

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN IN INDIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIAN LAWS**

---

**Dr. Navpreet Kaur\* Dr. Shobha Gulati \*\***

### **Introduction**

Domestic violence against men is a complex and often overlooked issue in India, as well as globally. While the predominant narrative tends to focus on violence against women, it is essential to acknowledge that men can also be victims of domestic violence. In India, there has been a growing recognition of this issue, but societal perceptions, stereotypes, and legal frameworks often lag behind in addressing the unique challenges faced by male victims. Men and women, same-sex individuals, or people of different ages can all engage in violent behaviour. Many different types of domestic violence exist. It could be physical, psychological, social, economic, or sexual. Since it affects all groups equally, violence can be "committed by those in authority against the weak or by the weak in retaliation against pressure from others to deny their powerlessness." Unfortunately, our society has long had a built-in culture of domestic violence. It is a harsh and incredibly intricate form of violence. Domestic abuse frequently occurs within the walls of the family home and particular, deeply ingrained power dynamic and socio-economic structure that forbids even the acknowledgment or identification of the violence.

Traditional gender norms and stereotypes can contribute to the underreporting of domestic violence against men. Societal expectations often assume that men are inherently stronger and less vulnerable, making it difficult for male victims to come forward. The legal landscape in India concerning domestic violence primarily revolves around laws that are gender-neutral. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is the primary legislation addressing domestic violence, but its title and language may discourage male victims from seeking help. Despite the prevalent societal focus on domestic violence against women, there exists a significant but underreported problem of domestic violence against men in India. This issue demands urgent attention as it challenges gender stereotypes, questions the traditional understanding of victimhood, and highlights the need for comprehensive support and protection mechanisms for all victims of domestic violence,

---

\* Assistant Professor of Law, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara (Punjab) India

\*\* Associate Professor of Law, Lovely Professional University, Phagwara (Punjab) India

regardless of gender.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- F To analyse the reasons for Domestic Violence against men.
- F To discuss the role of laws based on Gender Equality in India.
- F To study the Gender-based laws of other countries;
- F To appraise the role of the Judiciary to combat Domestic Violence against Men.

### **REASONS FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN**

F Underreported Cases: Domestic Violence against men in India remains largely unreported due to societal norms, stereotypes, and limited awareness. Men often face barriers when seeking help or disclosing their experiences, further perpetuating the silence surrounding this issue(Nadda, 2019).

F Lack of Legal Protection: The legal framework in India primarily focuses on protecting women from domestic violence, leaving men with limited legal recourse and protection. The absence of specific laws and policies addressing domestic Violence against men perpetuates the notion that they are not susceptible to abuse(E.V, 2021). Laws that are gender-neutral dominate India's legal environment in regard to domestic abuse. The main law addressing domestic abuse is the Protection of Women from Domestic abuse Act, 2005, yet its name and wording may deter male victims from getting assistance (Nayak, 2021)..

F Stereotypes and Gender Bias: Prevailing gender stereotypes assume that men are always perpetrators and women are always victims of domestic violence. This biased perception can hinder men from coming forward, seeking support, and receiving fair treatment when they report abuse(Awsthi, 2023).

F Support Services:Establishing support services that cater to the unique needs of male victims is crucial. This includes helplines, counselling services, and shelters that are sensitive to the experiences of male survivors.

F Awareness and Education:Raising awareness about domestic violence against men is essential to challenge stereotypes and promote a more inclusive understanding of the issue. Educational campaigns can help dispel myths and encourage open conversations.

F International Perspectives:Learning from international best practices and experiences in addressing domestic violence against men can provide valuable insights for shaping policies and interventions in India.

### **GENDER-BIASED LAWS CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORSENING OF MEN'S CIRCUMSTANCES**

It is essential to acknowledge that gender biases and inequalities affect both men and women in society. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that ensures fairness, equality, and protection for all individuals, regardless of gender. Striving for gender-neutral laws and policies considering the diverse experiences and needs of both men and women can help foster a more equitable society. Gender-biased laws can significantly impact the circumstances of men in India, potentially exacerbating their difficulties in certain areas. It's important to note that gender biases can manifest in various ways, affecting men and women differently in different contexts. While there may be instances where men face disadvantages due to specific laws or policies, it is crucial to approach this topic with a balanced perspective (Shalini Shivajirao Ghumare, 2021). To consider regarding the potential impact of gender-biased laws on men in India:

**F Family Law:** India's family laws have historically been criticized for being gender-biased, primarily favouring women in divorce, child custody, alimony, and property rights. For instance, laws like "Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code", which addresses dowry harassment, have been misused, leading to false accusations and hardship for men. While these laws aim to protect women, their implementation can sometimes lead to unfair treatment of men (Gupta, 2023).

