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Unmasking the Hidden Reality: Unveiling the Unheard and Uncounted Violence against Men in India

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ABSTRACT

In a world where the focus of gender-based violence has primarily been on women, the plight of men who suffer in silence demands our attention. Violence against men remains an unheard and uncounted reality, hidden behind societal misconceptions and a lack of awareness. This research paper aims to break the silence and shed light on this often-neglected issue, specifically within the context of India. By uncovering the truth, we can pave the way for meaningful change, challenging existing norms and advocating for the well-being of all individuals.

To better understand the magnitude of violence against men, we explore the global ranking of different countries, delving into comprehensive data and statistics. By identifying the best and worst performers in combating this issue, we gain valuable insights into the broader context, highlighting the urgency of addressing the problem in India. This global perspective enables us to access the gravity of the issue and advocate for change on an international scale.

This research paper delves into the multifaceted challenges faced by men who experience violence in India. By examining societal norms, stereotypes, and ingrained biases, we shed light on the obstacles that prevent men from reporting their experiences or seeking support. Additionally, we explore the gaps in legal protection and support systems, addressing the systematic issues that perpetuate the cycle of violence. By understanding these issues, we can develop targeted interventions to ensure the safety and well-being of male victims.

Drawing upon relevant ranks and data, this paper presents a comprehensive overview of the status of violence against men in India. By examining the constitutional provisions, existing laws, government schemes, and the role of NGOs, we gain insights into the current landscape. Furthermore, we identify the gaps and areas that require immediate attention, advocating for necessary legal reforms and the strengthening of support systems to address the issue effectively.

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Informed by comprehensive reports and successful practices from grassroots and global perspectives, this research paper provides actionable suggestions to combat violence against men in India. These suggestions encompass legal reforms, awareness campaigns, training programs, and the establishment of robust support systems at various levels. By implementing these solutions, we can strive towards a society that recognizes and addresses the unheard and uncounted violence faced by men, fostering a safer environment for all individuals.

While progress has been made in addressing violence against men, there is still much work to be done, by aligning our targets with achievable goals and accelerating actions, we can effectively address the issue and ensure the well-being and safety of all individuals. Through a multidimensional approach involving collaboration between government agencies, NGOs, and civil society, we can strive for a society that recognizes and addresses the unheard and uncounted violence faced by men. Together, we can unveil the truth and work towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Keywords: *Violence against men, Gender-based violence, India, Global status, Solutions*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Violence against men in India is a pervasive yet frequently overlooked issue that deserves urgent attention. While gender-based violence has traditionally been associated with women, it is important to recognize that men can also be victims of various forms of violence, including physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse, men face unique challenges in terms of societal expectations, cultural stereotypes, and the lack of awareness surrounding their vulnerabilities.

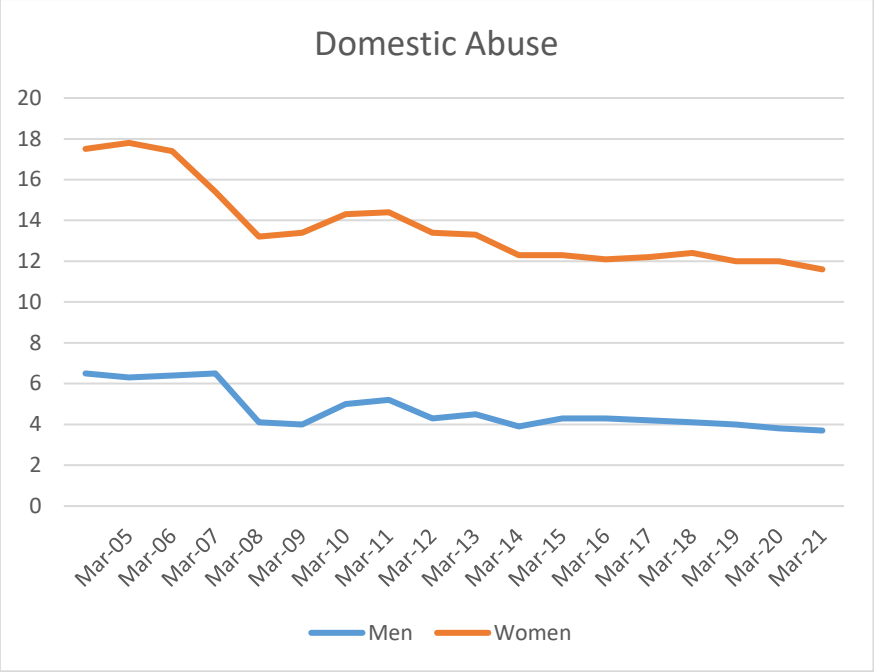
Significance of the Research Paper:

