



A PRELIMINARY STUDY ON MALE VICTIMIZATION IN THE EYES OF FEMALES IN INDIA

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Introduction

The term male victimization refers to the violence against men in terms of physical, emotional, psychological, and economical. Men are over represented as both victims and perpetrators of violence.

Through the influence of the feminist movement of the mid-1970s, domestic violence and other violence came to be understood primarily as a heterosexual, socio-political phenomenon with its basis in sexism, that is, gender (Schechter, 1982). This leads to the domestic violence movement historically focusing almost exclusively on the battering of heterosexual women. The feminist political view of the male-female dyad has been the basis of the movement's core philosophies, shaping everything from batter treatment policies (Renzetti & Hamberger, 2004) to victimization theory (Letellier, 1994), to current domestic violence law (Sonkin & Muhlhauser, 1987). The feminist analysis of gender socialization and its role in domestic violence has been tremendously effective in illuminating the relationship between discrimination and violence against men and women in the society at large.

India is considered a male dominated society. Therefore, people of India stereotyped that violence would only be possible with women done by men folks. As India is a patriarchal society, so it is easy to say that they are the ones who are always the perpetrators. But, now the scenario is reversing that a male can also be victimized by females. Men's actual or potential experiences of violence, whether it be criminally defined or not, have not been the primary target for contemporary sociological explorations of masculinity.

Numerous studies have consistently reinforced the “male perpetrators” and “female victims” in gender paradigm, here former word drawn from the court-mandated treatment groups (Dutton, 2013) and the latter from women’s shelters (Johnson, & Zlotnick, 2009) and compensation. In this particular study, samples were selected based on their perpetration or victimization and not representative of the community. True believers operating within the gender paradigm do not question the generalizability of such samples; selected by a system that was already operating on the assumption that men were sole perpetrators and women were victims.

Males are also victimized by several types of threat and violence as the females (Pandey, et al., 2021). However, it is very difficult to accept this fact in Indian patriarchal society. Before, considering it as an important issue, the question here arises is that will our society accept this? There are several issues a man faces when he pulls up socks to raise his voice.

The gender paradigm stereotype also holds that female violence is less serious, only what Johnson calls “common couple violence”(Johnson, 1995). An emergency clinic in Philadelphia found that 12.6 percent of all male patients over thirteen weeks (N=866) were victims of domestic violence. These patients reported having been kicked, bitten, punched, or choked by female intimate partners in 47 percent of cases, and in 37 percent of cases reported a weapon being used against them. The authors also noted that the numbers would have been higher except they had to stop counting after midnight and screened out “major trauma” cases, which could have amplified the proportion injured by female partners (Dutton, 2013).

This type of psychosocial issue of male sexual harassment was first time raised in the Bollywood movie “Aitraaz” released in 2004. Though, it was difficult for the Indian viewer to accept such an issue. However, it insisted the mentality of orthodox society to think about it.

In 2013, Justice Verma Committee had recommended implementing gender-neutral language for sexual offenses (*Js Verma Committe Report, 2013*), but to date, nobody paid any heed for the implementation of the same.

A survey was conducted by the Delhi-based Centre for Civil Society found that “approximately 18% of Indian adult men surveyed reported being coerced or forced to have sex. Of those, 16% claimed a female perpetrator and 2% claimed a male perpetrator”(Centre for Civil Society, 2014).

‘The Hindu’ newspaper published an article titled “Adam, what do you mean you were teased?” this article it is recognized the need for laws of sexual harassment, in the case of male victims and female perpetrators. They have also highlighted the fact about increasing instances of male sexual harassment, from being an object of comments heavy with sexual innuendo to being stalked. But Indian men are supposed to be ‘manly’ so they should not bother about these things(Khan, 2017).

On 19 November 2018, International Men's Day "The Quint" published an article consisting of different stories of males who are subjected to domestic violence, harassment, extortion, and other such incidents by quoting "One, our laws do not recognize that (abuse against men). Two, our society does not recognize that. Even if a man is sharing his suffering or his experience, we tend to belittle his experience"(Ranjana, 2018).

