all the time.

### The Misuse of Gender-Specific Laws

If we look at the existing laws in the country, we can see there are no laws that protect men from intimate partner violence

**Anti-Dowry Law (Section 498A IPC):** Originally designed to protect women from cruelty and harassment in marriage, this law is now among the most abused in India. The Supreme Court and several High Courts have repeatedly raised concerns about its misuse, where men and their families are falsely implicated for vengeance or to gain leverage in divorce and maintenance cases.

**Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA):** Under the Indian Penal Code of 1860, Section 498A explains that a man can only be held liable for practicing violence against his wife, there is no provision in the whole Act which makes the women responsible of the same. Similarly, Section 3 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005 states that it only protects women from such violence. This act does not recognize men as victims, despite evidence of men suffering domestic abuse. Men who attempt to report abuse often face ridicule or disbelief, leaving them with little legal recourse.

**Child Custody and Alimony:** Regardless of the circumstances, courts often give preference to mothers in custody disputes and place heavy financial responsibilities on males during divorce processes.

### A Case Study

#### The Atul Subhash Case-A Symbol of Systemic Abuse:

Atul Subhash, a 34-year-old software developer, committed suicide in Bengaluru on December 9, 2024. He left behind a 90-minute film and a 24-page suicide note detailing the constant abuse he endured at the hands of his estranged wife, Nikita Singhania, and her relatives, which totaled Rs 3 crore. According to Atul's family and friends, he was refused access to his son, was financially depleted, and was frequently called before courts in various states. Even on his son's birthday, Atul was denied access to his child, according to his father, who claimed that Nikita and her mother treated him as a "ATM." Atul killed himself because he could no longer stand the daily harassment and the emotional and social torture. Tell me, then: is it murder or suicide? Even on his son's birthday, Atul was denied access to his child, according to his father, who claimed that Nikita and her mother treated him as a "ATM." Atul killed himself because he could no longer stand the daily harassment and the emotional and social torture. Tell me, then: is it murder or suicide?

### Why Male Victimization is Less Reported?

- i). **Gender stereotypes and societal stigma:** According to Indian society, males should be strong, stoic, and emotionless; this is summed up by the saying "mard ko dard nahi hota" (men do not experience pain). Admitting trauma or displaying vulnerability is frequently viewed as weak, which can result in social rejection or mockery.

- ii). **Fear of Reputation Damage:** A lot of men worry that coming forward with information about abuse will harm their standing in the community and make them seem "cowardly" or "unmanly."  
Absence of Legal Protection: Male victims are not recognized by Indian laws, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), which leaves them without legal protection. Men are discouraged from coming forward because of this legal gap.
- iii). **Fear of False Allegations:** Men fear false charges of dowry harassment or abuse, which can result in social exclusion, loss of custody, and financial and legal disaster.
- iv). **Lack of Support Systems:** There aren't many safe places for guys to talk about emotional discomfort, and there aren't many networks of support for male victims.

### Finding Resolution by Increasing the Need for Reform and Making Gender-Neutral Laws

Targeted reforms that address gender-based violence and the abuse of protective laws are necessary to strike a balance between protecting women's rights and defending men's legal rights in India.

### Gender-Neutral Legal Frameworks:

Make sure that both genders are equally protected and subject to the same punishments by amending current laws to adopt gender-neutral wording. This strategy would address actual abuse cases while preventing the domestic violence act and Section 498A IPC from being used as weapons against males.

**Protections against False Accusations:** Implement more stringent regulations and sanctions for those convicted of making false accusations. Mandate that police and courts thoroughly examine claims before making an arrest or taking legal action, as stressed by recent PILs and Supreme Court rulings such as *\*Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar\**.

**Judicial Oversight and Expert Committees:** Form expert committees to examine and suggest changes to the legislation pertaining to domestic abuse and marriage. Regular training for law enforcement and judicial activism can assist guarantee a fair treatment of complaints.

**Male's Rights Organizations:** Organizations like as the Save Indian Family Movement (SIFM) support the creation of a National Men's Commission to handle issues pertaining to males, gender-neutral legislation, and harsher sanctions for abuse.

**Transparency in Matrimonial Disputes:** To reduce disagreements and fraudulent claims pertaining to dowry or property, require marriage registrations that include details of gifts and assets.

**Public Knowledge:** A major movement is underway to increase public knowledge of men's rights and the necessity of well-rounded legal protections.

### Conclusion

Accepting, appreciating, and managing differences are all parts of equality. For the good of society as a whole, the bonds of patriarchy must be broken. Promoting gender equality and building a more secure and equitable society for people of all genders requires exposing the reality of male victimization. Although protecting women is still a top priority, men in India also face additional difficulties as a result of the abuse of laws tailored to a particular gender and the emergence of pseudo-feminism. To guarantee justice and

equality for all, a well-rounded strategy based on gender neutrality and stringent protections against legal abuse is necessary. By doing these things, we can build a culture where everyone, regardless of gender, is respected and shielded from gendered abuse and violence.

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