

The Unseen Wounds of Male Victims of Gender-Based Violence: A Comparative Study of India and USA

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Abstract: Gender-based violence pertains to violence perpetrated against individuals, regardless of being male or female, because of their sex or socially established gender roles; however, when violence targets men due to their gender, it is known as gender-based violence against men. Gender-based violence includes in its ambit intimate partner violence, domestic violence. Historically, our society has been ruled by men, and it is commonly believed that only women are the victims of gender-based violence while men are seen as the perpetrators; however, the reality that men can also become victim of gender-based violence at the hands of others is largely overlooked and unrecognized. Gender-based violence directed at men is a concern that hampers gender equality, which is one of the objectives of sustainable development, and continues to be one of the most serious human rights violations in all societies. Men are not given any statutory protection against domestic violence or other form of abuse either in India or United States i.e. laws in India as well as in USA fails to acknowledge any kind of gender-based violence against men. Statutes related to Gender-based violence only revolves around women leaving men as unnoticed victims. Authors in this paper seeks to make comparative analysis with respect to existence and kinds of Gender-based violence against men in India as well as in USA like physical abuse, psychological abuse, economic abuse and sexual abuse etc. Focus is to analyse causes and consequences of Gender-based violence against men.

Keywords: Violence, Gender-based violence against men, Domestic Violence, India, USA.

I. Introduction

A significant social problem in the contemporary countries is the occurrence of gender-based violence directed towards men. No nation, culture, religion or class is excluded from the worldwide crisis of gender-based violence¹. Violence is a conduct involving deliberate aggression and harm that is committed against oneself or others. But violence in context of this research paper refers to gender-based violence. Gender-based violence pertains to violence perpetrated against individuals, regardless of being male or female, because of their sex or socially established gender roles. It is a violence aimed at an individual due to their gender. It is a universal issue that infringes human rights and hinders social progress.

Gender-based violence includes in its ambit the domestic violence and Domestic Violence refers to a pattern of an abusive conduct within any relationship employed by one partner to obtain or sustain power and control over the other². It is a violence or other form of abuse that happen in a domestic setting that are connected by a domestic relationship. The term “domestic violence” is often used interchangeably with “intimate partner violence”, which is committed by one person in an intimate relationship against the other person and can take place in present relationships or between former spouses or partners.

When violence is aimed at men due to their gender, it is referred as Gender-based violence against men.

Gender-based violence against men is a concern that obstructs gender equality, which is one of the objectives of sustainable development and continues to be one of the most considerable human rights violations in all societies.

Gender-based violence directed at men arises from a power imbalance and is carried out with the intent to demean and subordinate an individual or group of individuals identified as male, whom they perceive as inferior. This type of violence is deeply rooted in societal and cultural structures, norms, and values that govern behaviour within society, and it is often perpetuated by a culture of denial and silence. This form of violence may take place in private as well as public spheres, disproportionately affecting men.

Gender-based violence can appear as sexual, physical, verbal, psychological (emotional), or economic violence, appearing in various forms, including verbal abuse and online hate speech, as well as rape or murder. Offender can be anyone: a current or former spouse/partner, a family member, a coworker, classmates, friends, an unknown person, or individuals acting on behalf of cultural, religious, state, or intra-state institutions. Gender-based violence, like any other type of violence, is a problem that entails power relations. It arises from a feeling of superiority, along with an intention to assert that superiority within the family, at school, at work, in the community, or in society overall, based on their gender.

¹ Lokesh Chauhan & Dr. Deevanshu Shrivastava, “Types and Consequences of Domestic Violence on Male Victims” 6(6) *African Journal of Biological Sciences* 7378-7383 (2024). ISSN: 2663-2187.

² Definition of Domestic Violence, available at <https://www.justice.gov/ovw/domestic-violence> (last visited on March 6 at 3:42 pm).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenants on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, safeguards various human rights such as the right to life, gender equality, the ban on sex-based discrimination, the safeguarding of physical integrity, and the right to health, among others that are affected by gender-based offences.

Objectives

- I. To find out various kinds and existence of Gender-based violence against men in India as well as in USA.
- II. To analyse causes and consequences of Gender-based violence against men in India as well as in USA.