There are several laws for the protection of women that were implemented to protect women from any kind of violence. But now a day's things are in reversed fashion as some of the females using the laws inappropriately to take undue advantage of the laws especially made for them. In a study, 136 incidents of sexual assault were analyzed and it was found that 52.2% of instances were falsely reported (Rawat & Maharshi, 2020).

Due to the non-availability of data or due to insufficient statistics in support courts are also not sure of taking action when it comes to making the gender-neutral provisions as we have seen examples of "Judicial Activism" from time to time. Because, there are no studies, no researches available that can tell how many men are victimized or harassed in different aspects like how many men are sexually victimized, and what are the post factors of these incidents, which are definitely putting them in the worst mental state.

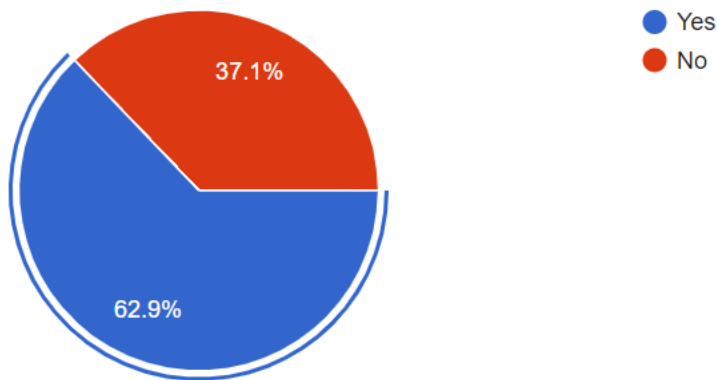
Therefore, there is a strong need to explore the issue so policymakers will understand the veracity of the issue. This study aims to know the feminine perspective towards this issue and to propose policy interventions for bringing amendments to the existing laws.

Methodology

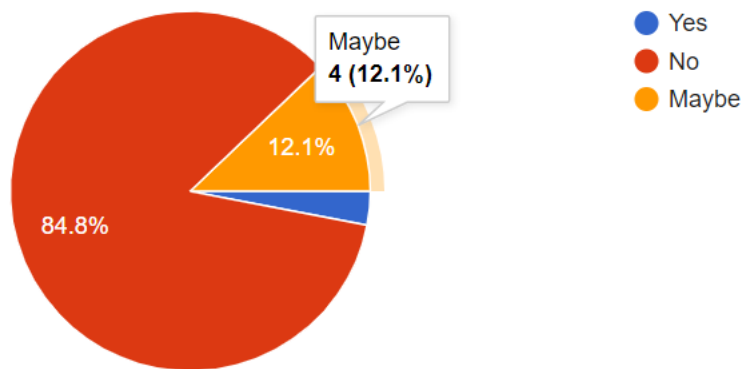
For this study, an online survey method was adopted and a formal questionnaire was prepared consisting of 15 questions by using the Google form. This questionnaire was floated among the graduate and postgraduate students of various Indian Universities targeting the age group of 18-25. This was repeatedly posted for fifteen days and a total of 53 responses were received. After verification 15 was excluded in which 10 were due to not fitting into the age slab and 8 forms haven't filled the form properly. Total of 35 responses was considered and analyzed.

Result & Discussion

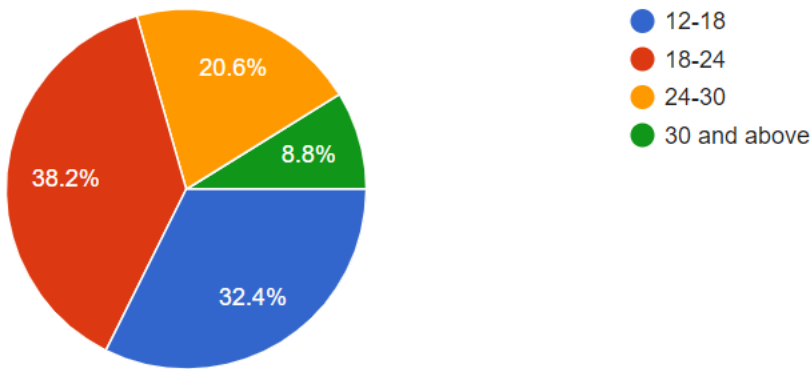
1. Pie chart indicate whether they have witnessed any male being victimized.