The significance of studying violence against men in India cannot be overstated. By shedding light on this often-marginalised issue, the research paper aims to challenge societal norms, raise awareness, and pave the way for policy changes. Understanding the prevalence, causes, and consequences of violence against men is crucial for developing targeted interventions, support systems, and legal reforms that can effectively address this issue.

II. GLOBAL STATUS

A. Data Analysis

3.0% of men (699,000) and 6.9% of women (1.671 million) aged 16 and over were victims of domestic abuse in 2021/22 equating to a ratio of two female victims to every on male victim. **For every three victims of domestic abuse, two will be female and one will be male.**



As can be seen, domestic abuse has been falling for both men for some years. These trend figures are for adults between 16 and 59 from March 2005. The current figures of 3.5% men for 2021-22 for that age group and shows a relative narrowing of the gap since they were first measured.[3]

1. Of domestic abuse crimes recorded by the police, 25% were committed against men.
2. Only 4.7% of victims of domestic abuse being supporting by local domestic services by men. This highlights how few men are being supported for local domestic abuse services.
3. Currently in the UK (1 June 2023) there are 43 organizations with 302 refuge or safe house spaces available for men (99 dedicated for men and 203 for men or women). These figures are hugely skewed by one organization with 37 spaces. If these were removed, the spaces would be 42 organizations with 265 places. The medium number per organizations is 4 spaces.
4. Half of the make victims (49%) fail to tell anyone they are a victim of domestic abuse and are two and a half times less likely to tell anyone than female victims (19%).

B. Best Performers

(a) Sweden- Sweden is often considered as a leading country in addressing gender-based violence comprehensively, including violence against men.

[3] June 2023- Produced by Mark Brooks OBE, ManKind Initiative "*Male Victims of Domestic Abuse and Partner Abuse: 70 Key Facts*"

(b) Canada- Canada has implemented robust policies and programs focussed on combating gender-based violence, which includes recognizing and addressing violence against men.

(c) Australia- Australia has made significant strides in acknowledging violence against men and recognizing it as a serious issue.

III. ISSUES FACED

A. Factors Contributing to Violence Against Men

Understanding the societal norms, stereotypes, and cultural factors is crucial for designing effective interventions and support systems. While societal norms and stereotypes may vary across cultures, here are some common factors that can contribute to violence against men.

1. **Masculinity and Gender Expectations:** Societal norms often dictate rigid expectations of masculinity, which can include being strong dominant, and invulnerable. Men who deviate from these expectations may face ridicule, mockery, or societal ostracism. This pressure to conform to traditional gender roles can lead to the perpetration of violence to assert dominance or prove masculinity.
2. **Cultural Norms of silence:** Cultural norms of silence and stoicism can prevent men from seeking help or reporting incidents of violence. Men may fear being stigmatized, emasculated, or not taken seriously when disclosing experiences of abuse. This cultural expectation of self reliance and emotional restraint can exacerbate the underreporting of violence against men.
3. **Stereotypes of Invulnerability:** Men are often portrayed as strong, invulnerable, and able to protect themselves. These stereotypes can create a false perception that men are immune to violence or that they should be able to defend themselves in all situations. As a result, incidents of violence against men may be minimized, overlooked, or dismissed due to these prevailing stereotypes.
4. **Victim Blaming and Societal Disbelief:** Victims of violence, including men, may face victim blaming and societal disbelief when they come forward with their experiences. The notion that men are always perpetrators rather than victims can contribute to a lack of support and empathy for male survivors. This societal disbelief further encourages men from reporting incidents and seeking help.

B. Lack of Legal Protection and Support System

The lack of legal protection and support systems for male victims of violence is a significant

challenge that exacerbates the issue and hinders the effective response to their needs.

