

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM NCT OF DELHI AND CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL LEGAL ANALYSIS

**Author: MEGHNA**

Department of Law, Manav Rachna University,  
Faridabad, India, ORCHID ID: 0009-0006-8589-3291,  
Email Id: meghna1135@gmail.com

**Co-author: Dr. SHAHARYAR ASAF KHAN**

Department of Law, Manav Rachna University, Faridabad, India,  
Email Id: shaharyarasafkhan@mru.edu.in

### Abstract

India positions itself as a democratic nation committed to the principle of equality, a value prominently reflected in the Preamble of its Constitution. Yet, in practice, there are several domains where this ideal remains unfulfilled, one of which is domestic violence. Domestic violence has been conceptualized as a gender-based issue that primarily impacts women. However, emerging researches reveal that men, too, experience abuse within intimate relationships. Despite the growing recognition, male victims remain largely overlooked, held back by legislative gaps, socio-cultural taboos, and ingrained biases within the justice system. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) offers protection exclusively to women, leaving male victims without any formal legal remedy. Moreover, the alleged misuse and gender-specific nature of provisions such as Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) has further intensified the systemic imbalance. In contrast, nations like the United States of America and United Kingdom have adopted gender-neutral domestic violence laws, ensuring that support and protection are available to all victims irrespective of their gender. This study seeks to bring attention to the often-ignored issue of domestic violence against men through empirical methodological research conducted in NCT of Delhi and complemented by comparative legal analysis of law addressing domestic violence in India with USA and UK. It examines how these countries recognize and respond to male victimhood, while highlighting the numerous barriers male victims face, including cultural stigma, inadequate legal safeguards, and the absence of appropriate support systems. It calls for urgent reforms in India's domestic violence laws, particularly by amending the PWDVA, enacting gender-neutral legislation, and establishing dedicated services for men.

**Keywords:** domestic violence, intimate partner violence, male victimhood, gender bias, criminal justice system

**Paper Type-** Research Paper

### Introduction:

Domestic violence against men remains a deeply complex and frequently overlooked issue, both in India and around the world. While public discourse and legislation often centre around violence against women, it is equally important to recognize that men can also be victims of such abuse. India has been a male-dominant society from ages, and it is hard to believe that male can be a victim and female a perpetrator (Malik & Nadda, 2019). Domestic violence is not

confined to any one gender, age group, or relationship type, it can occur between spouses, partners, family members, and even in same-sex relationships. Abuse isn't limited to just physical harm, it also includes emotional and psychological harm, financial dependency, social isolation, and, in some cases, forced sexual activity. It cuts across social and economic boundaries and can be inflicted by those in positions of power or, conversely, by those who feel powerless and act out in response to perceived control.

What makes domestic violence especially insidious is its hidden nature. Much of it unfolds behind closed doors, within homes that are meant to be safe havens. Socio-cultural norms, power imbalances, and rigid gender roles often prevent victims, especially men, from acknowledging the abuse, let alone reporting it. In numerous instances, male victims are met with disbelief or ridicule, which further discourages them. This makes domestic violence not only a personal and psychological struggle, but also a deeply entrenched social issue that demands a broader and more inclusive understanding.

### **Material and Method:**

The present study adopts a mixed approach, as it combines quantitative empirical research method with doctrinal and comparative legal research.

#### Empirical research method:

The quantitative empirical research approach is adopted to systematically collect first-hand data from respondents to examine the nature, prevalence and public perception regarding domestic violence against men in India and alleged misuse of statutory provisions. The study employs purposive and snowball sampling technique. The study was conducted on sample of 251 respondents, including 158 male and 93 female participants from NCT of Delhi region, to ensure representation of both genders. The respondents were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study through an online platform, as they were informed about the purpose of study. No personal identifying information was collected, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to include close-ended and Likert scale questions. The data was compiled and analysed using percentage analysis and graphical representations. This helped in interpreting trends and comparing responses.

#### Comparative Legal Analysis:

A doctrinal research method is adopted to analyse laws governing domestic violence in India, judicial interpretations and legislative measures undertaken to address this issue. This is followed by a comparative analysis of domestic violence laws in India, USA, UK. This helps in identifying similarities and differences among these legislations and enables critical analysis of the challenges associated with their implications.

### **Result and Findings:**

The present study was conducted on a sample of 251 respondents using purposive and snowball sampling to assess perception and societal responses related to domestic violence against men in India. Chi-square test is applied for the analysing the data.