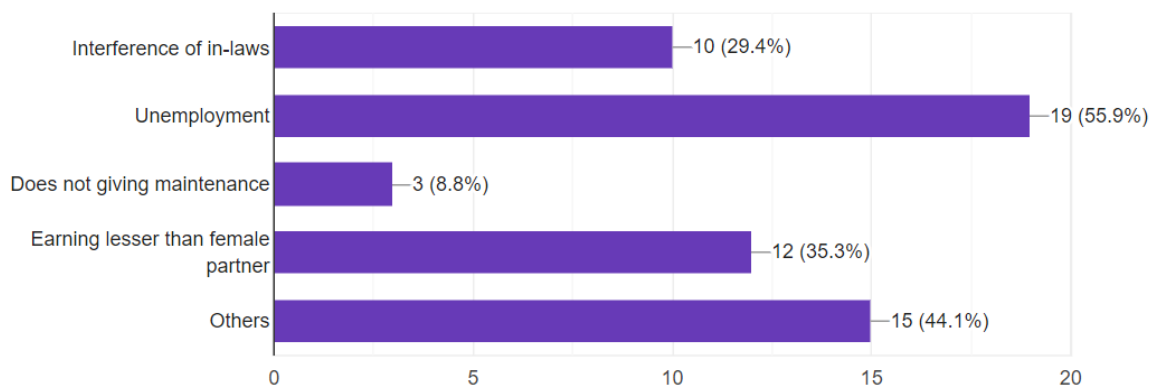
2. Pie chart indicate data whether the respondents have victimized any male.



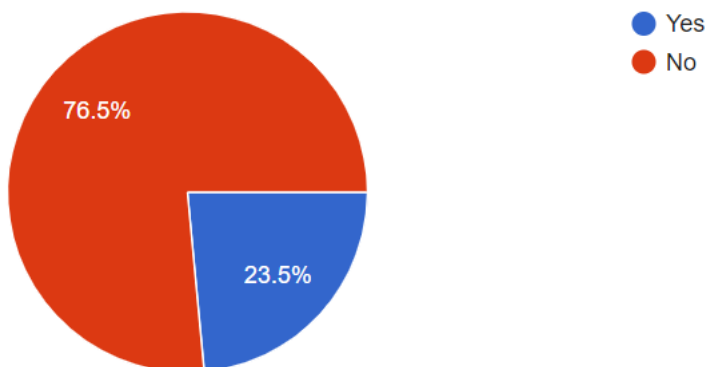
3. What is the prominent age group of males who faces victimization?



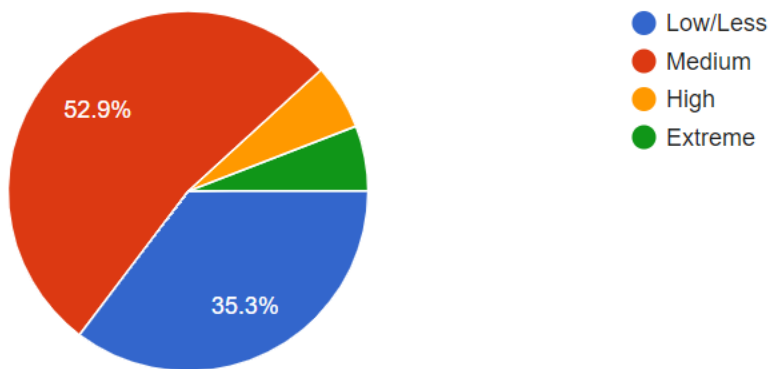
4. Reason behind male victimization.