1. **Legal Frameworks:** Legal frameworks often focus on addressing violence against women, leaving gaps in the protection and support available for male victims. Laws related to domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment may not adequately recognize male victims, leading to a lack of legal remedies and assistance tailored to their specific experiences.
2. **Underreporting and Stereotypes:** The societal expectation that men are invulnerable or should be able to defend themselves can contribute to underreporting of violence. Stereotypes and social stigma surrounding male victimization may deter men from seeking help or reporting incidents, further reducing their access to legal protection.
3. **Limited Awareness and Training:** Legal professionals, including police, lawyers, and judges, may have limited awareness and training regarding the unique challenges faced by male victims. This can result in insensitivity or dismissive attitudes when male victims seek legal assistance or pursue legal action.
4. **Lack of Support Services:** Support systems, such as shelters, counselling services, and helplines, often focus on women, making it challenging for male victims to access appropriate support. The scarcity of dedicated support services for male victims may leave them without adequate resources or safe spaces to seek help and recover from their experiences.

C. Psychological and Social Consequences Experienced by Men

Men who experience violence can face a range of psychological and social consequences that have a profound impact on their well-being and overall quality of life.

1. **Psychological Trauma:** Men subjected to violence may experience psychological trauma, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression. The trauma can result from physical abuse, sexual assault, or emotional abuse, leading to long-lasting psychological consequences.
2. **Self-Esteem and Identity Issues:** Violence can undermine a man's self-esteem and sense of self-worth. They may question their own strength, masculinity, and ability to protect themselves, leading to identity issues and a loss of confidence.
3. **Relationship Challenges:**Men who have experienced violence may struggle with forming and maintaining healthy relationships. Trust issues, fear of vulnerability, and

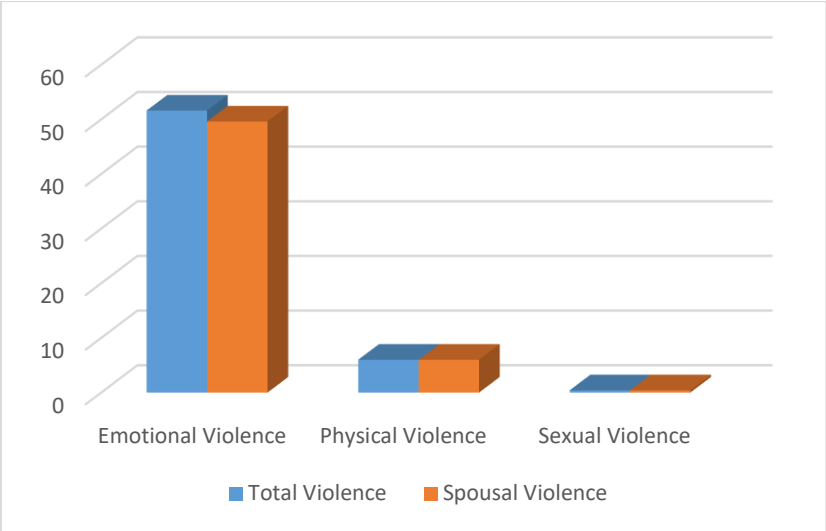
difficulties in expressing emotions can impact their ability to establish intimate connections and maintain healthy social interactions.

4. **Substance Abuse and Risky Behaviours:** Some men may turn to substance abuse or engage in risky behaviours as a copying mechanism to deal with the psychological effects of violence. This can further exacerbate their mental health challenges and lead to additional social consequences, such as strained relationships and legal issues.

IV. STATUS IN INDIA

A. Data Analysis

Domestic violence is not only for women. The present study shows that men are also the victims of violence at the hand of women.



From the above graph, the majority (51.6%) of the male victims experienced emotional violence followed by physical violence (6%), then sexual violence (0.4%) by any female in India.

B. Constitutional Provisions and Legal Framework

The constitutional provisions and legal framework in India play a crucial role in addressing violence against men.

1. **Constitutional Provisions:**

(a) Right to Equality- The Indian Constitution guarantees the right to equality under Article 14, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of gender, are treated equally under the law.

Dr. Ivor Jennings explains,[4] "Equality before the law means that among equals the law should be equal and should be equally administered, that like should be treated alike."

"Equality before law", thus, meansabsence of any special privileges for any particular person. It also strikes at arbitrary powers on the part of the Government. It is, therefore, a negative concept.

Article 7 of the UDHR, proclaimed on December 10, 1948, uses both the expressions. It says: "All are equals before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law."

Hence, the States are at responsibility to make the Statutes applicable uniformly to all. Thus, violation of such laws makes the accused person liable for the offence.