#### Socio-Demographic characteristics of Respondents

The majority of respondents, 83 (33.07%) belonged to 18-28 years age group, followed by 67 (26.69%) of 29-38 years age group, 58 (23.11%) of 39-48 years age group, 35 (13.95%) of 49-58 years age group, while the remaining participants, 8 (3.19%) were above 58 years. In terms of professional background, 76 respondents (30.28%) were Academician, 71 respondents (28.30%) were general public from non-legal profession, 56 respondents (22.31%) were lawyers and

advocates and lastly, 48 respondents (19.12%) were law students. Regarding gender distribution 158 respondents were male, while 93 were female.

#### Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Men and Social Response

A significant proportion of respondents 195 (77.69%) acknowledged that wife can commit act of violence against her husband. However, 36 respondents comprising 14.34% disagreed with the statement and 20 respondents (7.97%) remained neutral on the statement. When asked about nature of violence committed against men, 185 respondents, comprising 77.7% acknowledged that emotional abuse is committed, followed by 181 respondents (72.11%) acknowledged verbal abuse, 146 respondents comprising 58.17% acknowledged economic abuse, 144 respondents (57.31%) coercion and threat, 99 respondents (39.44%) acknowledged that physical violence and 96 respondents (38.98%) acknowledged sexual violence is committed against men, while 15 respondents comprising 5% respondents denied such exposure. However, when asked about the frequency of occurrence of such abuse 42.9% considered such incidents as rare, 20.4% as occasional, while 22.4% stated that they have never encountered such cases. This suggests that although such abuse against men may not be common, recurring and low frequency abuse is present in domestic settings.

A majority of respondents, 176 (70.4%) believed that men are unable to talk openly about the violence committed against them by their female partners, attributing this primarily to the perceived lack of seriousness.

#### Factors Contributing to Under-Reporting

The most common factor cited for under-reporting was social and cultural stigma surrounding masculinity as stated by 183 (72.9%) respondents, followed by fear of counter case by their partners cited by 158 (62.9%) respondents, gender stereotypes cited by 137 (54.6%), limited legal protection to the male victims cited by 132 (52.4%) respondents, while 21 respondents comprising 8.4% chose cannot say. This shows substantial influence of social norms and legal constraints in shaping reporting behaviour among victims.

#### Legal Framework and Perceived Misuse

With regard to adequacy of existing legal framework in addressing domestic violence against men, a substantial proportion of respondents, 178 (71%) expressed dissatisfaction as majority of respondent 122 comprising 48.7% strongly disagreed and 56 (22.3%) somewhat disagreed that sufficient legal remedies are available. When asked if the participants believe that male victims of domestic violence get justice in India, 182 respondents expressed their disagreement with the statement. Here, 146 (50%) respondents disagreed and 36 (12.5%) strongly disagreed.

When asked about the alleged misuse of existing laws, an overwhelming number of respondents, 234(93.23%) reported awareness of instances where Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and similar provisions of BNS are misused. A total number of 220 respondents (87.65%) believed that false cases are being filed by wives against their husbands. The most common reasons for such misuse include divorce related conflicts, as cited by 168 respondents (66.93%), followed by revenge against husband and in-laws as stated by 165 (65.74%) respondents, seeking financial advantage as cited by 145 (57.77%), misguided legal advice stated by 130(51.79%) respondents and family pressure stated by 92 (36.65%), while 12 responded comprising 4.78% of the population believed that these laws are not being misused.

### Discussion:

In India, despite the availability of data on domestic violence against men, public perception continues to treat such offences as gender-specific, with only women being the victims. However, Malik and Nadda (2019) highlight that male victimization is far from rare. In their study conducted in Rohtak, Delhi, it was found that out of 1,000 male participants, 51.5% reported experiencing violence by their spouses. While the majority (49.6%) reported emotional abuse, instances of physical (0.6%) and sexual violence (0.4%) were also reported by them. Multiple reports, based on small-scale studies, data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), and international news sources, indicate that spousal violence against men is not uncommon in India (Desai, 2017).

Moreover, the National Family Health Survey (2005-06) revealed that nearly 60 lakh women committed assault against their husbands without any provocation. However, men are more likely to experience violence by the relatives and family members of their wife than the wife herself.