II. Methodology

Data Collection:

To thoroughly investigate the “Unseen wounds of male victims of gender-based violence (GBV) in India and USA”, we utilized a systematic literature review methodology. We collected data from peer-reviewed articles; Journals from a variety of academic databases particularly Google Scholar, UGC-CARE list, PubMed, Cross Ref, Scopus published during 2001-2024 with respect to Indian and USA aspect and Survey particularly USA survey (NISVS) 2016/2017.

Database Search Strategy:

The search was performed using specific keywords that indicate the focus of our research. These keywords consisted of "gender-based violence against men", male victims of gender-based violence in India and USA", "Domestic Violence against men", "Causes of gender-based violence against men" and "Consequences of gender-based violence against men". We constrained our search to publications published between 2001 and 2024 to guarantee the relevance and timeliness of our information.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

To sustain academic rigor, we established defined criteria for including literature in our review. The criteria for inclusion encompassed:

1. Peer-reviewed articles: Ensuring scholarly integrity.
2. Relevance: Articles needed to explicitly concentrate on male victims of GBV within the settings of India or the USA.
3. Geographical coverage: Studies must cover both India and the USA for comparative evaluation.
4. Thematic relevance: Literature should address themes related to psychological consequences, social perceptions, and access to care for male victims.

On the other hand, articles were left out if they were not peer-reviewed, did not focus specifically on the subject of male victims of GBV, or if they solely examined female victims without acknowledging male viewpoints.

Analytical Framework:

For our evaluation, we employed a thematic analysis method. This approach provides a detailed understanding of the primary themes and patterns regarding the experiences of male GBV victims in both nations. The thematic analysis was suitable due to its adaptability, enabling us to recognize and interpret various narratives extracted from the literature. We categorized the findings into main themes such as "societal stigma," "mental health impacts," and "access to support resources," which surfaced as important in both contexts.

III. Result & Discussion

Various kinds of Gender-Based Violence against men in India as well as in USA

Violence is often viewed through the lens of women and children, but violence also impacts men in ways that can be as equally damaging physiologically, psychologically and emotionally. It is essential to take into account that men also experience violence, and their experiences need to be examined and comprehended. Here, we look at the forms of violence that are encountered by men.

Different types and prevalence of Gender-based violence directed at men in both India and the USA are outlined as follows:

Physical Violence:

It is the broadest category of violence that includes any bodily injury a man sustains. Physical violence towards men can take different forms and they include:

- ✓ Domestic Violence: Men are subjected to domestic violence. This can include any physical abuse within a domestic relationship like hitting, slapping, pushing or using weapons to harm the man.

- ✓ Street Violence and Gang Violence: Men tend to suffer more than women from street violence which includes fights, assaults and violent acts carried out by gangs. Factors like territorial aggression or rivalry and random acts of violence can lead to this.
- ✓ Workplace violence: Men suffer more violence that occurs in places of work, especially in high-risk occupations like construction, manufacturing and policing. Men in such occupations bear the high risk of the physical violence and injury.

According to The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2016/2017) (hereinafter referred to as “NISVS”) released by the United States reveals that over 2 in 5 men (42. 3% or 49. 9 million) in the US have indicated that they were victims of physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime, of which 24. 6% (29 million) faced severe physical violence and 39. 0% (46. 1 million) reported experiencing physical abuse such as slapping or being shoved by their intimate partner. (According to NISVS, an Intimate Partner is defined as a romantic or sexual partner and encompasses spouses, boyfriends, girlfriends, along with individuals they have dated, are dating, or with whom they have had a hookup)³.

Research was conducted in Haryana state in which total 1000 men participated in the survey and its result indicated that a total of 524 men (52.4%) faced gender-based violence. Out of which 6% of men were victims of physical violence. The most prevalent type of physical violence was slapping (98.3%), while the least prevalent was being beaten with a weapon (3.3%). Severe physical assaults occurred in only one-tenth of the cases (seven males). In every instance, the spouse as the one accountable for the physical violence⁴.

Research conducted by Hines and Morrison (2001) in USA indicates that men may experience physical violence in their intimate partnerships with women. Women inflict physical violence on men at a significant rate. This physical violence includes both mild and severe forms of abuse, which cannot always be simply classified as self-defense⁵.