(b) Right to Life and Personal Liberty- Article 21 guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, providing protection against any form of violence or infringement on these fundamental rights.

If the wife commits any offence or threatens to commit any offence against husband it amounts to cruelty and if the wife is taking the advantage of the laws, which accord protection to her, also amounts to cruelty and covered under the violation of fundamental right to life and personal liberty of her husband.

Recently, the Delhi High Court has held that "constant threats of suicide by wife may not have been successful but there cannot be a bigger "Mental Torture" for husband than to be in continuous fear. The High court grant divorce to the husband.

Another landmark cases are related to Section 498 A of IPC. Although the provision is clear enough to make one understand what constitutes cruelty under IPC section 498 A, it sometimes becomes confusing when the same is applied to specific facts of the case. In fact, in the 498-A false percentage is higher than the genuine cases as reflected through conviction rate which reflects its misuse.

In case of *Kahkashan Kausar* v. *State of Bihar*,[5] SA Nazeer and Krishna Murari,JJ. od Hon'ble Apex Court held that the husband's relatives cannot be forced to undergo trial in absence of specific allegations of dowry demand. It was further observed through this judgment on 498-A that, "a criminal trial leading to an eventual acquittal also

[4] Law of the Constitution, 1971, 94. See also *Gauri Shankar* v. *Union of India*, AIR 1995 SC 55; Narender Kumar, *Constitutional Law of India*, 117(2020).
[5] 2022 SCC online SC 162.

inflicts severe scars upon the accused, and such a exercise must therefore be discouraged."

Another landmark judgment passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court is *Rajaram* v. *State of M.P.*[6]Here the victim's husband came up with an appeal against conviction under IPC section 498-A. According to the facts, the victim was brought to the hospital in a burnt condition and lost her life thereafter. Two dying declarations of the victim were recorded by the authorities. The first dying declaration elaborated the acts of burning her with Kerosin oil, wherein, there is no mention of the appellant, i. e. her husband. The second dying declaration did mention previous acts of cruelty, which includes the husband along with other family members. The High court has discredited the second dying declaration, being the only piece of evidence against the husband. Hence, the Court set aside the conviction and sentence for cruelty under section 498-A.

Further important 498-A guidelines were laid down by Hon'ble Rahul Chaturvedi, J. of Allahabad High Court in *Mukesh Bansal* v. *State of U.P.*[7]for a "cooling period" of two months against arrest of accused persons in these cases.[8] Thus, it is directed that No arrest or police action to nab the named accused persons shall be made after lodging of the FIR or complaints without concluding the "Cooling-Period" which is two months from the lodging of the FIR or the complaint. During this "Cooling-Period", the matter would be immediately referred to Family Welfare Committee (hereinafter referred to as FWC) in each district.

2. Legal Framework

(a) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005- From the plain reading of objectives of DV Act is clear that, "The purpose of this Act is to prevent woman only from domestic violence because 'aggrieved person' includes only women, means onlythe men can be prosecuted not the woman. In 21st century by the legislations itself the women are being treated at par with men but there have been many incidences where a woman isinvolved in insult, humiliation, verbal and emotional abuse to men. Men are the victims of domestic abuse. But DV Act gives protection to only women and not for men. Women can also commit the crime. It is the most lethal weapon which women can use against men to extort, exploit and threaten men committing just like terrorism. The DV Act has provisions like right to

[6]2022 SCC online SC 1733.
[7]2022 SCC online SC 395.
[8]*Social Action Forum for Manav Adhikar* v. *Union of India*, Writ Petition (Civil)No. 73 of 2015.

residence regardless of legal right on the property, maintenance. This provision is being misused by the women. 98% of the cases are deemed to be fake and there is no provision in DV Act if a fake case is lodged then there is no provision for punishment for the women. Even in some small disputes, in the name of 'insult', they are ready to raise the complaint under this DV Act and the innocent husbands are obliged to pay maintenance to women. Their punishments start from the filling of FIR to the final disposal of cases. Hence, this Acts needs to be amended with more gender-neutral provisions to prevent its misuse. In *Kamtachi* v. *Laxmi Narayanan,*[9]the Hon'bleSupreme Court has held that there is no limitation to file complaint under the DV Act.