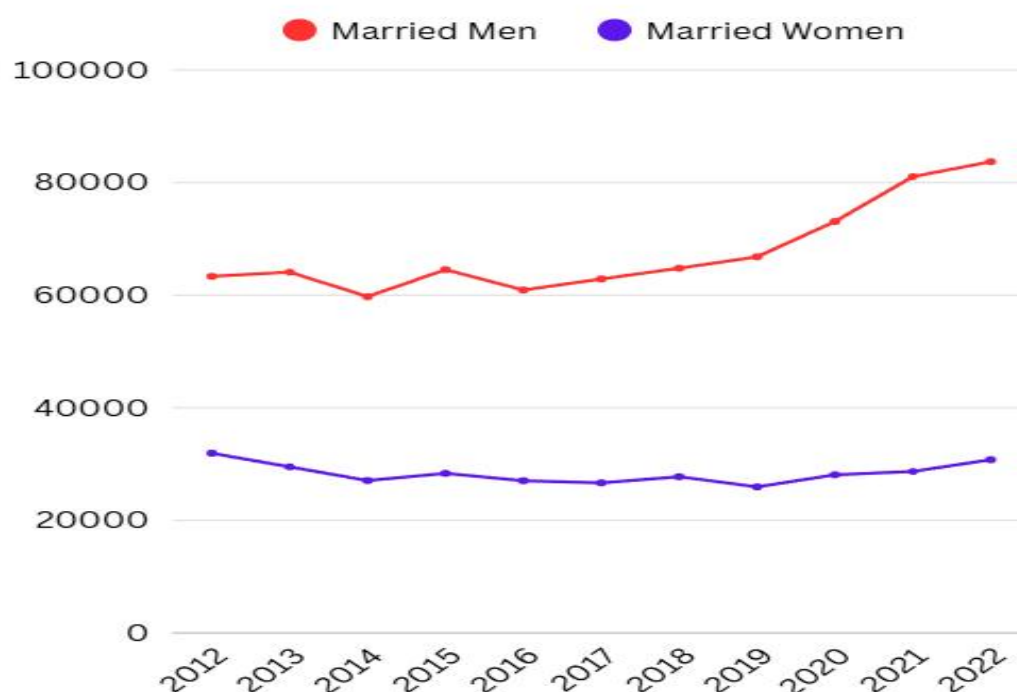
According to NCRB reports, in recent years, the number of suicide rate among married men in India has increased drastically. Statistics shows every year approximately 70% suicide among men are committed by those who are married. The report further highlighted that among men aged between 18 and 45, family problems were the biggest reported cause of suicide. More importantly, incidents of suicide due to family problems and mental torture are substantially higher in males compared to females (NCRB, 2022; NCRB,2023)

**Table 1: Number of suicides among married men and married women in India (2012-2022)**

| Year | Married Men | Married Women |
|------|-------------|---------------|
| 2012 | 63343       | 31921         |
| 2013 | 64098       | 29491         |
| 2014 | 59744       | 27064         |
| 2015 | 64534       | 28344         |
| 2016 | 60914       | 27030         |
| 2017 | 62880       | 26656         |
| 2018 | 64791       | 27742         |
| 2019 | 66815       | 25941         |
| 2020 | 73093       | 28085         |
| 2021 | 81063       | 28680         |
| 2022 | 83713       | 30771         |

Source: National Crime Records Bureau (2012-2022)

**Figure 1: Trends in suicide rates among married men and married women in India (2012–2022)**



(Data Source: NCRB and ADSI Annual Reports, 2012–2022)

The figure illustrates a comparative number of suicides counts among married men and married women over a period of 11 years (2012–2022). A consistently higher incidence is observed among married men across all years, with the gender disparity growing significantly after 2019 period. While the NCRB categorizes the primary reasons for such suicides as “family problems” and “marital disputes,” these categories may conceal more complex underlying factors, including forms of domestic abuse against men. Unlike female victims, whose experiences with domestic violence are increasingly documented and legally recognized, male victims often experience social and institutional barriers to reporting abuse. As a result, what is officially recorded as a family issue may, in reality, reflect the unseen burden of domestic distress and abuse that men often suffer in silence.

The empirical survey conducted in NCT of Delhi, data from NCRB, 2007 Report from National Family Health Survey and other relevant evidences directly and indirectly indicates prevalence of Domestic Violence against Men in India. Despite these evidences, India’s legal system fails to recognise these male victims.

### **Existing legal frameworks dealing with Domestic Violence**

Over the years, India has made a significant progress in addressing domestic violence through laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and provisions under the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). However, what remains largely unaddressed is the reality that men, too, can be victims of domestic abuse. The existing laws, especially the BNS, is incapable of protecting a male victim against domestic violence completely. To better

understand the existing legal landscape, it's important to look at the key laws in India that address domestic violence.

#### Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act

Enacted in 2005, this Act was introduced by the Indian Parliament with the intent of safeguarding women from domestic abuse. The Act provides for protection orders and financial compensation, extending its scope beyond married women to include those in live-in relationships also. However, the law doesn't provide similar legal protections to men or individuals in same-sex relationships. This creates a critical legal gap, leaving male victims without the legal tools they may need to escape such abusive environments.

#### Section 85 of the BNS

This provision has long served as a cornerstone in addressing cruelty toward married women, especially in cases involving dowry. While the law has undoubtedly helped many women escape violence, it remains explicitly gender-specific and offers no relief to men who experience similar emotional, physical, or financial abuse in marriage. The language of statute effectively prevents male victims from filing complaints under this section. Furthermore, there is growing concern regarding its potential misuse, with false allegations in some cases resulting in serious legal and social consequences for men.