A study by Avinash (2022) in India revealed that Physical abuse committed against men involves slapping, pushing, hitting by wife or his in-laws or throwing of objects like phones, utensils etc at husbands.

98.3% of men reported being victim of slapping which is the most common form of physical abuse followed by beaten by weapon i.e. 33% which is the least common form⁶.

Mental/Psychological/Emotional Violence:

An act that can negatively influence a man’s mind. It refers to behaviour that causes emotional suffering to man and it excludes physical injury. This form of abuse often goes unnoticed, but it does not make its impact any less painful. Men have access to emotional violence in abusive relationships, families as well as at workplace.

- ✓ Bullying and Harassment: Most men suffer from bullying or social harassment, which include insults, mistreatment, demeaning behaviour or and being ostracized. This is especially prevalent in cultures and workplaces that emphasized extreme masculinism or toxic gender norms.
- ✓ Cultural and Societal Pressure: Men have to deal with pressures from society to meet masculine stereotypes, resulting into feelings of shame and inability to express emotions. The continuous pressure to “be strong” or “never show weakness” can lead to great suffering.
- ✓ Humiliation and Belittling: Continuously demeaning a man to weaken his self-worth and self-esteem.
- ✓ Threats: Coercing with the threats of physical injury or the loss of children or financial resources.
- ✓ Isolation: Preventing him from interacting with friends or family or closely monitoring his actions.
- ✓ Gaslighting: Leading a man to question his own reality, self-worth, or perceptions through deception.
- ✓ Abuse in relationship

As per NISVS, 2016/2017, about 45.1% (53.3 million) of men in United States indicated experiencing any psychological violence from an intimate partner during their lifespan. 7.0% (8.2 million) reported about such incidence before 12 months of conducting the survey. About 1 in 5 men in US cited expressive aggression from an intimate partner during their lifespan whereas 2 in 5 men cited coercive control and entrapment including 26.7% of men reported that their intimate partner kept track of them by

³ “The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey” (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Intimate Partner Violence.

⁴ Jasbir Singh Malik, Anuradha Nadda “A Cross-Sectional study of Gender-Based violence against Men in the rural area of Haryana, India” 44(1) *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* 35-38 (2019).

⁵ Hines, D.A., and Malley Morrison, K., “Psychological effects of partner abuse against men: A neglected area” 2(2) *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* 75-85 (2001).

⁶ Avinash D.S, “Domestic Violence against men: A Lesser Explored Phenomenon” 6(1) *Annals of Indian Psychiatry* 1-3 (2022).

demanding to know what they were doing and where they were and 20.9% of men reported that their partners made decision on behalf of them⁷.

Research was conducted in Haryana state in which total 1000 men participated in the survey and its result indicated that a total of 524 men (52.4%) faced gender-based violence. Out of which 51.6% of men were the victims of emotional violence. Among those who suffered from emotional abuse, 85% of men faced criticism, 29.7% were insulted publicly and 3.5% experienced threats or physical harm (Jasbir Singh, 2019)⁸.

Research Study revealed Psychological/Emotional abuse against men included criticism (85%), insulted publicly (29.7%) and threat (35%).

One of the most horrific experiences that is reported by men is the false complaint under Sec 498-A of Indian Penal Code (Avinash, 2022)⁹.

Sexual Violence:

Sexual violence against men exists as a serious issue that suffers from widespread underreporting. It can occur in the form of:

- ✓ Rape: Men can be victims of sexual assault or rape, whether it occurs in a relationship, with a stranger or in institutional settings like prisons.
- ✓ Sexual coercion or Exploitation: Just like women, men can face sexual exploitation or coercion. This includes any non-consensual sexual activity, such as forcing or manipulating an individual into engaging in sexual acts.
- ✓ Sexual Violence in Prisons: Men in prison may be particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, especially in situations where there are power imbalances, such as sexual assaults committed by fellow inmates or even prison staff.

As per NISVS, one in 13 men (7.6% or more than 8.9 million) in United States reported any contact sexual violence by their intimate partner during their lifetime. In the 12 months prior to the survey, 1.4% of men (1.7 million) reported being victim of such kind of violence by an intimate partner¹⁰.