In *Mohd. Zakir v. Smt Shabana & others*[10] the court held that "husband can initiate proceedings under D V Act against his wife and her relatives. The Karnataka High Court held that any person, be it male or female, aggrieved and alleging violation of the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act, can invoke the provisions under the Act. Petition was filed by Mohammed Zakir against dismissal of his complaint filed under the Domestic Violence Act against his wife and her relatives by Addl. City Civil Court, Bangalore. The civil judge was not very impressed with the complaint, as the Act clearly speaks only in favour of women and does not relate any male being suffered by domestic violence".

The High Court noticed that the said issue was subject matter of an appeal before the apex court in the case of *Hirlal P Harsora v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora* wherein "the Supreme Court has struck down a portion of Section 2 (a) on the ground that it is violative of Article 14 of the Constitution and thephrase 'adult male' as appearing in Section 2(q) stood deleted. If the said sub-section is read after deleting the expression 'adult male', it would appear that any person, whether male or female, aggrieved and alleging violation of the provisions of the Act could invoke the provisions under the Act. In that view of the matter, the petitioner's complaint could not have been trashed on the ground that the Act does not contemplate provision for men and it could only be in respect of women".

[9] Criminal Appeal No. 627 of 2022 (Arising out of Special Leave to Appeal (Criminal) No. 2514 of 2021.
[10] Mohd Zakirv. Smt Shabana & others, Criminal Petition No 2351 of 2017 decided on 18th April 2017.

(b) Indian Penal Code (IPC)- The IPC criminalizes various forms of violence that can affect men, such as physical assault, sexual assault, and harassment. Sections like 354, 354A, 375, and 498A provide legal provisions for addressing these offenses.

(c) Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC)- The CrPC outlines the legal procedures for investigation, arrest, and trial of offenses, ensuring that due process is followed when violence against men is reported.

3. Gender-Neutral Laws:

(a) Some laws, such as the **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act**, do not differentiate between male and female victims, ensuring equal protection for all children.

(b) The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, extends protection to both women and men who experience workplace harassment.[11]

V. ROLE OF JUDICIARY

"In the traditional concept of judiciary, the judge is depicted by an image, where the eyes of the judge are covered by dark cloth with hands holding the balance. This obviously means that the judges are supposed to have a very open mind one very issue without having any personal opinions at all"

- N.S. Venkataraman.[12]

Justice Y.K.Sabharwal[13] in his 'Role of Judiciary in Good Governance' express that "The judicial system has an important role to play ultimately inensuring better public governance. There may be a plethora of regulations, rules and procedures but when disputes arise, they have to be settled in a court of law. There is no area where the judgments of Supreme Court have not played a significant contribution in the governance–good governance–whether it be–environment, human rights, gender justice, education, minorities, police reforms, elections and limits on constituent powers of Parliament to amend the Constitution".

[11] Anagha Sarpotdar; "*Sexual Harassment of Women: Reflections on the Private Sector*"

[12] **N.S. VENKATARAMAN**, *"Changing role of the Indian judiciary"*, PUCL bulletin, Published on April 2004, *available at*-http://www.pucl.org/Topics/Law/2004/changing-role.htm, (last visited on - Oct.15th,2016).

[13] **JUSTICEY.K.SABHARWAL**,*"ChiefJusticeofIndia"*,RoleofJudiciaryinGoodGovernance,*availableat*https://highcourtchd.gov.in/sub_pages/left_menu/publish/articles/articles_pdf/goodgovernance.pdf,(lastvisitedon-Oct.18th,2016).

The judiciary plays a vital role in interpreting and enforcing laws related to violence against men. Landmark judgments have helped in expanding the understanding and recognition of male victimization and strengthening legal protection for men. Judicial pronouncements have highlighted the importance of gender neutrality, ensuring that laws and legal procedures are applied without bias, irrespective of the gender of the victim.

In *K.Srinivasv. K. Sunita*[14] it was held that "it is settled that if a false criminal complaint is preferred by either spouse it would invariably and indubitably constitute matrimonial cruelty and would entitle the other spouse to claim a divorce. Hence it is held that if the complaint filed by the wife against the husband under section 498-A of IPC and other related provisions is dismissed on merits and the husband and his family members are acquitted, then it is clear that the complaint filed by the wife against the husband was a false complaint".[15]

In *Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar & Anr*[16], the Supreme Court held that "women were increasingly using the anti-dowry laws to harass their in-laws and forced police to arrest their husband and relatives on mere lodging of a complaint under Section498A of the IPC".