#### Section 80 of the BNS

This provision criminalises dowry-related deaths and is invoked when a woman dies under unnatural circumstances within seven years of marriage and where there is evidence of dowry-related harassment. While the law effectively addresses a deeply rooted issue in Indian society, it only recognizes women as potential victims. Men who may experience similar harassment or coercion in domestic relationships are not even part of the legal conversation.

#### Criminal Force and Assault

Sections 128 to 131 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023) address the offence of criminal force and assault, including acts done with the intent to cause fear of injury or to actually inflict harm. These provisions criminalise the use of force against another person without consent, even in the absence of serious physical harm. Men who experience aggression or threatening within domestic spaces can seek protection under these sections. However, it is important to recognise that emotional violence is a major component of abuse experienced by men. Sarkar, Dsouza, and Dasgupta (2007) found that approximately 85% of male respondents reported experiencing psychological violence in intimate relationships.

#### Wrongful Restraint and Confinement

Sections 126 and 127 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) deal with the offences of wrongful restraint and wrongful confinement, respectively, wherein an individual is illegally prevented from exercising their right to move freely or is confined against their will. In the context of domestic violence against men, such action may manifest as restrictions on access to financial resources, communication, or social mobility, often imposed by the spouse or their relatives. While women have Section 85 as a protective mechanism specifically addressing cruelty by the husband or his family, men lack a parallel legal remedy, even though the abuse they experience may be equally severe.

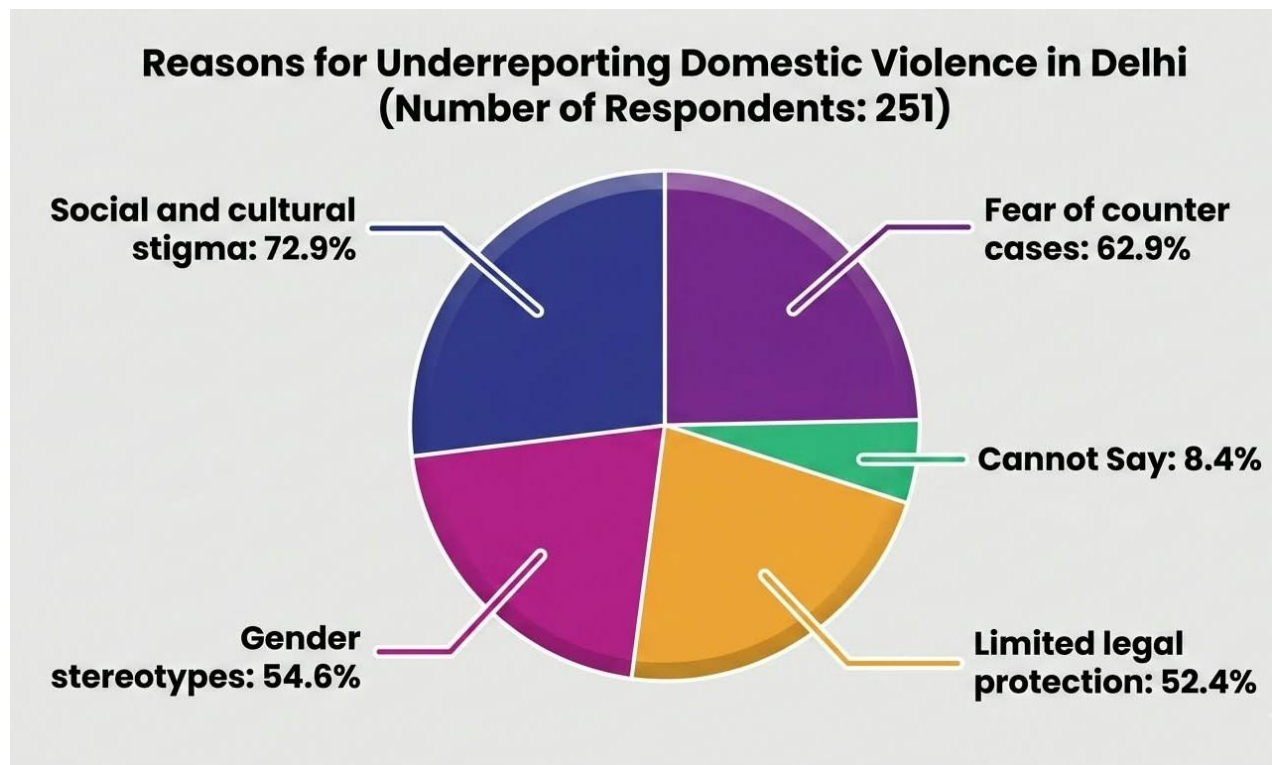
This pattern reveals an implicit assumption that under the Indian law only women can be victims of domestic violence. What may have begun as a targeted policy response to protect women now risks violating the principles of equality, as it fails to acknowledge other categories of victims of domestic abuse.