Research was conducted in Haryana state in which total 1000 men participated in the survey and its result indicated that a total of 524 men (52.4%) faced gender-based violence. Out of which 0.4% of men were subjected to sexual abuse¹¹. 0.4% of men reported being victim of Sexual abuse which result from denial of sex by men¹².

Economic Violence:

Economic violence refers to actions that restrict a person's financial independence, often as a means of control. Men can experience economic abuse in various forms:

- ✓ Financial control in relationships: Men might find their income or financial resources withheld or their earnings could be controlled or manipulated by the spouse or family member.
- ✓ Unemployment and Poverty: Economic violence can also occur on a broader scale when men face unemployment or poverty, especially in cultures that expect them to be the primary earners. The pressure to meet these expectations can lead to feelings of inadequacy and societal stigma.
- ✓ Undermining Job opportunities: Deliberately hindering a man's career or job opportunities, resulting in economic hardship.

Stalking or Harassment:

- ✓ Persistent unwanted contact: The man faces persistent harassment through unwanted texts, phone calls and visits.
- ✓ Monitoring or controlling behaviour: Perpetrator monitors and observes man's day today activities including monitoring his phone or emails without his permission.

One out of every 20 men in the U. S. (5. 2% or 6. 2 million) stated that they have experienced being stalked by an intimate partner at some point in their lives, while 1.2% of men (1. 4 million) indicated that they were stalked by an intimate partner in the year prior to the survey¹³.

⁷ *Id.* at 6.

⁸ *Id.* at 6

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey" (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Intimate Partner Violence.

¹¹ Jasbir Singh Malik, Anuradha Nadda "A Cross-Sectional study of Gender-Based violence against Men in the rural area of Haryana, India" 44(1) *Indian Journal of Community Medicine* 35-38 (2019).

¹² Avinash D.S, "Domestic Violence against men: A Lesser Explored Phenomenon" 6(1) *Annals of Indian Psychiatry* 1-3 (2022).

¹³ *Id.* at 6.

Verbal Abuse:

- ✓ Name-calling, insults or yelling: Ongoing verbal degradation aimed at demeaning or intimidating the victim.
- ✓ Degrading remarks regarding masculinity: The use of social stereotype to diminish the victim's perception of manhood.

Hate Crimes and Discrimination:

Men can suffer from hate crimes and discriminatory acts based on their race, sexual orientation or various other factors.

- ✓ Racial or Ethnic Violence: Men from particular racial or ethnic backgrounds experience higher rates of violence because biases and stereotypes drive this aggression.
- ✓ Homophobic and Transphobic Violence: Men who is identified as gay, bisexual or transgender could experience violence alongside harassment and discrimination because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Research was conducted in Haryana state in which total 1000 men participated in the survey and its result indicated that a total of 524 men (52.4%) faced gender-based violence. Out of which 51.6% of men were the victims of emotional violence and 6% of men were victims of physical violence whereas 0.4% of men were subjected to sexual abuse. The most prevalent type of physical violence was slapping (98.3%), while the least prevalent was being beaten with a weapon (3.3%). Severe physical assaults occurred in only one-tenth of the cases (seven males). In every instance, the spouse as the one accountable for the physical violence. Among those who suffered from emotional abuse, 85% of men faced criticism, 29.7% were insulted publicly and 3.5% experienced threats or physical harm¹⁴.

Causes of Gender-based and Domestic Violence against men:

Gender-based violence (GBV) men is significant problem that may be caused by a number of factors. Though the reasons could differ based on cultural, social, and individual contexts, certain common causes include:

Traditional Gender Roles and General Stereotypes against men:

There exists a common belief in society that men are always strong, powerful, and dominant and that they cannot be victims of any form of crime and even if they stand up and speaks out against violence, they risk being labelled as weak man. Therefore, this viewpoint can prevent them from stepping forward¹⁵.

Males may feel socially compelled to uphold the provider or protector role, thus less likely to report abuse or seek help due to fear of stigma¹⁶.

Cultural and Social Norms:

- ✓ Traditional Gender Roles: Men are anticipated to be powerful and commanding in most societies. These norms can create a culture where it is more difficult for men to be vulnerable or ask for help if they have been subjected to violence.
- ✓ Masculinity Norms: Societal norms about masculinity tend to dissuade men from expressing emotions or vulnerability and so they may end up suffering silently when undergoing domestic violence.
- ✓ Stigma and Shame: Men who are victims of domestic violence might fear being labelled as weak, unmanly, or emasculated. This shame might keep them from reporting abuse or seeking help.