Although the legislature enacted the dowry cases excellent tool to fight back harassment on women in marital homes, they also signaled out the dowry harassment cases as the highly abused and misused provision.

Justice Prasad, in his judgment said there had been a considerable increase indowry harassment cases in India in the last few years. "The fact that Section498A is a cognizable and non-bailable offence has lent it a dubious place ofpride amongst the provisions that are used as weapons rather than shield by disgruntled wives, he said. He further added, the simplest way to harass is to get the husband and his relatives arrested under this provision. In a quite number of cases, bed-ridden grand-fathers and grandmothers of the husbands, their sisters living abroad for decades are arrested.

Concerns have been raised regarding the stringent anti-dowry laws that are widely misused by some women to harass or blackmail their in-laws. These apprehensions have not only been expressed by courts but even women's activists

[14] [Civil Appeal No. 1213 of 2006]
[15] *K. Srinivas Rao* v. *D.A. Deepa*, 2013(5) SCC 226.
[16] (2014)8 SCC 273

have discovered the same. It therefore became necessary for the law to take this reality into account. There's a learning check for all of us as social ills can't be stroked out overnight simply by enacting laws, as India generally does that. Society as a whole needs to join the movement against the ills"[17].

In *Sarithav. R. Ramachandra*[18] the Andhra Pradesh High Court never expected that "women in this country would lead to filing false Criminal Cases against In-Laws just to take personal grudges or revenge. This is in clear terms the misuse of the beneficial provision stated for the women from unscrupulous husbands. It is for the law commission and the parliament now to take a step to either continue that provision (section498A IPC) in the same for mort to make the offense itself non-cognizable and bailable so that ill-educated women of India do not misuse the provision to harass innocent people".

Again in *B. Shri Mangesh Balkrushna Bhoir v. Sau. Leena Mangesh Bhoir*[19]thecourt finds that "In spite of trial court not mentioning that 498a filed by womenwas false, Hon Bombay HC granted the divorce to the man. HC discovered thatthe women had filed false case and treated her husband cruelly. Thus, when man filed it finally reached Bombay HC and justice was attained".

But this strategy of woman is changed no was The Supreme Court has given a clear verdict in case of *Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India*,[20] that "with the misuse of the provision of IPC section 498A, new legal terrorism has been unleashed. The provision is intended to be used as shield and not assassins' weapon. There is no question in eventually investigating with the agencies and Courts that deal with these allegations. They cannot follow any straight forward formula in such matters. They cannot just lose sight of that ultimate objectives that every legal system should arrive at truth, punish the guilty and protect theinnocent".

Hence, we can say that judiciary is playing its vital role in protection of human rights of husbands as well.

[17] See **498A GLADIATOR, "***SC: dowry law the most misused, abused law in India. Police should follow 9 point checklist as per 41 Cr.P.C,"* Gladiator-Fighting Legal Terrorism, Published on-Jul.3rd, 2014, *available at* - https://terminatorak.wordpress.com/category/judgments/498a-judgments/, (lastvisitedon-Jul.5th,2015).
[18]Sarithav. R. Ramachandra,2002(6) ALD 319,2002(4) ALT59, I (2003) DMC 37.
[19]*Shri Mangesh Balkrushna Bhoir*v. *Sau. Leena Mangesh Bhoir,* A.I.R. 2016 (NOC) 364 Bom.
[20]Writ Petition (civil) 141 of 2005

VI. EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND ROLE OF NGOS

Evaluating the effectiveness of existing government schemes and the role of NGOs in providing support to male victims of violence is essential for assessing the progress and identifying areas for improvement.

1. **Government Schemes:**

   (a) One Stop Centres (OSCs) - OSCs established under the Ministry of Women and Child Developmentaim to provide support and assistance to women affected by violence, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment. Though primarily aimed at women, these centres are meant to be accessible to all, including male victims seeking support.

   (b) Legal Aid- The Indian government provides legal aid and assistance to underprivileged individuals, including male victims, through schemes like the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). Legal aid can help male victims navigate the legal process and access justice.

   (c) Swadhar Greh-Swadhar Greh scheme caters to women in difficult circumstances, such as those affected by violence, trafficking, or desertion. Though primarily focused on women male victims may receive support through related schemes if they meet certain criteria.