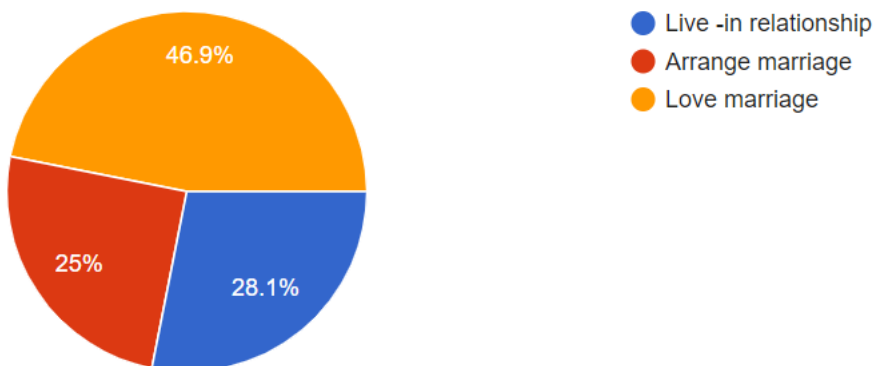
5. Pie chart indicate whether the male reveals victimization.



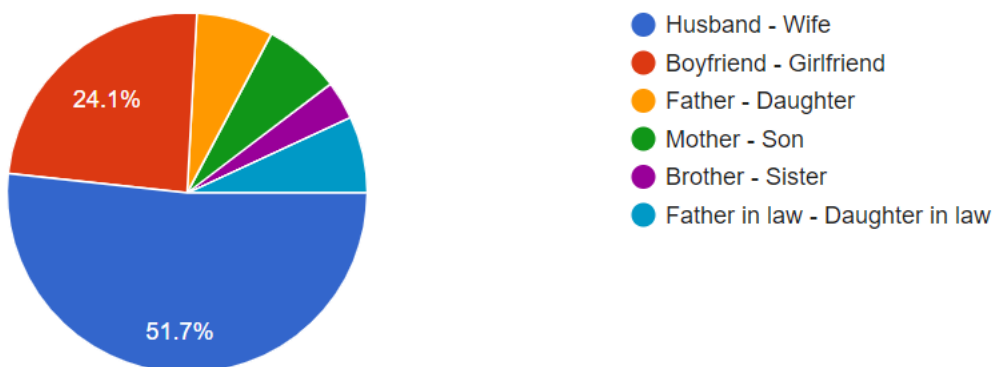
6. Up to what extent males are being victimized?



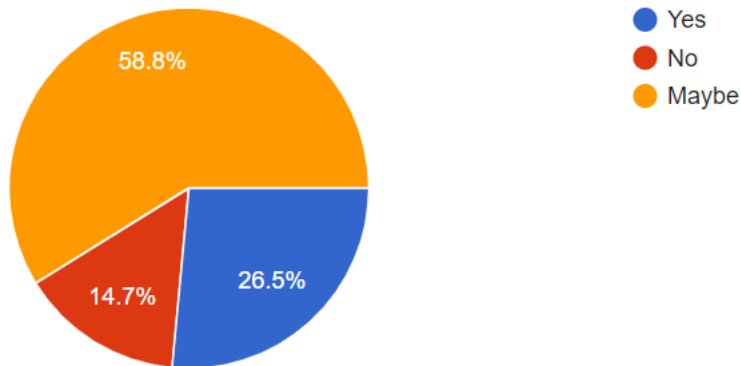
7. Pie chart indicates the types of relationships in which this issue is prominent.



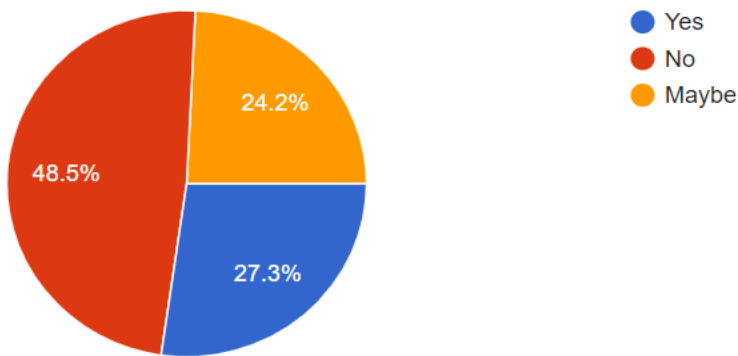
8. In which relation male suffers the most.