Psychological Factors:

- ✓ Power and Control: Like women, men can be victimized by abusive behaviour based on a need for power and control by their partners. Abusers might use psychological manipulation, threats, or physical violence to control the relationship.
- ✓ Mental Health and Substance Abuse: Mental illness, substance abuse, or unresolved trauma can lead to violent behaviour. The perpetrator's and victim's mental illness may contribute to cycles of violence, particularly in abusive relationships.

Economic and Power Imbalances:

- ✓ Financial Stress: Financial struggles, unemployment, and poverty can put pressure on relationships and lead to domestic violence. In certain situations, men may feel stressed from not being able to meet conventional breadwinner expectations, which can result in frustration, anger, and aggressive behaviour.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 6.

¹⁵ Abhijeet Ghosh and Ambika Kumar "Cruelty Against Men: Neglected Narrative from a Males Perspective" 6(2) *Journal of Psychosexual Health* 117-129 (2024).

¹⁶ Navpreet Kaur, Shobha Gulati, "Domestic Violence against men in India: A Critical Analysis with special reference to Indian Laws" 22(1) *South India Journal of Social Sciences* 70-81 (2024).

Conversely, if men rely financially on their partners, they might feel powerless or confined, which can complicate their ability to leave an abusive environment.

- ✓ Economic Dependency: When men are economically dependent on their partners, they might end up feeling trapped or stuck in an abusive relationship. Economic manipulation can be another type of abuse employed by controlling partners.

Inadequate Legislative Protection:

In today's time most of the laws are gender-biased particularly favouring women as women faced violence and discrimination at the hands of others since time immemorial. But rather than using these gender-biased laws by women to raise their genuine concerns, these are being misused by some women leaving others with inadequate legal protection.

Examples:

- ✓ Sexual Assaults Laws:

In India, Sexual Assault laws are primarily gender-biased particularly revolving around women. These laws provide legal protection to women and considers only women as a victim of sexual offence and fails to acknowledge men as a victim like Sec 64-70, 74-79 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

On the other hand, Sexual Assault laws in United States are made Gender-neutral considering anyone as a victim be it men or women.

- ✓ Domestic Violence Laws:

In India, Domestic Violence law i.e. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 centres around women only and it aims to provides legal protection to women from any kind of domestic violence occurring within a domestic relationship.

In United States, situation is somewhat similar. Violence Against Women Act of 1994 as well as The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2022 aims to protect female only from any kind of domestic abuse.

Relationship Dynamics:

- ✓ Conflict and Stress: Relationship issues, economic stress, and parenting issues can lead to conflict in relationships. In other instances, these tensions spill over into violence, and men become victims of their partners abusive acts.
- ✓ Coercive Control: In some abusive relationships, a partner will exert coercive control over the male victim through tactics like emotional manipulation, financial control, or intimidation.

Family and Upbringing:

- ✓ Childhood Exposure to Violence: Men who experienced abuse in their childhood or have gone through trauma (either as victims of violence or as witnesses to violence) might have a higher likelihood of experiencing or committing domestic violence in adulthood. Early exposure to violence can make aggressive behaviour seem normal and create patterns that carry over into their own relationships.

Lack of Support and Resources:

- ✓ Poor Services for Men: Services, hotlines, and counselling services for male domestic violence victims are frequently less available or inaccessible than services for women. This may become more difficult for male victims to access help and assistance.
- ✓ Resistance to Seeking Help: Men are not likely to seek help because they do not know services are available, are afraid of not being believed, or do not want to be ridiculed.

Substance Abuse and Alcohol:

Alcohol and drug use can enhance the risk of violence in relationships. Men are more likely to turn violent when under the influence of alcohol, and in other situations, abusive partners can use alcohol and drugs as a tool for controlling their victims.

Media and Representation:

Media Depictions: Media's depiction of domestic violence tends to focus on the woman as victim and the man as perpetrator. This perpetuates dangerous stereotypes and may result in male victims being seen or heard as non-existent or unsupported in what they endure.