VII. ROLE OF NGOS:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in India often play a significant role in providing support to men who are a victim of violence.

(a) Counselling and Helplines- NGOs may run helplines and counselling centres to provide emotional support, guidance, and a safe space for male victims to share their experience and seek help.

(b) Shelter and Rehabilitation- Some NGOs operate shelters or rehabilitation centres where male victims can find temporary accommodation and support while they cope with the aftermath of violence.

(c) Legal Aid and Advocacy- NGOs can offer legal assistance, help male victims understand their rights, and advocate for gender-inclusive policies and laws that protect male victims of violence.

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(d) Research and Data Collection-NGOs may undertake research to highlight the prevalence and impact of violence against men and generate data to inform policies and interventions.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

Based on comprehensive reports and best practices, here are some recommendations to improve support for male victims of violence:

1. Strengthen Legal Framework:

(a) Ensure Gender-Neutral Laws- Review and amend existing laws to ensure that they provide equal protection and support for male victims of violence.

(b) Address Gaps in Legislation- Identify and address any gaps in the legal framework that may hinder the effective prosecution of offenders and provision of support to male victims.

(c) Train Legal Professionals- Provide comprehensive training to legal professionals, including police, lawyers, and judges, to sensitize them about the unique challenges faced by male victims and to ensure fair and sensitive treatment during legal proceedings.

2. Enhance Support Services:

(a) Establish Dedicated Support Helplines- Set up helplines specifically tailored to address the needs of male victims of violence, providing them with access to information, counselling, and support.

(b) Expand Counselling Services- Increase the availability of counselling services that specifically cater to male victims, ensuring that they have a safe space to discuss their experiences and receive emotional support.

(c) Establish Safe Shelter Facilities-Create safe shelter facilities that are accessible to male victims of violence, providing them with temporary accommodation, protection, and resources to rebuild their lives.

3. Raise Awareness and Challenge Stereotypes:

(a) Conduct Awareness Campaigns- Launch targeted awareness campaigns to challenge societal stereotypes and myths surrounding male victimization, promoting a more inclusive understanding of gender-based violence.

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(b) Educate the Public- Integrate education on violence against men into school curricula and community programs, fostering a culture of empathy, respect, and gender equality.

(c) Engage the Media- Collaborate with medic organizations to ensure accurate and responsible reporting on violence against men, avoiding sensationalism and reinforcing stereotypes.

Legal reforms aim to address the existing gaps in the legal framework and ensure that male victims receive adequate protection, support, and access to justice. To enhance the protection of male victims, the following are the legal reforms to be considered:

1. **Gender-Neutral Definitions:** Amend existing laws to include gender-neutral definitions of violence, such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment, to ensure that male victims are explicitly covered under these provisions. This will provide equal legal protection and support for both men and female victims.
2. **Specialized Courts or Tribunals:** Establish specialized courts or tribunals to handle cases of violence against men, equipped with judges and legal professionals trained in addressing the unique challenges faced by male victims. These can ensure sensitive handling of cases and expedite the judicial process.
3. **Protection Orders:** Introduce provisions for protection orders that can be issued in favour of male victims, like those available for female victims. These orders can provide immediate protection and prohibit the perpetrator from approaching or contacting the victim.
4. **Enhanced Reporting Mechanisms:** Develop and implement mechanisms that facilitate the reporting of violence against men, ensuring that male victims feel comfortable and supported when coming forward. This can include anonymous reporting options, helplines, and online platforms dedicated to reporting incidents.
5. **Strengthening Witness Protection:** Strengthen witness protection measures to ensure the safety and well-being of male victims during and after legal proceedings. This can include provisions for anonymous testimony, relocation assistance, and security measures to mitigate the risks faced by male victims who report violence.

Advocating for awareness campaigns and educational initiatives is instrumental in challenging societal stereotypes, increasing empathy, and creating a supportive environment for male victims of violence. By challenging these stereotypes, we can foster a more inclusive

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understanding of gender-based violence. Here are some key points to advocate for awareness campaigns and educational initiatives.

