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Men Victims Of Domestic Violence: A Hidden Reality.

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Abstract: Domestic Violence has been a common social issue all over the world, but the narrative has always been that a woman is the victim while men as abuser. But because of unequal application of law, the male victims are left out or excluded who silently suffer the views based on gender stereotypes, society expectations etc. This study tries to reflect the reality of men being victims of Domestic Violence and analyses the psychological, emotional and legal aspect of abuse faced by men and tries to broaden the perspective of seeing domestic violence as a gender-neutral issue. Finally, the study offers alternate narratives, aiming to raise awareness and suggest inclusive reforms.

Key words: Men, Domestic Violence, Victim, Abuse.

Introduction: Domestic violence has traditionally been understood as violence by men against women. Experts say that men are subjected to domestic violence either in most societies which are not patriarchal societies. This is because in patriarchal societies women do not even think of doing it. Countries where men only face domestic violence at the hands of their partners include many countries both Asian as well as western countries.

Discussion

Perception of society and Gender stereotypes: The word masculinity keeps men away from confessing being victim of being abused. Men are sought to be strong, obliging, impassive which promotes vulnerability to be suppressed. That's why when men are victims of domestic violence, they do not want to report the abuse or seek any help because of the fear of shame, mockery.¹ In conservative societies, such things are interpreted as weakness, which discourages male victims from reporting. Moreover, the idea of violence against men will also seem unrealistic to many people. This is also because of the old mindset of the people that they are not aware in increase in violence against men in worrying. Some people in the society mock them and question their masculinity. This targeting or mockery leads to underreporting and limited services targeting male victims.

Psychological and emotional abuse: Violence against men occurs not only inside home but also outside, but unfortunately no one is there to speak for them. When it comes to domestic violence it is not necessarily manifested in physical attacks, emotional and physical abuse can be just as damaging. Men are caught between the fight of their mother and their wife. If they support their mother, their wife gets angry likewise

if they support their wife, their mother gets angry. This is the universal truth. Emotional blackmail based on using child, threat of divorce and many more are used as weapons to control the man.²

This can result in anxiety, depression and even suicidal tendencies for men. Also found that male victims internalise their trauma, leading to worsening mental health outcomes. Since, shelters or equipped for male victims, their pain tends to go unheard.

Legal and institutional laws: Though in many countries, domestic violence acts are only to protect women. For instance,

* The domestic violence Act 2005, officially known as the protection of women from domestic violence, by Indian Government from October 2006.³

* Domestic abuse act, 2021 – United Kingdom⁴

* The Punjab protection of women against violence act, 2016 – Pakistan⁵

* Domestic violence act, (Act no.116 of 1998) – South Africa⁶

And many more are some laws of she laws all over the world for female victims of domestic violence. The blame is mostly attributed to the men even in the presence of evidences also.

Furthermore, police officers are more likely to dismiss the complaints of men or treat them rightly. But in many countries, some rules and laws have been made gender neutral i.e., the protection of both male and female victims, like in France, Australia, Canada, UK, etc

While domestic violence laws and support system globally focus on women as victims, many jurisdictions are increasingly recognizing that men can also be victims and are implementing legal protections and support services accordingly like in Germany, two states – Bavaria and North Rhine – Westphalia (NRW) – launched for the first time ever a coordinated Government initiative aimed specifically at protection of male victim of domestic violence.

These include:

- *Hotline and online counselling platforms.*⁷
- *Safehouses and counselling centres for them.*
- *Public awareness campaign to break the taboo around male victimhood.*⁸

Case Study: Nightmare of a man from UK – Alex skeel – Male victims of Domestic violence: Alex a young man from UK born in 1995, who was badly abused by his girlfriend in 2017, Tordon Worth. She controlled his life – telling him what to wear, whom to talk, what to eat etc. She also hurt him physically by hitting, stabbing and burning him and tortured him mentally as well.