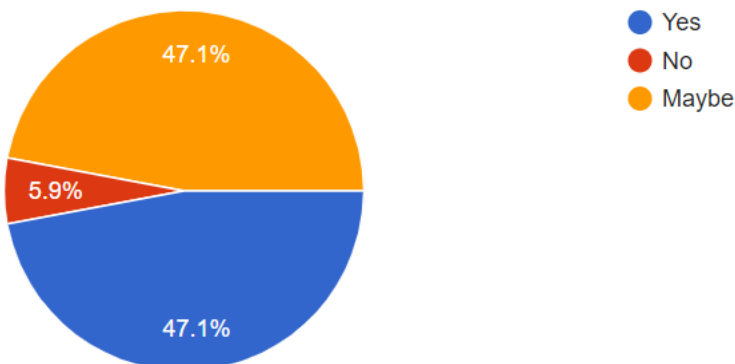
9. Pie chart indicates the extent to which a male initiates a complaint of victimization.



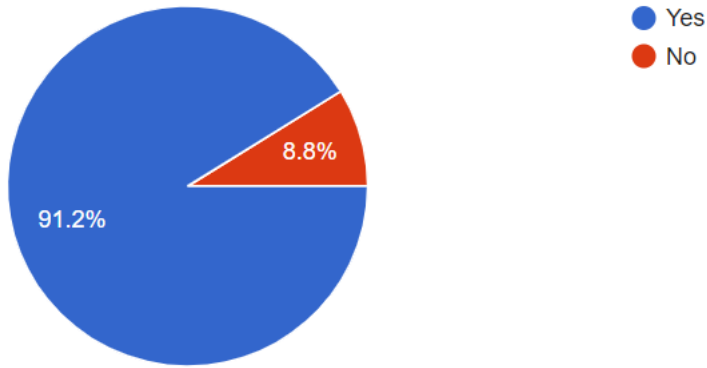
10. Respondents on whether police personnel's files complain seriously?



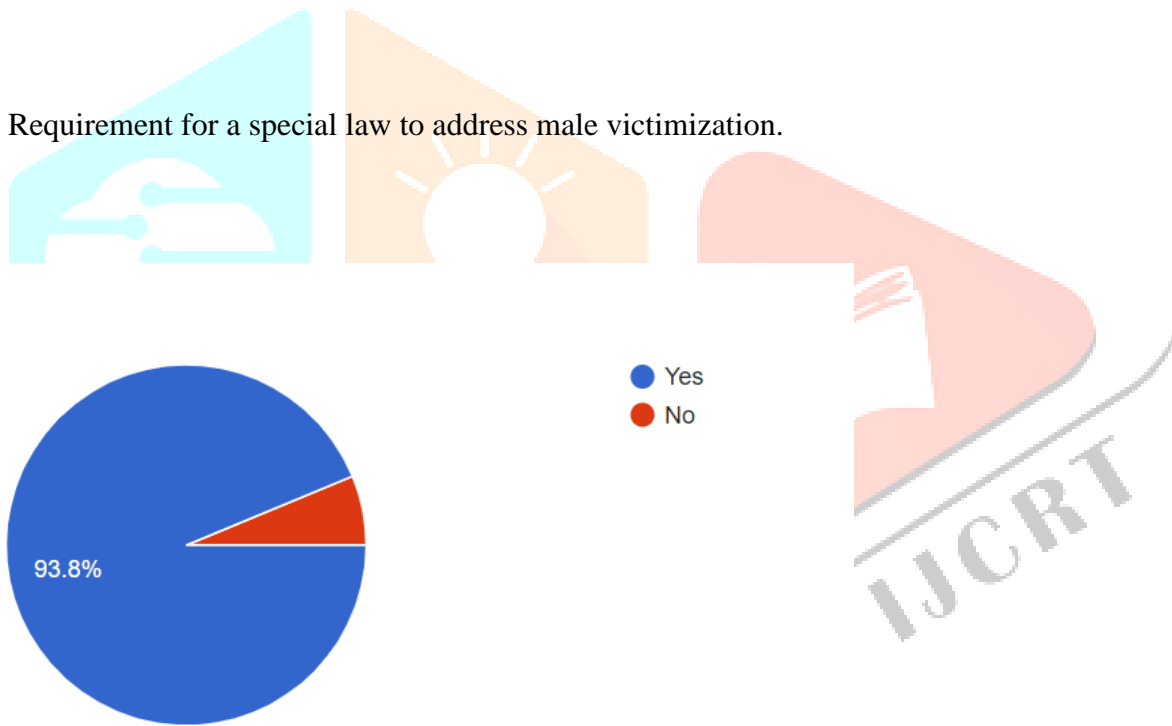
11. Future possibility of coming up male victimization cases into the notice.