1. **Raise Public Awareness:** Launch targeted awareness campaigns to educate the public about the realities of violence against men. These campaigns should highlight the prevalence, impact, and consequences of violence, as well as the unique challenges faced by male victims.
2. **Dispel Myths and Stereotypes:** Challenge prevailing myths and stereotypes that perpetuate the notion that men cannot be victims of violence or that they should be able to protect themselves. Provide information and personal stories to dispel these misconceptions.
3. **Engage Multiple Channels:** Utilize diverse communication channels, including social media, television, and public events, to reach a wide audience and maximize the impact of awareness campaigns. Collaborate with media organizations to ensure responsible reporting and accurate representation of male victims.
4. **Education and School Curriculum:** Incorporate education on gender-based violence, including violence against men, into school curricula. Teach students about healthy relationships, consent, and respectful behaviour to foster a culture of empathy and gender equality from an early age.
5. **Sensitize Professionals:** Conduct training programs for professionals in sectors such as education, healthcare, and social work. This training should focus on recognizing the signs of violence against men, responding sensitively, and providing support to male victims.

Implementing robust support systems and counselling services for male victims is crucial for addressing the psychological, emotional, and practical needs of survivors. Here are key-points to discuss the significance of these support systems.

1. **Addressing Unique Needs:** Support systems and counselling services designated for male victims recognize and address their unique needs, experiences, and challenges. These services provide a safe and empathetic environment where male survivors can share their experiences, express emotions, and receive appropriate guidance and support.
2. **Validation and Empowerment:** Support systems and counselling services validate the experiences of male victims, affirming that their experiences are real and deserving of

attention. This validation helps empower male survivors, enabling them to process their trauma, regain control over their lives, and move towards healing and recovery.

3. **Emotional Support and Copying Strategies:** Counselling services often a platform for male victims to explore and process their emotions, which may include anger, guilt, or fear. Mental health professionals can provide copying strategies, emotional regulation techniques, and tools to help male victims navigate the emotional aftermath of violence.
4. **Breaking the Silence and Overcoming Stigma:** Support systems and counselling services provide an avenue for male victims to break the silence surrounding their experiences and overcome societal stigma. By creating safe spaces and fostering a non-judgmental atmosphere, these services encourage male survivors to share their stories, seek help, and build a support network.
5. **Holistic Healing:** Support systems and counselling services aim for holistic healing, addressing not only the psychological aspects but also the physical social, and practical needs of male victims. This can include referrals to medical services, legal aid, employment assistance, housing support, and other resources that contribute to their overall well-being and recovery.

IX. CONCLUSION

The research paper focussed on unveiling the truth about unheard and uncounted violence against men in India. The main findings and insights can be summarized as follows:

1. **Prevalence and Impact:** The research paper revealed that violence against men is a significant issue in India, often overlooked and underreported. It highlighted the various forms of violence that men can experience, including physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse, and the detrimental impact it has on their well-being and quality of life.
2. **Legal and Institutional Framework:** The research paper examined the existing legal and institutional frameworks in India, identifying gaps and challenges in the protection and support available to male victims. It emphasized the need for gender-neutral laws, specialized courts, and comprehensive support services tailored to the unique needs of male victims.
3. **Societal Norms and Stereotypes:** The research paper explored the societal norms, stereotypes, and cultural factors that contribute to the underreporting and neglect of

violence against men. It emphasized the need to challenge rapid gender norms, raise awareness, and promote a more inclusive understanding of gender-based violence.

Based on these findings and insights, the research paper highlighted the need to align targets with achievable goals. It emphasized the importance of setting realistic and measurable targets that can be effectively implemented to address violence against men. Aligning targets with achievable goals ensures progress and tangible outcomes in protecting and supporting male victims.

The research paper called for accelerated actions and collaboration between stakeholders. It emphasized that addressing violence against men requires a multi-sectoral approach, involving government agencies, NGOs, legal professionals, and civil society organizations. Collaboration and collective efforts are essential to create comprehensive support systems, raise awareness, and implement effective interventions.

Furthermore, the research paper emphasized the importance of recognizing and addressing the unheard and uncounted violence faced by men. It highlighted that gender-based violence is not exclusive to women and that men also experience significant harm. Recognizing and addressing this issue promotes a more inclusive and equitable approach to combat violence, ensuring the well-being and safety of all individuals, regardless of their gender.

In conclusion, the research paper shed light on the hidden and uncounted violence against men in India. It stressed the need for aligning targets with achievable goals, calling for accelerated actions and collaboration between stakeholders. By recognizing and addressing the unheard and uncounted violence faced by men, we can strive towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

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