**F Domestic Violence:** "The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act" in India aims to safeguard women from domestic violence. However, the law's exclusive focus on women as victims and men as perpetrators can overlook male victims of domestic abuse and their needs. This can create challenges for men who experience abuse and seek legal assistance or support (Dubey, 2023).

**F Sexual Assault Laws:** Sexual assault laws primarily focus on women as victims, given the higher prevalence of crimes against women. However, the narrow-gendered definition of sexual assault can overlook instances where men are victims of sexual crimes, preventing them from receiving adequate legal protection and support (Deshpande, 2019).

**F Paternity Rights:** India's legal framework provides limited rights for unwed fathers, particularly regarding child custody and guardianship. In cases of dispute, fathers often face challenges securing custody or visitation rights, which can impact their relationship with their children (Patel, 2022).

**F Workplace Laws:** While laws like "the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act" aim to protect women in the workplace, the focus on women as victims can overlook instances where men face workplace harassment or discrimination. Men may hesitate to report such incidents due to societal expectations

or the perceived lack of legal support(Thakur, 2020).

### **COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN**

**USA :** The United States has seen increased recognition of domestic violence against men in recent years. Legal frameworks vary by state, but many have gender-neutral laws. Organizations like the National Domestic Violence Hotline offer support to male victims (Rakesh Choudhary, 2019).

**United Kingdom :** In the UK, there is a growing awareness of domestic violence against men. The law is gender-neutral, and organizations such as Mankind Initiative provide support and resources for male victims(Sharon, 2014).

**Canada :** Canada has gender-neutral laws addressing domestic violence. Efforts have been made to increase awareness of male victims, and organizations like the Canadian Centre for Men and Families offer support services(Dubey, 2023).

**Australia :** Australia recognizes domestic violence against men, and legal responses are generally gender-neutral. Organizations such as the One in Three Campaign raise awareness and provide support for male victims(Awsthi, 2023).

**Sweden :** Sweden has a gender-neutral approach to domestic violence laws. Support services are available for all victims, and efforts are made to challenge stereotypes and encourage reporting by male victims(Deshpande, 2019).

Norway:Norway has a gender-neutral legal framework for addressing domestic violence. Awareness campaigns and support services, such as the Alternative to Violence organization, aim to assist all victims, including men(Gupta, 2023).

### **Judicial Approach**

The judicial perspective on domestic violence against men in India involves the interpretation and application of existing laws, primarily the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. It's important to note that legal perspectives can evolve, and there may be changes or developments since then. Courts in India have, at times, taken a gender-neutral approach in interpreting laws related to domestic violence. Some judgments have emphasized the need to protect all individuals, irrespective of gender, from domestic violence(Nayak, 2021).

Regarding the Indian Supreme Court's stance on domestic Violence against men, it has generally recognized that men can be victims of domestic Violence. In various judgments, the court has emphasized the need for gender-neutral laws and the importance of protecting all victims of domestic Violence, irrespective of their gender."Hiralal P. Harsora v. Kusum

Narottamdas Harsora, 2016", the court observed "violence knows no gender" and that domestic Violence can also be inflicted upon men. The court emphasized the need for gender neutrality in Domestic Violence cases (Gupta, 2023).

**Methods and Results**

The Questionnaire Method is adopted to conduct the Field Study. The data is collected from 200 respondents, including Advocates, Police Officers, Academicians, and General Public. The SPSS is used to analyse the data through Descriptive Statistics and Chi-Square Test.