Research was conducted in Haryana state in which total 1000 men participated in the survey and its result indicated that major cause for violence against husbands was the husband's unemployment (60.1%) followed by disagreements and not paying attention to one another (23%) and the perpetrator's addiction (4.3%). Unmanaged anger, issues with ego and so forth, comprised the remaining cases.

A study by Kolbe and Buttner (2020) in USA, showed that 40% of the men reported that jealousy, mental illness, short relationship duration and extra marital affair are all associated with higher risk of being a victim of domestic violence¹⁷.

Consequences of Gender-biased Violence against men:

Gender-biased Violence against men can produce drastic and enduring effects, both on the victim and society at large. Some of the consequences are as follows:

Physical Consequences¹⁸:

- ✓ Physical Injuries: Similar to women, men may also experience physical injuries from gender-based and domestic violence in the form of cuts, fractured bones, burns or other physical injuries.
- ✓ Chronic Pain: Long-term violence can lead to physical problem such as chronic pain, which could be due to previous injuries that never received the right treatment.

Psychological and Emotional Consequences:

Gender-based violence can lead to various mental or psychological consequences including:

- ✓ Mental Health Struggles: Male victims could undergo anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or other mental issues. The victimization can impair one's self-esteem and overall health¹⁹.
- ✓ Low Self-esteem²⁰: Violence can develop a feeling of worthlessness and loss of self-esteem and confidence among victim males. Because of trauma of violence against them they often lose self-esteem and confidence and unable to interact and socialize with others in the society. Also, men can experience identity problems if they believe their masculinity is threatened or undermined.
- ✓ Fear and Isolation: Victim males can become isolated, fearing criticism and disbelief if they disclose their sufferings. The fear of not being believed or being accused may hinder them from seeking any kind of assistance.

Financial and Economic Consequences:

- ✓ Loss of Employment or Work Productivity: Violence can result in missed work, reduced job productivity or termination of employment through the emotional and physical effects of violence. Victims may unable to focus or suffer injuries that hinder the performance of work responsibilities.
- ✓ Financial Dependency: The male victims also face financial domination by their partners, which makes them financially vulnerable or dependent upon the perpetrator.

Sexual Consequences: Violence can impact the sexual and reproductive health of the Victim males like HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Social Consequences:

- ✓ Social Isolation²¹: Men tend to be ashamed or embarrassed by their victimization, which usually causes them to withdraw from friends and family. They fear being judged and disbelief, which increases their feelings of isolation.
- ✓ Stigma and Shame: Victimhood of males in gender based and domestic violence carries a great deal of stigma. Men are stereotypically perceived as the perpetrators of violence in most societies, and therefore, male victims find it hard to come forward for help and assistance.
- ✓ Gender Stereotypes: The social norm that men should be tough, powerful and capable of defending themselves may make them feel inadequate or guilty when they are abused, which makes it more difficult for them to report or discuss their experiences.

Legal Consequences:

Victim men can encounter obstacles in legal arenas like difficulty in getting protection orders in his favour or being viewed as an aggressor rather than victim. In certain situations, victim males may lose custody of their children due to stereotypes suggesting that men are violent or perpetrator.

¹⁷ Verena Kolbe and Andreas Buttner, "Domestic Violence Against Men-Prevalence and Risk Factors", 117 (31-32) *Deutsches Arzteblatt International* 534-541 (2020).

¹⁸ Malla Greeshma, "Uncovering the Taboo: Domestic Violence Against Men in India".

¹⁹ Aditya Agarwal, "The Effects of Domestic Violence on Male Victims: The Law's Response to the Ultimate Taboo" 9 *International Journal of Novel Research and Development* 165 (2024).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Id.* at 6.

Effects on Family life and Relationships:

- ✓ Strained Family Relationships: The consequences of gender-based violence can spread beyond the victim to their children, extended family and social relationships.
- ✓ Effect on Children: Exposure to violence in the household can adversely affect the children. It may result into emotional damage and behavioural problems, which can impact their development.
- ✓ Relationship Challenges: Having a history of gender-based violence can lead to challenges in developing healthy, trusting relationships in the future. Men can have emotional scars that impact their trust in other people or their ability to create a healthy relationship.