² <https://www.womenslaw.org/about-abuse/forms-abuse/emotional-and-psychological-abuse#:~:text=Emotional%20and%20psychological%20abuse%20can%20have%20severe%20short%2D%20and%20long,%2C%20chronic%20pain%2C%20and%20more>. Accessed on 23 Aug, 2025.

³ https://www.indiacode.nic.in/show-data?abv=CEN&statehandle=123456789/1362&actid=AC_CEN_13_14_00008_200543_1517807325788§ionId=12899§ionno=3&orderno=3&orgactid=AC_CEN_13_14_00008_200543_1517807325788. Accessed on 22 Aug, 2025.

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17>. Accessed on 22 , Aug, 2025.

⁵ <https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/pakistans-federal-shariat-court-affirms-that-the-punjab-protection-of-women-against-violence-act-2016-aligns-with-islamic-injunctions/>. Accessed on 23 Aug, 2025.

⁶ https://www.divorcelaws.co.za/uploads/1/2/1/6/12166127/the_domestic_violence_amendment_act_14_of_2021.pdf. Accessed on 23 Aug, 2025.

⁷ <https://www.dw.com/en/german-states-announce-new-hotline-for-male-victims-of-domestic-violence/a-53209399>. Accessed on 22 Aug, 2025.

⁸ <https://www.dw.com/en/domestic-violence-against-men-german-states-move-to-break-taboo/a-49252236>. Accessed on 22 Aug, 2025.

He was very scared and couldn't speak up. He had serious injuries and nearly died. She isolated him from his family, blocked access to media care despite his worse condition including infections and brain swelling.

In 2018, Police arrested her and became the 1st women convicted in the UK under the coercive control legislation, receiving 7.5-year prison sentence for her actions.⁹

Since then, he became an ambassador for the charity (*The Mankind Initiative*) raising awareness that men can also be victims of domestic abuse.

The use of girl card and manipulation: A girl can target many boys by the strategic deployment of the so-called girl card, in which girls use gendered assumptions which can ruin the lives of men.

Seeing today's generation for money or for the sake of followers, likes and views, they do abuse the boys but they pretend to be the victims to get the fame on social media. Infact some women emotionally blackmail their men by using child as their means.

In the option of L. Cook 1995, explores how an alleged phenomenon – parental alienation – can be misused in custody battles to manipulate outcomes in favour of one parent, often mothers.¹⁰

This is not to undermine the legitimate grievances of women victims but to highlight the necessity of a balanced response that sees abuse in all its forms, where ever it happens, and where ever it is gendered.

Underreporting and shame culture: According to, NCADV 2020 report, approximately, 20 people per minute in US experience violence by intimate partner in 2020, 1 in 4 men suffered some form of violence and 1 in 7 men experience physical violence.¹¹

In some Asian countries the percentage is less because the abuse not only happen because of (*sharm aur haya*) surrounding male identity. South Asian culture values socialise boys at young age never to cry, neither complaint or to communicate the pain, such values instil seeking help as shameful. That is the reason, men endure for extended durations in silence, leading to stress related illness and family breakdown.

Media representation and public discourse: Media has a significant influence on public attitudes. Men are typically shown as attackers and women as defenceless victims in most of the shows, movies and TV dramas. Such portrayed supports for gender bias and silences non stereotypical men. We rarely report it due to lack of institutional support, fear of not being believed, shame and many more threats.

In UK, Office for National Statics (2022) noted that 1/3rd of domestic abuse victim is male. Despite this, male victims often face challenges such as disbelief by institution as I mentioned above, and scarcity of support service like shelters or helplines.

In countries like India, Pakistan, men often remain silent due to deeply rooted cultural norms and legal framework that primarily focus on protecting women, thereby excluding men from legal protection.

There is an urgent need for gender inclusive policies, public awareness campaigns and further research to ensure that male victims receive equal protection and support globally.