**Descriptive Statistics**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <b>Gender Norms and Culture Factors</b>	19	9.5	9.5	9.5
<b>Lack of Awareness and Stigma</b>	28	14.0	14.0	23.5
<b>Legal System Challenges</b>	12	6.0	6.0	29.5
<b>Lack of Support Services</b>	17	8.5	8.5	38.0
<b>Above all mentioned</b>	124	62.0	62.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work

**Chi-Square Test**

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
<b>Gender Norms and Culture Factors</b>	19	40.0	-21.0
<b>Lack of Awareness and Stigma</b>	28	40.0	-12.0
<b>Legal System Challenges</b>	12	40.0	-28.0
<b>Lack of Support Services</b>	17	40.0	-23.0
<b>Above all mentioned</b>	124	40.0	84.0
<b>Total</b>	200		

	<b>What are the underlying causes and contributing factors of domestic violence against men in India?</b>
Chi-Square	223.850 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 40.0.

**Descriptive Statistics**

**Table 2: What is domestic violence's psychological and emotional impacts on men in India?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid <b>Emotional Distress</b>	10	5.0	5.0	5.0
<b>Low Self-Esteem</b>	17	8.5	8.5	13.5
<b>Guilt and Shame</b>	13	6.5	6.5	20.0
<b>Impact on Relationships</b>	27	13.5	13.5	33.5
<b>Suicidal Thoughts</b>	18	9.0	9.0	42.5
<b>Parenting Challenges</b>	4	2.0	2.0	44.5
<b>Difficulty Forming Intimate Relationships</b>	6	3.0	3.0	47.5
<b>Above all the mentioned</b>	105	52.5	52.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Source : Field Work

**Chi-Square Test**

**What is domestic violence's psychological and emotional impacts on men in India?**

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
<b>Emotional Distress</b>	10	25.0	-15.0
<b>Low Self-Esteem</b>	17	25.0	-8.0
<b>Guilt and Shame</b>	13	25.0	-12.0
<b>Impact on Relationships</b>	27	25.0	2.0
<b>Suicidal Thoughts</b>	18	25.0	-7.0
<b>Parenting Challenges</b>	4	25.0	-21.0
<b>Difficulty Forming Intimate Relationships</b>	6	25.0	-19.0
<b>All the above mentioned</b>	105	25.0	80.0
<b>Total</b>	200		

**Test Statistics**

	What is domestic violence's psychological and emotional impacts on men in India?
Chi-Square	307.520 <sup>a</sup>
Df	7
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0.

**Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Table 3: What are some effective intervention and prevention strategies for addressing domestic violence against men?</b>					
		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Valid	<b>Raising awareness</b>	24	12.0	12.0	12.0
	<b>Legal protection and advocacy</b>	21	10.5	10.5	22.5
	<b>Addressing substance abuse and mental health</b>	19	9.5	9.5	32.0
	<b>Collaboration and coordination with various government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and law enforcement</b>	12	6.0	6.0	38.0
	<b>All of the above mentioned</b>	124	62.0	62.0	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	200	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Work

**Chi-Square Test**

<b>What are some effective intervention and prevention strategies for addressing domestic violence against men?</b>			
	<b>Observed N</b>	<b>Expected N</b>	<b>Residual</b>
<b>Raising awareness</b>	24	40.0	-16.0
<b>Legal protection and advocacy</b>	21	40.0	-19.0
<b>Addressing substance abuse and mental health</b>	19	40.0	-21.0
<b>Collaboration and coordination with various government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and law enforcement</b>	12	40.0	-28.0
<b>All of the above mentioned</b>	124	40.0	84.0
<b>Total</b>	200		

<b>Test Statistics</b>	
	<b>What are some effective intervention and prevention strategies for addressing domestic violence against men?</b>
Chi-Square	222.450 <sup>a</sup>
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 40.0.

### Discussion and Analysis of Data

Table 1 shows the "underlying causes and contributing factors of domestic violence against men in India." There are a total of 200 respondents who replied to the above-stated question. Under the Frequency value, 19 respondents on Gender Norms and Culture Factors, 28 on Lack of Awareness and Stigma, 12 on Legal System Challenges, 17 on Lack of Support Services, 124 on Above all mentioned. The percentage distribution opted by respondents, 9.5% on Gender Norms and Culture Factors, 14.0% on Lack of Awareness and Stigma, 6.0% on Legal System Challenges, 8.5% on Lack of Support Services, 62.0% on Above all mentioned.