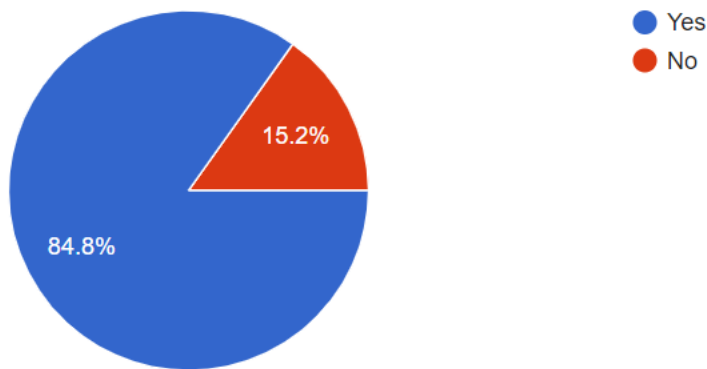
12. Bar graph indicates the requirement of strict action against male victimization



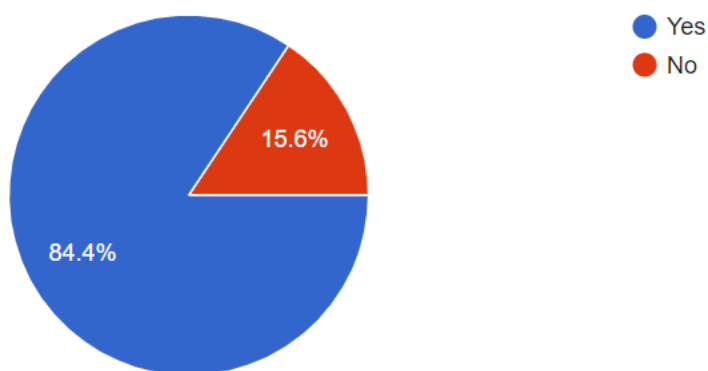
13. Requirement for a special law to address male victimization.



14. Requirement of helpline for males



15. Should there be more NGOs and other legal agencies which can assist males in regards to victimization?



When the female respondents were questioned they opined that 62.9% of them had witnessed a male getting victimized at some point of time, while 37.1% rejected. This indicates the presence of issue in the society and it needs to be addressed, if we want to have a gender neutral approach in the society and also for the better development of both the genders(Martin & Ruble, 2010).3% of the respondents have accepted that they have victimized a male at some point, 12.1% were not aware if they have done or not while 84.8% have thumbs down. But there might be a chance that others may do not want to disclose because of desirable human tendency.

When comes to the age of the victims 38.2% of respondents believe that males aged between 18-24 years are the major age group who may victimize, 32.4% thinks males between 12-18 years, 20.6% thinks males between 24-30 years and 8.8% thinks males of 30 years and above. As per the result, it can be concluded that early adulthood and adult group is more vulnerable for victimization. This may be because respondents believe

that male victimization occurs in marital life or live-in relationships. Those who responded and considered the age group below 18 might believe this issue in romantic relations rather than martial or live-in.

The result of the question asking the reason behind such issue indicates certain responsible factors. Economical factor reflects as a major cause for this issue as respondents rated unemployment 55.9% followed by 35.55% other monetary related matters. In-laws interference 29.4% and maintenance related problems 8.8% were accepted. Though, there might be certain other factors that are also responsible because 44.1% of respondents have marked the 'others' option.

Though in POCSO Act, 2012 it is available where a male child can report any incident of sexual assault if we look at other Laws like Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal procedure or any other such laws under which an adult male can initiate a complaint of sexual assault. Adult males are still in the hope of gender neutral laws(celsnluj, 2020). The majority of the victims do require help and support and action that address the issue of male victimization.