Cultural and Religious influences: Male victims of domestic violence often face unique challenges because of cultural and religious beliefs. In many societies, men are expected to be strong and never show any kind of weakness, so if they admit any kind of abuse, that can bring damage to their reputation. Some cultures value family honour so highly, that men stay silent to avoid bringing dishonour to their families. Religious belief can also play a role, there are rules and regulations for both men and women but sometimes

⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2019/08/abused-by-my-girlfriend>. Accessed on 22 Aug, 2025.

¹⁰ [https://canadiancrc.com/PARENTAL-ALIENATION-CANADA/Parental Alienation Syndrome Hidden Facet Custody Disputes Canadian Bar Association.aspx](https://canadiancrc.com/PARENTAL-ALIENATION-CANADA/Parental%20Alienation%20Syndrome%20Hidden%20Facet%20Custody%20Disputes%20Canadian%20Bar%20Association.aspx). Accessed on 22 Aug 2025.

¹¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499891/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20CDC%2C%201,10%20million%20people%20each%20year.> Accessed on 23, Aug, 2025.

sacred texts are misunderstood mean that men must tolerate hardships, while in other cases, the preachers offer support and promote respect and justice for all. These cultural and religious pressures often cause men to hide their abuse leading to lack of help and underreporting.¹²

Social media's role in framing narratives: Social-media have been both a source of education and a battleground of poisonous dialogue. Although platforms like twitter, YouTube, TikTok, have given some male victims a voice and access to other people, they have also put them in danger of mockery and dismissal. Campaigns like #MENTOO have attempted to ape the #METOO message for men but end up getting misinterpreted.¹³

Positive framing can lead to greater policy discussions, support networks, gender inclusive resources, while dismissive or mocking content can further silence male victims. In this way social media acts as tool of advocacy and a battleground for how society defines and responds to domestic violence against men worldwide.

Solution and policy recommendations: Domestic violence against men happens in every part of world, but many cases go unreported because of stigma, shame and lack of services for male victims. To address this government and organisations should make laws and policies gender neutral so they protect all victims equally. Police, health workers and social services need training to recognise and respond to the abuse against men without being bias. National surveys should collect data for both men and women so the scale of problem is clear and public campaigns should spread the message that anyone can be victim and that help is available.

Services must also be adopted to include men, like 24/7 helplines, counselling, legal aid and safe housing options. These should be clearly advertised as open to all genders, and they should be trained to handle the specific needs of male victims, prevention efforts like healthy relationships education in school, community awareness, programs and early intervention support for at risk groups can reduce abuse before it starts. All changes should be introduced alongside existing services for women to ensure that support is fair, inclusive and effective for everyone.

Conclusion: Domestic violence is a serious problem in every part of the world, and it can happen to anyone – men as well as women. Men who experience abuse often remain silent because they fear being judged, laughed at or not believed. Most importantly, women are given a lot of importance in society and the law compared to men. Even if a woman is lying, society considers her as fragile and accept her as such. Many laws have been made to protect women and prevent violence, while for men there are hardly any laws. Unless we accept that violence is possible through both genders, it is impossible to stop it at all. This lack of recognition not only leaves many men to suffer alone but also hides the true scale of the problem.

Accepting that men can also be victims does not reduce the importance of protecting women. It makes the fight against domestic violence stronger and fair for all. Governments, NGO's and communities should work together to raise awareness, improve laws and provide equal help to everyone who suffers abuse. Just as helplines have been setup to protect women, similar facilities should also be available for affective men. Like telephone helplines have been setup in 2 German states, and online consultation platforms will also be setup at the provincial level to help victims. These measures should be taken in every country so that everyone can live with protection and love.

Domestic violence should never be ignored, no matter who the victim is. Every person deserves to live without fear in their own home. Only when we protect and support all victims equally can we hope to create a safer, more compassionate world for future generations.

¹² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK499891/>. Accessed on 23 Aug, 2025.

¹³

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326189137 Hate speech on social media networks towards a regulatory framework](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326189137_Hate_speech_on_social_media_networks_towards_a_regulatory_framework). Accessed on 23 Aug, 2025.