Obstacles in Finding Help:

- ✓ Lack of support services: Most support services and shelters are targeted towards women, so male victims have fewer resources to turn to for help. This absence of support infrastructure complicates the process of men seeking assistance.
- ✓ Underreporting: Stigma, fear of not being heard or unawareness of available resources causes men to be less likely to report. This underreporting makes male victims “invisible” and the contributes to lack of data on this issue.

Resorting to illegal means: As there is limited legal protection for victim males as a result, they can themselves take revenge by taking law into their own hands and resorting to illegal means like murder, using criminal force, abduction etc against assailant.

Long-term Effects:

- ✓ Chronic Trauma and PTSD: The long-term psychological impact of gender-based and domestic violence can be PTSD, which can take the form of flashbacks, emotional numbness, relationship problems or fear of future violence.
- ✓ Risk of Future Abuse: Without intervention and assistance, men who have been victimized by gender-based and domestic violence are at risk of re-entering an abusive relationship and continuing the cycle of violence.
- ✓ Suicidal Tendencies²²: In severe situations, male victims can suffer from suicidal tendencies, thoughts or attempts because of the devastating intensity of the trauma and loneliness.
- ✓ Insomnia and Nightmares: Male victim may face insomnia and nightmares.

As per The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (2016/2017), 21.1% (24.9 million) of men in United States reported injury in their lifetime by their intimate partner. Injury included minor bruises or scratches (15.4%); cuts, major bruises or black eyes (6.4%). Other physical Injuries included injury to any ligament, muscles or tendons (0.9%); broken bones or tooth (0.7%); back or neck injury (0.7%); being knocked out after getting hit, slammed against something or choked (0.6%) and head injury (0.8%)²³.

14.5% (17.2 million) of men in US reported experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD);

8.1% (9.6 million) of men in US reported being fearful;

7.1% (8.4 million) of men in US reported being concerned for their safety;

5.8 % (6.9 million) of men in US needed legal services²⁴;

5% (6.7 million) of men in US skipped at least one day of work;

4.3% (5 million) of men in US needed medical care;

5.5% 6.4 million) of men in US needed help from law enforcement;

1.5% (1.8 million) of men talked to a crisis hotline operator;

0.6% (701,000) of men needed victim advocate services.

Men who indicated experiencing intimate partner violence victimization at some point in their lives exhibited a notably greater prevalence of 7 out of 10 assessed health conditions in comparison to men who did not report such victimization. Health condition encompassed with asthma, Irritable bowel syndrome, Diabetes, High blood pressure, HIV AIDS, frequent headaches, chronic pain, difficulties with sleeping, significant hearing difficulties, blindness or considerable vision impairment. Concerning the four assessed activity limitations, men who indicated experiencing intimate partner violence victimization showed a notably

²² *Id.* at 6.

²³ “The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey” (NISVS): 2016/2017 Report on Intimate Partner Violence. Available at: <https://search.app/zgCdDvW1LwQZrj5r8> (Last visited on March 12, 2025).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

greater prevalence of challenges with concentration, remembering or making decisions; challenges with dressing or bathing and challenges with performing errands alone compared to men who did not report such victimization.

In Indian perspective, studies reported that majority of the male victims faced injuries, severe assaultive injuries, deadliness in rare situations under physical consequences. Further, the study revealed that most of them reported psychological and emotional consequences of violence such as shameful, revenge, fear, emotionally hurt, unloved and helpless (Avinash, 2022)²⁵.

IV. Conclusion

Although conversations regarding gender-based violence frequently concentrate on women and children and most of the legislations are designed to empower and safeguard them but it is equally important to recognize and maintain a balance in these laws to guarantee that the safety and rights of men are also respected. One gender cannot be highly protected at the cost of another. Caution must be exercised to avoid the abuse of laws intended for women's empowerment, and society must work towards upholding the principle of fairness and justice for every individual, irrespective of gender. By acknowledging and tackling the problem of gender-based violence against men, we can foster a more equitable and just society where the rights and safety of all people are honoured and defended. Acknowledging these different types of violence is an important step toward fostering a more complete understanding a gender-based and domestic violence and ensuring that all victims receive the necessary support.