There is a need for the development or induction of law that could address this emerging issue of male victimization. The results reveal that 76.5% of the male never admit their victimization, though 23.5% of respondents believed that male reveals. Most of the respondents accepted that male will not admit their victimization because they believe that it will undermine their masculine level. This might be due to the patriarchal dominance over the society where males are supposed to be kept 'Godly' specifically the husbands. Here, the authors admit that patriarchal dominance is more prevalent among certain castes and cultures Northern part of the country.

On the question related to the type of relationships and victimization, 46.9% believe that male victimization is more common in love marriage, 28.1% believe it is more in live-in relationships, whereas 25% think that it may happen in arrange marriages only. Most of the respondents have accepted that this practice is more common in love marriages in comparison to the arranged marriages. This further suggests that modern females are somehow accepting the issue of love marriage'. There are differences in the culture, traditions, and norms of every society. There might be economic, cultural conflicts, etc. that may play a major role in the victimization of males.

On the question do males initiate a complaint of their victimization, 53.8% of respondents were in dilemma, whereas 14.7% said that they do not initiate any complaint and only 26.5% agreed that they will initiate a complaint. The data reveals that due to patriarchal setup and social stigma, the image of masculine is built in so strong that no male reports victimization against them. It also portrays the feminine view regarding the fact that the majority of the male show stepping back-tendency when it comes to reporting or initiating a legal process against his wife/ intimate partner (Khan, 2017).

On the question of police response on this issue, 48.5% has responded that they might not take the issue seriously and may not file a complaint, while 24.2% of them are unsure. This suggests that a complaint of a male victim is not considered seriously by the law enforcement agencies (Khan, 2017).

When respondents were asked about the future possibility of coming up with male victimization cases 47.1% have agreed and 47.1% were not sure while only 5.9% rejected the chance of occurrence. Future can't be predicted through any science but after analyzing the study it can be concluded that there is a strong possibility of a surge in the cases of male victimization if the trend of misusing laws continues.

91.2% of the respondents agreed that strict action should be taken in the cases of male victimization on the other hand 8.8% respondent thumbs down this indicates that few people are still not accepting it as a scar on society.

On the question 'is there a requirement for a specific law to address this issue, 93.8% of respondents agreed to this. Further, it suggests that the majority of the respondents feel the need for specific laws to address this issue.

The data reveals that only 15.2% of the respondents have rejected the need for a helpline number for male victims, other 84.8% are in favour. This shows that there is an urgent need for allotting a separate helpline and or complaint number to the males, where they can ask for help or can register their complaints against the perpetrator females.

Need for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and other legal aid organizations, which can assist males in such issues in this regard 84.4% respondents agreed with this on the contrary 15.6% respondents disagree with this. There are very few NGOs working in concern to male victimization and those are limited to the metropolitan cities.

While studying this issue we get to know the current status of males in our democratic society. In the 21st century males are also being victimized, it's just a matter that it remains as the dark figure of crime (Borysenko, 2020).

Authors admit that the sample size of the survey is not wide enough to generalize, and also the survey method is also not considered a high standard technique of data collection. But, the study does throw ample light on the issue of male victimization through this paper.

Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be concluded that a number of males are being victimized in some way or the other by females. They are also facing several problems as the females face but it becomes hidden and goes unreported as no one listen to their woes and take their problem seriously. Instead of helping them people do make fun of them. So, there is a requirement of specific laws pertaining to male victimization so that they too get justice, and then we can talk about the principle of equality before law.

These are few steps that can be initiated for the remedial purpose in such types of issues is formation of committees that can look into such type of problems, ensure the strict action against the perpetrators, need to support the already existing NGO's which are fighting for male rights, amendments in the existing laws or acts are the need of the hour which would reduce the cases of false allegations and trim down false accusations, to impede the miscarriage of justice there should be a dedicated helpline service where they can seek assistance and register their complaints, last but not least certainly there is necessitate to create awareness in society about this foul play. Author's observation and analysis finds that some females too want justice for males as they have opined freely and frankly in response to the answers of the questionnaire.

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