### Challenges faced by male victims

#### I Underreporting and Stigma

The present study suggests that domestic violence against men remains significantly underreported in India. The most common reason found was cultural expectations of masculinity and strength, social stigma and lack of legal recognition (as shown in Figure 2). The fear of ridicule, shame, and lack of acceptance often deter male victims from disclosing their experiences or seeking help.

**Figure 2: Reasons for underreporting of domestic violence among male victims:**



*The figure represents the percentage distribution of reasons reported by respondents for underreporting of domestic violence incidents, based on data obtained from structured questionnaire survey.*

#### II Legal Gaps

Despite the growing recognition of domestic violence against men, the Indian laws continue to prioritize the protection of women. The primary legislative framework addressing domestic abuse, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is designed exclusively to safeguard women, offering them civil remedies such as protection orders, residence rights, and maintenance. However, this statute does not extend similar legal protection to men who may

experience physical, emotional, or economic abuse within intimate relationships. While the Supreme Court has made progressive, gender-neutral interpretations of certain provisions, no comprehensive legislation has been enacted to address or protect male victims of domestic violence.

### III Gender Biasness and Stereotypes

According to Malik & Nadda (2019), the prevailing assumptions that men are always perpetrators and women are always victims hinder male survivors from being recognized and supported. Such biasness contributes to systemic neglect and social exclusion.

### IV Lack of Support Services

Domestic violence is not only a social concern, but also a significant legal issue. However, the male victims often find themselves without appropriate support system. The protections and reliefs, such as, protection order, shelter homes, compensation available under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 are not extended to men. Furthermore, support services such as helplines, shelter homes, and psychological counselling remain scarce for male victims, leaving them isolated during times of crisis.

## Judicial and Legislative development

### I Emerging Judicial Recognition and Legislative Shifts

In recent years, Indian courts have begun to acknowledge the limitations of a strictly gendered approach to domestic violence. A notable example is the landmark case of *Hiral P. Harsora & Ors v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora* (2016), where the Supreme Court of India struck down the phrase “adult male” from Section 2(q) of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. This historic judgment broadened the scope of the Act by allowing victims to file complaints not only against adult male members, but also against female relatives and non-adult males. This decision marked an important shift in acknowledging that abuse can come from both men and women within domestic settings.

In *Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India* (2005), the Delhi High Court acknowledged that domestic violence is not a gender-exclusive phenomenon, and recognized its impact on individuals across all gender identities. The Court emphasized the need for a more inclusive and balanced legal framework that accommodates the realities of all victims.

Similarly, in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh* (2017), the Supreme Court expressed concern over the one-sided nature of existing domestic violence laws and highlighted the risk of their misuse. The Court urged the legislature to consider a more equitable legal model that safeguards the rights of all individuals, irrespective of gender.

### II Legislative Proposals

In recent years, several private member bills have been introduced in the Indian Parliament advocating for gender-neutral domestic violence laws. These proposals aim to amend the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, to extend legal protection to all victims of domestic abuse irrespective of gender, while still retaining special safeguards for women, who remain the most frequently affected demographic (Gupta & Wamankar, 2025).

### III Law Commission and Policy Discussions

Although the Law Commission of India has not yet issued a comprehensive report specifically addressing gender neutrality in domestic violence laws, various parliamentary committees and academic reviews have acknowledged the pressing need for reform. These discussions signal a slow but important shift towards a more inclusive and equitable legal understanding of domestic abuse in India (Gupta & Wamankar, 2025).

### **Comparative Analysis with USA and UK**

Domestic violence remains a serious issue across the world. Studies from around the world show that there is a notable number of men who face domestic violence, although their experiences are reported less frequently than those of women. While some countries are making efforts to build a gender-inclusive legal system, others still continue to focus mainly on protecting women, leaving male victims without adequate support. The following section compares how different countries address domestic violence against men.

#### **I United States of America**

The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) found that nearly one in every four men has experienced some form of violence from an intimate partner. This includes physical harm, sexual violence, or stalking, with or without injuries. This number is surprisingly high, but many men do not ask for help. One of the main reasons is the social stigma around domestic violence, which often makes people think that only women are victims. Because of this belief, men may feel ashamed or afraid to speak up about the abuse they face.

In the United States, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), 1994 was originally enacted to protect women from domestic violence and sexual assault. However, in 2013, the law was amended to be more gender-neutral. Now the Act recognizes men as victims of Intimate Partner Violence and provides them access to services like shelters, legal help, and financial support funded by the government. Research shows that many men do use these services when they need help.