Suggestions

In order to combat gender-based violence against men below are some suggestions:

Raising Awareness and Educating the Public:

- Public Campaigns: Initiate campaigns that break gender-role and gender-stereotype stereotypes. These campaigns need to convey that domestic violence knows no gender.
- Education in Schools: Include education about healthy relationships, consent, and respect in school curricula. Educating children early on about equality, mutual respect, and recognizing abusive behaviour can prevent future abuse.
- Media Representation: Promote balanced media portrayals of domestic violence, indicating that men can also be victims. Media can help normalize discourses on male victims of GBV and combat stigma.

Offer Support Services for Men:

- Safe Spaces and Shelters: Create shelters and support services specifically for male domestic violence victims. These should offer immediate shelter, legal assistance, psychological counselling, and reintegration assistance.
- Helplines and Online Services: Set up confidential helplines and online services where men can report abuse, seek guidance, or receive support without fear of stigma or judgment.
- Counselling and Therapy: Offer male-specific counselling services to assist men in working through trauma, managing emotional distress, and rebuilding their lives following violence.

Strengthen Legal Frameworks:

- Gender-Neutral Legal Protections: Provide legal protections against domestic violence and gender-based violence in a gender-neutral manner so that all victims, both men and women, are treated equally. Legal protections must be available for men, and they must be motivated to report violence without worrying whether they will be heard or not.
- Training Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities: Law enforcement officials, social workers, and judges must be trained to identify signs of domestic violence against men and deal with cases sensitively and respectfully.
- Establish Stronger Penalties for Offenders: Make sure the law facilitates suitable penalties for domestic violence offenders, independent of the gender of the victim.

Encourage Positive Masculinity:

- Challenge Toxic Masculinity: Have conversations about reframing masculinity to incorporate vulnerability, empathy, and non-violence. Men need to be encouraged to feel comfortable showing emotions, to ask for help when they need it, and to abandon the notion that they need to be strong and silent.
- Male Role Models: Highlight male role models who model healthy relationships and break down stereotypes surrounding masculinity. These men can play a significant role in shifting public opinion.

²⁵ *Id.* at 6.

Encourage Men to Talk:

- Make Speaking About Abuse Normal: Make it a society where men feel comfortable talking about abuse freely without fear of ridicule or disbelief. Support groups and networks of male survivors can assist men in meeting others who have gone through similar experiences.
- Community Programs: Establish male support groups where they can exchange experiences and get peer support. These programs should also be aimed at informing men about their rights and existing resources.

Engage Men in Prevention Work:

- Engage Men as Allies: Incorporate men in gender-based violence prevention efforts, especially as allies in advocating women's rights and opposing male violence. When men become involved actively, it indicates that abuse in any manner is not acceptable.
- Training and Workshops: Provide workshops to train men in identifying abusive patterns, intervening when violence occurs, and assisting a friend or loved one who has been a victim of violence.

Enhance Support Networks:

- Support Men's Health Organizations: Ally with men's health and wellbeing organizations to provide resources and also advocate for male victims of domestic violence specifically.
- Family and Peer Support: Involve families, friends, and communities in encouraging them to be supportive and not judgmental toward men who self-report abuse. Creating a non-stigmatizing environment is extremely important.

Fight Underreporting and Stigma:

- Combat the Stigma: Combat the stigma that stops men from reporting abuse. This entails breaking down the fear of being seen as weak or not manly enough. Emphasize the value of asking for help when needed and that domestic violence is never the fault of the victim.
- Confidential Reporting Systems: Provide anonymous reporting systems that enable victims to report violence without exposing themselves, and this can be particularly crucial for men who would fear being judged or not believed.

Research and Data Collection:

- Gather Data on Male Victims: Do more research and data collection on male domestic violence victims. This information will be able to inform policies, enhance service provision, and give an indication of the extent of the issue.
- Address Service Gaps: Utilize the results of these studies to close service gaps, including ensuring men's support systems are adequately funded, effective, and accessible.

Cross-Sector Partnership:

- Partner with NGOs: Governments, NGOs, and community-based organizations should partner to develop an integrated service package for both women and men survivors of gender-based violence. This involves offering coordinated services like legal assistance, counselling, housing, and employment.

Through the incorporation of these strategies into society, it will be possible to develop a system where gender-based violence, including violence against men, is identified, prevented, and treated with the care and urgency it deserves.

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