A chi-square analysis examines the relationship between respondents about the "underlying causes and contributing factors of domestic violence against men in India." The sample consisted of 200 participants. The expected frequencies are 40.0 each, based on the assumption of equal proportions of respondent's answers. The chi-square test statistic is significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 200) = 223.850, d=4, p < .000$ , indicating the underlying causes and contributing factors of domestic violence against men in India. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. So, most respondents agree on all the options of Gender Norms and Culture Factors, Lack of Awareness and Stigma, Legal System Challenges, and Lack of Support Services.

Table 2 shows domestic violence's psychological and emotional impacts on men in India. There are a total of 200 respondents who replied to the above-stated question. Under the Frequency value, 10 respondents on Emotional Distress, 17 on Low Self-Esteem, 4 on Parenting Challenges, 13 on Guilt and Shame, 27 on Impact on Relationships, 18 on Suicidal Thoughts, 6 on Difficulty Forming Intimate Relationships, 105 on Above all the mentioned. The percentage distribution opted by respondents, 5.0% on Emotional Distress, 8.5% on Low Self-Esteem, 6.5% on Guilt and Shame, 13.5% on Impact on Relationships, 9.0% on Suicidal Thoughts, 2.0% on Parenting Challenges, 3.0% on Difficulty Forming Intimate Relationships, and 52.5% on Above all the mentioned.

A chi-square analysis examines the relationship between respondents about what are domestic violence's psychological and emotional impacts on men in India. The sample consisted of 200 participants. The expected frequencies are 25.0 each, based on the assumption of equal proportions of respondent's answers. The chi-square test statistic is significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 200) = 307.520, d=7, p < .000$ , indicating the underlying examination of the relationship between respondents about what are domestic violence's psychological and emotional impacts on men in India. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. So, majority of respondents are agreed on all the options of



Emotional Distress, Low Self-Esteem, Guilt and Shame, Impact on Relationships, Suicidal Thoughts, Parenting Challenges, and Difficulty Forming Intimate Relationships.

Table 3, shows the effective intervention and prevention strategies for addressing domestic violence against men. There are a total of 200 respondents who replied to the above-stated question. Under the Frequency value, 24 respondents on Raising awareness, 21 on Legal protection and advocacy, 19 on Addressing substance abuse and mental health, 12 on Collaboration and coordination with various government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and law enforcement, 124 on All of the above mentioned. The percentage distribution opted by respondents, 12.0% on Raising awareness, 10.5% on Legal protection and advocacy, 9.5% on Addressing substance abuse and mental health, 6.0% on Collaboration and coordination with various government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and law enforcement, 62.0% on All of the above mentioned.

A chi-square analysis examines the effective intervention and prevention strategies for addressing domestic violence against men. The sample consisted of 200 participants. The expected frequencies are 40.0 each, based on the assumption of equal proportions of respondent's answers. The chi-square test statistic is significant,  $\chi^2 (1, N = 200) = 222.450$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $p < .000$ , indicating the underlying the effective intervention and prevention strategies for addressing domestic violence against men. Therefore, reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. So, majority of respondents are agreed on Raising awareness, Legal protection and advocacy, Addressing substance abuse and mental health, Collaboration and coordination with various government agencies, NGOs, healthcare providers, and law enforcement.

### **Conclusion**

The problem of domestic violence against males and its prevalence in society is not well known. This is because men are expected to always be powerful and in charge according to the conventional gender norms that persist in many countries. This makes men feel as though they must conceal any signs of weakness or vulnerability, making it challenging for them to get help when mistreated. The issue of domestic Violence against men can be handled in a variety of different ways. One is to make people more aware of the problem and its prevalence. Education and public awareness campaigns can accomplish this. Additionally, by passing a particular piece of law for men that is comparable to 'The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005' for women, improvements can also be accomplished. These services ought to be discreet, easily reachable, and able to offer both material and emotional help. The way things are now has undergone significant change. After the emergence of contemporary technologies and the effects of globalisation

have altered our way of life. The influence of western ideas on our cultural values and social conventions is profound. Family structures as we previously knew them are evolving. Women in the family can now fulfil the male role of defender and saviour in the same way. It is also time to acknowledge the horrors that males in domestic situations must endure. By adopting pertinent legal requirements and passing gender-neutral regulations that should protect both spouses from domestic abuse, awareness should be raised to address these issues.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

**F Raise Awareness:** Launch public awareness campaigns to challenge societal norms and stereotypes that perpetuate the idea that men cannot be victims of domestic Violence. Education and awareness programs can help dispel myths and encourage reporting and seeking help.