Despite these positive changes, the stigma against male victims remains strong. Many men still feel hesitant to report abuse or seek assistance because society often expects men to be strong and not vulnerable. In addition, most of the public discussions and laws around domestic violence still focus mainly on women, which can make male victims feel invisible and unsupported.

#### **II United Kingdom**

According to the Mankind Initiative, approximately 40% of domestic abuse victims in the UK are men. Moreover, the organisation reports that 58.9% of men contacting their helpline had never previously disclosed their abuse, and 64% stated they would not have called if the helpline had not offered anonymity. This highlights that many men suffer in silence because society expects them to be tough and not show any sign of vulnerability or ask for help.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 marks a significant step forward in the UK's approach to domestic violence. It provides protection for all victims, regardless of their gender. The Act allows victims to request Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs) and offers safeguards against coercive control, including economic and emotional abuse. It is important to note that these protections and services are explicitly available to men, who make up around 40% of victims in the country.

### **Differences and Similarities in approach of these countries:**

Across these nations, the core distinction lies in the extent to which legal protections extend to male victims of domestic violence. Countries like the United States and United Kingdom have adopted gender-neutral legal frameworks, allowing all victims of domestic violence, regardless of gender, access to protection and support. Whereas, India continues to approach domestic violence primarily through a women-centric lens.

A common thread across most legal systems is the growing awareness, either expressly in law or implied through judicial interpretation that men, too, can be victims of domestic abuse. Despite this progress, cultural and societal barriers continue to obstruct change. In India

traditional gender roles discourage men from speaking out or seeking help, reinforcing silence and underreporting.

### **Lesson for India**

International experiences from countries like the United States and United Kingdom offer important lessons for India in addressing domestic violence against men. These countries have built legal systems that protect all victims of abuse, without ignoring the fact that women are still more frequently affected. India can learn from their approaches to create a more balanced and inclusive legal framework.

#### **I Gender-Neutral Legal Reforms**

The domestic violence laws of USA and UK have been revised to ensure that men have equal access to protection and legal remedies. Both nations recognize that domestic abuse is not limited to women and that men can also be victims. India's current law, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), is limited to protecting women only. Amending this law to incorporate gender-neutral provisions would allow male victims to seek help and justice without any discrimination. Such reforms would not only uphold the constitutional promise of equality under Article 14 of the Constitution of India, but also help reduce misuse based on gender stereotypes and create a fairer legal system.

#### **II Establishing Support Centres and Helplines for Men**

Another key lesson is the need for establishing dedicated support services for male victims. It is essential that support is not only promised in laws but also effectively delivered in practice. Setting up shelters, helplines, and counseling centres specifically for men who suffer from domestic abuse would provide safe spaces, legal guidance, and psychological help to the victims. India currently lacks sufficient resources tailored to male victims.

#### **III Awareness and Education to Break Social Stigma**

One of the most significant barriers men face worldwide, including in India, is the stigma attached to being a male victim of domestic violence. Deep-rooted social norms often discourage men from acknowledging abuse or seeking help, due to fear of judgment or disbelief. In the UK, initiatives like the Greater Manchester strategy on violence against men and boys, which introduced dedicated domestic violence advisers and male-specific support services, shows growing institutional recognition of male victimhood. India should similarly promote educational programs in schools, colleges, and communities to normalise conversation about domestic violence against men. Schools and universities can also play a role by including mental health education to encourage young men to take care of their emotional well-being.

#### **IV Legal Assistance for Male Victims**

Many male victims of domestic violence face significant financial challenges that prevent them from accessing justice. To address this gap, the government should ensure that free legal aid is available to men who have experienced abuse. Such support would enable them to engage with the legal system without the added burden of legal costs. This step is essential to ensure that all victims, regardless of gender or economic background, have equal access to justice.

#### **V Training for Law Enforcement Officers**

It is equally important to sensitize police and law enforcement officers to the realities of domestic violence against men. Training programs must include specific modules that address male victimhood and prepare officers to handle such cases with empathy and without bias. Domestic violence should be recognized as a human rights issue, not a gender-exclusive concern. Officers must be trained to treat all victims with dignity and to respond appropriately to emotional, physical, and psychological abuse, regardless of who the victim is.

Empirical evidences highlight the effectiveness of such trainings. In Colombia, gender-sensitive training significantly enhanced police responsiveness, instilling greater empathy, improving handling of sensitive situations, and fostering more appropriate legal interventions (Andrea, 2024). Similarly, gender-sensitive training programs in Bihar, India, demonstrated the potential of immersive techniques, such as, applied theatre and full-day interactive session programmes to restore empathy, challenge victim-blaming attitude and promote survivor-centered policing (Borker, Prakash, & Sviatschi, 2022–24). Bridging global and local efforts can help India move toward a more inclusive policing system.

