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AN ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN

INTRODUCTION

Any abusive act in which one party aims to obtain or retain power and control over the other partner and occurs between family members, ex-spouses, intimate cohabitants, former intimate cohabitants, dating couples, or former dating couples is considered domestic violence. It is possible for couples or ex-couples to be of the same sex. Domestic violence can take the form of threats or acts that are directed towards another person and can be physical, sexual, emotional, financial, or psychological. This encompasses any actions that cause fear, terror, intimidation, isolation, coercion, threats, harm, injure, or wound someone.¹

Domestic abuse can affect anyone, regardless of their age, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, religion, or social class. Any member of the household, including children and relatives, can become a victim of domestic abuse.² People frequently believe that a woman was abused and that a man was the aggressor when the topic of domestic violence is raised. Domestic violence against men is also common, despite the fact that this is true in most cases.³

The recognition of male victims of sexual violence as remote realities has been overlooked in the framing of sexual violence as a feminist issue. The low number of reports of male sexual assault and the victims' reluctance to come forward are major factors in the paucity of legal action pertaining to male sexual victimisation.⁴

¹ Domestic Violence Coordinating Council. (2011). Domestic Violence Dynamics – What Domestic Abuse What It Does to Family. Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) – State of Delaware. <https://dvcc.delaware.gov/background-purpose/dynamics-domestic-abuse/>

² Kelly Scott Storey & Sue O' Donnell, Sage Journals, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/15248380211043827> (last visited Jan 30, 2022).

³ Lyle Therese A. Hilotin-Lee, J.D., Domestic Violence Against Men FindLaw (2023), <https://www.findlaw.com/family/domestic-violence/domestic-violence-against-men.html> (last visited Feb 10, 2024).

⁴ Adult Male Victims of Rape:- Need of Legal Recognition in India Research Gate https://www.researchgate.net/publication/352836485_Adult_Male_Victims_of_Rape_Need_of_Legal_Recognition_in_India#:~:text=Abstract,action%20concerning%20male%20sexual%20victimization. (last visited Feb 10, 2024)

PREVELANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN:-

Research from all around the world focuses on the injustices and violations of women's rights, rarely addressing the horrors that men face. Men are also victims of gender-based violence in addition to women. This necessitates further research and the required action to address gender-based violence against men in India. 52.4% of men reported having experienced gender-based violence in a recent study. Of the 1000 men surveyed, 51.5% had at least one violent incident involving their wives or intimate partners throughout their lives, and 10.5% had experienced it in the previous 12 months. Emotional abuse accounted for 51.6% of all spousal violence cases, with physical abuse coming in second at 6%. Physical assaults were severe only in 10% of cases. The husband was the one who started the emotional and physical abuse in nearly half of the cases. In India, there is no gender symmetry when it comes to physical violence. Risk factors included lower family income, education up to middle class, nuclear family structure, and an intoxicated perpetrator. A spouse who earns a living and has completed their education is at risk for both types of physical violence.⁵

Domestic violence cases against Indian men are often not reported for four main reasons: general stereotypes against men, fear of phoney cases, pressure from family and society, and denial. Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code 1860 states that only a man is responsible for cruelty to his wife. The law contains no passages or clauses that hold women accountable for domestic abuse. Men commit suicide at a higher rate than women, but women are more likely to consider suicide than men. In the world, Indian wives are third best at beating their husbands. First and second place go to Egypt and the United Kingdom, respectively. The most basic relief that males can receive from the current legislation is the assurance that a male or female aggressor will refrain from approaching them.⁶

FORMS OF ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY MEN:-

These days, it's not uncommon for women to abuse men. This encompasses psychological abuse that compromises a person's physical and mental well-being, as well as economic, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Gender-based violence affects both men and women. Contrary to popular assumption, there is a growing number of men who experience physical and psychological abuse at the hands of women.⁷ It is much less common for men to report being victimised, which makes

⁵ 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, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6437789/> (last visited Feb 10, 2024)

⁶ 9 eye-opening facts & statistics about domestic violence cases against Indian men Google, <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.mensxp.com/amp/special-features/features/108932-domestic-violence-cases-on-indian-men-facts-and-statistics.html> (last visited Feb 10, 2024)

⁷ An Indian Perspective on Domestic Violence against Men Times of India , <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/my-thoughts-on-paper/an-indian-perspective-on-domestic-violence-against-men-50632/> (last visited Feb 10, 2024)

them less likely to ask for or receive assistance. Because victims are perceived as weak, defenceless, in need of aid, and unable to defend themselves, men may be especially reluctant to report and come forward.⁸

IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF MEN:-

In a recent study, it was discovered that there are 29 cases of spousal violence against men per 1,000 in India. In Sikkim, there were two married women for every 1,000 people, whereas in Tamil Nadu, there were ninety women for every 1,000 people. Sexual and physical abuse of a partner is associated with a host of health issues and consequences that are visible in different forms. The immediate physical impact can result in minor to major injuries, including bruising, fractured bones, internal bleeding, gastrointestinal problems, sexually transmitted diseases, and in rare cases, even death.⁹

The psychological ramifications of being in a relationship involving domestic violence include feelings of guilt and humiliation, confusion and helplessness, and low self-esteem for the victims. More severe symptoms such as anxiety, depressive disorders, PTSD, suicidal thoughts or attempts, and body dysmorphia leading to disordered eating patterns or other unhealthy behaviours can result from these.¹⁰

CONCLUSION:-

The issue of domestic violence is complicated. However, as these social messages make clear, abuse in any form—whether it be from a romantic partner, at work, or in a school setting—always involves an imbalance of power. Currently, a large portion of male aggression and coercive control towards their female partners is justified by society and stems from men claiming authority and control in an effort to uphold their superior status over women. These kinds of hierarchical behaviours happen in the workplace, in same-sex relationships, and in establishments like schools and churches. While it doesn't always matter in some of these circumstances, gender is a significant factor in abuse of an intimate partner.¹¹ In the end, violence in intimate partner

⁸ Underreporting among males likely due to gender-based stigma Marquette Wire, <https://marquettewire.org/3988006/news/underreporting-among-males-likely-due-to-gender-based-stigma/> (last visited Feb 10, 2024)

⁹ Domestic violence and the impacts on your physical and mental health Domestic Violence and the Impacts on your Physical and Mental Health: Harbor Community Health Centers: Primary Care Practices, <https://www.harborchc.org/blog/domestic-violence-and-the-impacts-on-your-physical-and-mental-health> (last visited Feb 10, 2024)

¹⁰ Verena Kolbe, Domestic Violence Against Men—Prevalence and Risk Factors, NCBI <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7658679/>

¹¹ Clare Murphy, Gender: How Men and Women Experience Domestic Violence Differently, NCBI <https://speakoutloud.net/intimate-partner-abuse/domestic-violence-gender>.

relationships is used by both men and women. Safety comes first when responding to victims, regardless of gender. In order to provide adequate support to victims of abuse and develop preventative measures and long-term strategies for transformation, it is essential to fully recognise and comprehend the unique complexities that apply to men and women.¹²

¹² Verena Kolbe & Andreas Büttner, Gender: How Men and Women Experience Domestic Violence Differently, NCBI (May 8, 2020), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7658679/>.