**F Support Helplines and Counseling Services:** Establish helplines and counseling services specifically for male victims of domestic Violence. These services can provide emotional support, advice, and guidance to those in need. It is important to ensure that these services are confidential, non-judgmental, and easily accessible.

**F Legal Protection:** Strengthen legal frameworks to protect male victims of domestic Violence. Ensure that the definition of domestic Violence includes men and that legal provisions, such as protection orders and restraining orders, are available to all victims. Encourage reporting and prosecution of domestic violence cases involving men.

**F Supportive Shelters:** Establish safe shelters and temporary housing facilities for male victims of domestic Violence. These shelters should provide a secure and supportive environment where men can seek refuge, receive counseling, and access legal assistance.

**F Training for Police and Healthcare Providers:** Conduct training programs for law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and social workers to sensitize them to the issue of domestic violence against men. Enhance their understanding of male victims' unique needs and challenges and train them to respond effectively and supportively.

**F Engage Men in the Solution:** Encourage men to be active allies in the fight against domestic Violence. Engage men in community outreach programs, workshops, and campaigns to promote respectful relationships, gender equality, and non-violent communication.

**F Strengthen Support Systems:** Collaborate with NGOs, community organizations, and support groups to comprehensively support male victims. Foster partnerships with these organizations to ensure a coordinated response and facilitate referrals for counseling, legal aid, and other necessary services.

**F Research and Data Collection:** Invest in research initiatives to gather reliable data on the prevalence and impact of domestic violence against men. This data will help policymakers, organizations, and stakeholders better understand the issue and develop evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention.

**F Inclusive Policies:** Advocate for gender-inclusive policies that recognize and address the needs of male victims of domestic violence. Encourage the government to allocate resources and develop programs tailored to support male victims and prevent domestic violence.

**F Education and Prevention:** Integrate gender equality and domestic violence prevention education into school curricula and community programs. Promote healthy relationships, consent, and conflict resolution skills early, fostering a culture of non-violence and respect.

#### **References**

1. Awsthi, A. (2023, August 18). An Indian Perspective on Domestic Violence against Men. Retrieved from Times of India: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/my-thoughts-on-paper/an-indian-perspective-on-domestic-violence-against-men-50632/>
2. Deshpande, S. (2019). Sociocultural and Legal Aspects of Violence Against Men. *Journal of Psychosexual Health*, 246-249.
3. Dubey, A. (2023, July 5). The issue of Domestic Violence against Men in India. Retrieved from Daaman Promoting Harmony: <https://www.daaman.org/post/the-issue-of-domestic-violence-against-men-in-india>
4. E.V., S. F. (2021). Domestic Violence Against Men: Hidden Victim. *International Journal of Law Management and Humanities*, 2192 - 2198.
5. Gupta, S. (2023, July 12). Domestic violence against men in India. Retrieved from Ipleaders: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/domestic-violence-men-india/>
6. N, S. S. (2022). A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN IN INDIA AND THE ROLE OF GENDER BIASED LAWS IN IT. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS*, 1-15.
7. Nadda, J. S. (2019). A Cross-sectional Study of Gender-Based Violence against Men in the Rural Area of Haryana, India. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 35-38.
8. Nayak, P. (2021). DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN IN INDIA: A SERIOUS ISSUE. *Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Legal Research*, 1-7.
9. Patel, M. (2022). Domestic Violence Against Men in India. *Jus Corpus Law Journal*.

10. Rakesh Choudhary, M. K. (2019). Domestic Violence Against Women's in India A Study. PANACEA International Research Journal, 49-55.
11. Sebastian, S. K. (2018). DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN IN INDIA . The Law Brigade (Publishing) Group, 384-391.
12. Shalini Shivajirao Ghumare, D. P. (2021). Domestic Violence - A curse to a Man in a maledominated society. International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts , 754-760.
13. Sharon, D. (2014). Domestic Violence Against Women in India: A Family Menace. Social science, 147-149.
14. Thakur, M. S. (2020, October 22). Domestic Violence Against Men and Women in India: Why Blame Only Us If You Can Do It Too? Retrieved from Legal Bites: <https://www.legalbites.in/domestic-violence-against-men/>