### **What else can India do?**

#### **I Revising Divorce and Custody Laws**

Domestic violence is increasingly emerging as a significant factor in divorce and child custody proceedings. In India, however, the legal provisions under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, particularly Section 13, which deals with grounds for divorce, does not recognise domestic violence against men as a valid ground to dissolve a marriage. The provision mentions “cruelty” as a ground, but it is left to the discretion of the court to determine whether the particular act falls within the ambit of cruelty. Legal reforms are necessary to amend the Act to explicitly acknowledge that men, too, can be victims of abuse in marital relationships. Recognising this would ensure that men are granted equitable rights in seeking divorce when subjected to physical, emotional, or financial abuse.

Similarly, child custody arrangements must evolve to align with modern realities. Currently, custody decisions in India often tend to favor mothers by default, often neglecting the father’s role and presence of abuse he may have suffered. Courts should be mandated to consider any history of domestic violence, irrespective of victim’s gender, while deciding custody arrangements. While the child’s welfare must remain the paramount consideration, overlooking a father’s experience of abuse due to traditional gender norms undermines the principle of fairness.

#### **II Establishing Fast-Track Courts for Domestic Violence Cases**

An important reform to strengthen domestic violence response system in India is the establishment of fast-track courts specifically designed to handle such cases. Considering the severe emotional, psychological and physical trauma often associated with domestic abuse, victims across all gender deserve timely legal recourse. However, the chronic delay in India’s overburdened judiciary often lead to prolonged suffering, discouraging victims from coming forward or pursuing legal action. Specialised fast-track courts could significantly reduce trial delays, ensure focused judicial attention, and reduce the backlog in the regular court system. These courts should be staffed with specially trained judges and support personnel to handle the sensitive nature of such cases. Importantly, such reform must adopt an inclusive approach, offering protection and legal remedy to both male and female victims alike.

#### **III Comprehensive Research and Data Collection**

To develop policies that truly address the scope of domestic violence in India, there is an urgent need for comprehensive, gender-inclusive research and data collection. At present, most statistics on domestic abuse in India focus exclusively on women, primarily because existing laws and public discourse tend to overlook male victims. This absence of reliable data not only skews policy decisions but also reinforces the misconception that men do not experience abuse within intimate relationships.

The rectify the imbalance, government should actively support large-scale studies that examine the prevalence, forms, and consequences of domestic violence across all demographics. Such

studies must adopt a comprehensive lens, covering not only physical abuse but also emotional, financial, and sexual abuse. Research institutions and policy think tanks can play a key role in producing evidence that leads to more inclusive and equitable legal and support frameworks.

#### **IV Regular Monitoring and Evaluation**

Once legal reforms are enacted, it is equally important to establish mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation of their implementation. Many well-intentioned reforms fail to produce meaningful outcomes due to ineffective execution or limited awareness among legal practitioners and law enforcement agencies. To address this, an independent monitoring body should be established to oversee the practical application of domestic violence laws, identify systemic gaps, and suggest timely improvements.

#### **V Periodic Victim Surveys**

In addition to academic research, conducting regular victim surveys is essential. These surveys can help policymakers and social workers better understand the lived experiences of all victims, including men, women, and non-binary individuals. It should include anonymous feedback, detailed case studies, and statistical insights to more effectively inform the design of support services, helplines, shelter homes, and legal aid programs.

#### **Limitation of the study:**

This study is subject to certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. The sample size ( $n = 251$ ) is relatively small, which limits the statistical power of study and reduces the ability to generalise the result in broader population. Moreover, the use of purposive and snowball sampling technique may have resulted in selection bias, as participation was dependent on respondents' awareness and willingness to engage. The study is geographically confined to the NCT of Delhi region, which may not adequately reflect regional variations in social norms, legal awareness and experiences of domestic violence across India. Furthermore, the study adopts a purely quantitative approach, which may limit the exploration of individual experiences. Lastly, the comparative analysis is limited to selected jurisdictions.

#### **Conclusion**

In India, domestic violence is seen mostly as a women's issue. Men in India do not have any legal provisions that specifically protect them. However, the absence of such provisions does not mean that they do not need protection. While countries, such as, the United States and United Kingdom have taken significant steps toward creating gender-neutral frameworks, India's legal system continues to offer limited recognition and protection to male victims. Nonetheless, the growing awareness and the increasing number of male victims coming forward with their experience signals the urgent need for legal reform. This includes amending the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 to cover male victims, and establishing shelter homes and victim support services specifically for men. However, it is important to note that simply making new laws or adding new provisions to the already existing laws is not the complete solution to this issue. India already has a wide range of legal provisions, many of which suffer from poor implementation. Laws that exist merely on paper cannot bring about meaningful change. Therefore, the focus must shift from solely enacting laws to ensuring that the existing ones are actually functioning on the ground.

The Indian legal system is still evolving. As a developing nation with a diverse population and complex issues, its legal landscape must be flexible. Therefore, the enactment of legislation should not mark the end of reform, rather, laws must be periodically revisited and refined through amendments to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.



Moreover, practical support measures such as free legal aid, targeted public awareness campaigns, and enhanced training for police and judicial officers, is essential to enable male victims to access justice without fear of stigma or financial hardship. By adopting a comprehensive and inclusive approach, India can create a justice system that reflects the realities of all those affected by domestic violence and upholds the constitutional principles of fairness and equality.

## References:

1. Andrea, C. (2024). Effect of Gender-Sensitive Training on police response to domestic violence in Colombia. *International Journal of Gender Studies*, 9(3), 15-26. <https://doi.org/10.47604/ijgs.2877>
2. Borker, G., Prakash, N., & Sviatschi, M. (2022-2024). *The impact of a gender-sensitive training for police officers on gender-based violence in India* [Evaluation report]. Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. Retrieved from <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/impact-gender-sensitive-training-police-officers-gender-based-violence-india>
3. Desai, D. (2017, November 17). *When husbands are victims of domestic violence*. *The Times of India*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/relationships/love-sex/when-husbands-are-victims-of-domestic-violence/articleshow/26031858.cms>
4. Deshpande, S. (2019). Sociocultural and legal aspects of violence against men. *Journal of Psychosexual Health*, 1(3-4), 246-249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2631831819894176>
5. Dubey, A. (2021, December 3). *The issue of domestic violence against men in India*. DaamanNGO. <https://www.daaman.org/post/the-issue-of-domestic-violence-against-men-in-india>
6. Dubey, A. (2024, June 25). *Domestic violence against men in India: A constitutional analysis*. TSCLD. <https://www.tsclid.com/domestic-violence-against-men-india>
7. Gupta, S., & Wamankar, Y. (2025, July 10). *Gender neutrality in domestic violence laws: A critical analysis of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005*. *theacademic.in*. <https://theacademic.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/113.pdf>
8. Hiral P. Harsora v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora, (2016) 10 SCC 165
9. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) & Macro International. (2007). *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06: India (Vol. 1)*. Mumbai: IIPS. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/frind3/frind3-vol1andvol2.pdf>
10. Malik, J. S., & Nadda, A. (2019). A Cross-sectional Study of Gender-Based Violence against Men in the Rural Area of Haryana, India. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine: Official Publication of Indian Association of Preventive & Social Medicine*, 44(1), 35-38. [https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.IJCM\\_222\\_18](https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.IJCM_222_18)
11. Morishita, J., Kato, R., Yasuda, M., & Suda, S. (2023). Male intimate partner violence (IPV) victims in Japan: Associations of types of harm, sociodemographic characteristics, and depression trait. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences Reports*, 2, e127. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/pcn5.127>

12. National Crime Records Bureau. (2022). *Accidental deaths and suicides in India – 2021*. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/accidental-deaths-suicides-india>
13. National Crime Records Bureau. (2023). *Accidental deaths and suicides in India – 2022*. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. <https://ncrb.gov.in/en/accidental-deaths-suicides-india>
14. Parliament of India. (2005). *The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005*. [https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/15436/1/protection of women from domestic violence act%2C 2005.pdf](https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/15436/1/protection%20of%20women%20from%20domestic%20violence%20act%202005.pdf)
15. Parliament of India. (2023). *The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023*. Ministry of Home Affairs. [https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/250883\\_english\\_01042024.pdf](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/250883_english_01042024.pdf)
16. Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh, (2017) 13 SCC 553
17. Sarkar, S., Dsouza, R., & Dasgupta, A. (2007). *Domestic violence against men: A study report by Save Family Foundation*. Save Family Foundation. <https://ipc498a.files.wordpress.com/2007/10/domestic-violence-against-men.pdf>
18. Sharma, R. (n.d.). *An Insight To The Issue Of Domestic Violence Against Men In India: A Call For Gender – Neutral Law*. Indian Journal of Law and Society. <https://ijls.co.in/vol-1-issue-4-6>
19. South India Journal of Social Sciences. (n.d.). *Domestic Violence Against Men in India: A Critical Analysis with Special Reference to Indian Laws*. South India Journal of Social Sciences. <https://journal.sijss.com/index.php/home/article/view/231/72>
20. Sushil Kumar Sharma v. Union of India, (2005) 6 SCC 281