

Domestic Violence against Men by Women

Dr. Suman Shrivastava, Kumari Muskan

Sai Nath University, Jharkhand, India

Abstract

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), intimate partner violence is one of the main risks to women's health worldwide. Men can also become victims of domestic violence; as well as female victims tend to present their injuries first to the family doctor or the emergency room. Domestic violence against men is thus a current topic for doctors of all specialties.

Studies identified by the search provided prevalence rates of domestic physical violence against men ranging from 3.4% to 20.3%. Most affected men were violent towards their partners. 10.6-40% of them reported being abused or mistreated as children. Alcohol abuse, jealousy, mental illness, physical disability, and short relationship duration are associated with a higher risk of becoming a victim of domestic violence. Reported consequences of violence usually include minor physical injuries, impaired physical health, mental health problems such as anxiety or disruptive disorder, and increased use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Physical Abuse, Gender based Violence

Introduction

Mahesh was beaten and tortured daily by his wife in front of his son. His son's behavior was also affected by daily harassment and domestic violence. The violence and fights were so intense and loud that even the neighbors became aware of their condition and were also unaware of what was happening in their home. But he couldn't do anything. One day, when Mahesh's wife and son were not at home, Mahesh hanged himself from the ceiling fan as he was done with endless violence.

Spousal abuse is not something that only one gender faces. The general assumption or preconceived notions that have been in our society since time immemorial are that men are supposed to be strong, powerful and are generally expected to suppress their emotions. If they show or reveal their vulnerabilities, then they are labeled as sissy, effeminate and many other derogatory terms.

What does Domestic Violence on Men Means

Domestic violence against men is violence or other physical abuse that men experience in the domestic environment, for example in marriage or cohabitation. As with domestic violence against women, violence against men can be a criminal offence, but laws vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Men who report domestic violence may face social stigma regarding their perceived lack of machismo or other denigration of their masculinity. In addition, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) against men is generally less recognized by society than IPV against women. , which can act as another block for men to report their situation.

The relative prevalence of IPV in men and women is highly contested between studies. Women are significantly more likely to be injured or killed in cases of domestic violence. Some researchers believe that the number of male victims may be underestimated by law enforcement. For both men and women, domestic violence is among the most underrated crimes worldwide.

IPV against men is a controversial area of research, with concepts such as gender symmetry, battered spouse syndrome, and bidirectional IPV generating much debate. The lines of debate tend to fall between two basic polemics. The first of these argues that scholars who focus on IPV perpetrated by women are part of an anti-feminist backlash and attempt to undermine the problem of male abuse by championing the male cause over the far more serious cause of the abused woman. The second polemic argues that IPV against men is a serious and underreported problem, that domestic violence researchers and feminist academics have ignored it in order to protect the core gains of the battered women's movement, namely the view that intimate partner abuse is an extension of patriarchal dominance and that the concealment of violence perpetrated by women puts the abuser herself at risk for future escalation of IPV. One of the instruments used to generate statistics on IPV perpetration, the Conflict Tactics Scale, is particularly controversial.

History

Legal and Social Responses

IPV against men was not considered nearly as egregious as it was against women, both within society at large and in the courts. While men who beat their wives received severe punishments from judges, women who beat their husbands often received little or no punishment, and some were even applauded by judges and bystanders who saw the behavior as appropriate discipline. Societal expectations about gender and marriage were relevant in these discrepancies; many judges and newspaper articles joked that men subjected to IPV were "weak, pitiful, and effeminate." Men beaten by their wives were considered "so manly that they did not deserve society's care or protection." Later, women who committed physical violence against their husbands, judges were punished more severely in the hope of deterring what was perceived as an adverse outcome of the women's rights movement.

Statistics on Domestic Violence against Men in India

In a study of 1,000 married men of various age groups aged 21-49 in rural Haryana villages, 52.4% of men experience gender-based violence in India. 51.5% of men have experienced some form of torture or violence by their wives or their intimate partners during their lifetime. 10.5% of men experienced gender-based violence by their wives or intimate partners in the last 12 months. The most common spousal or domestic violence against men is emotional, and physical is the second most common domestic violence against men.

Either spouse can experience IPV or intimate partner violence. Lack of education, middle class values, one person earning a higher income, etc. are some of the main causes of IPV.

Apart from women, men also experience gender-based violence in India. Most women experience violence, so there is a stereotypical assumption among people that domestic violence is gender specific,

which is not correct. India is a patriarchal or male-dominated society, so it is often hard to believe that even men can be victims of domestic violence.

Comparison with Other Countries

1 in 9 men in the United States experience some form of domestic violence from their intimate partner or spouse. 1 in 7 men have been victims of some type of physical violence by their wife or intimate partner.

In the UK, two out of five victims of domestic violence are men. This dispels the common belief that only women can be victims of domestic violence. According to the men's rights group Parity Campaign, domestic violence against men often goes unnoticed and their attackers are usually not punished by the police.

According to the British Crime Survey in 2004-2005 and 2008-2009, 40% of victims of domestic violence were men. In recent years, it has decreased to 37.7%.

Men are most likely to be victims of domestic violence by strangers and in public places. In Australia, 1 in 16 men have been subjected to domestic violence since the age of 15, in the form of physical or sexual torture by their wife or intimate partner or someone they live with. Between 2012-13 and 2013-14, one man is killed per month as a result of domestic violence by a current or former partner.

These surveys and studies from different countries show that domestic violence between men by their wives or intimate partners is not uncommon. There should be appropriate measures to deal with domestic violence in a more neutral way.

Reasons Why Cases of Domestic Violence against Men Remain Unreported

There are many reasons why men often do not disclose the violence they face from their wives or intimate partners.

- **General Stereotypes Against Men:** Men often feel discriminated against or feel uncomfortable opening up about the violence they face because they are ashamed of being judged and labeled as weak and effeminate. They think that their fight against violence will be futile because of the gender specific laws and provisions that are mentioned in the Indian Constitution. They feel they have failed in their role as protectors in taking care of their families.
- **Fear of False Cases:** Men often feel that disclosing violence may cause unnecessary harassment and do not want to face legal consequences due to gender-biased or gender-specific laws in our constitution. They feel they have to leave their families and do not want to lose custody of their children, which is often a cumbersome process.
- **Social and Family Pressure:** Most Indians live with their families even after marriage. Because of this factor, men are ashamed to open up about violence. Society also plays a key role in cultivating gender-biased laws and stereotypes towards a particular sex.
- **Denial:** People usually feel that domestic violence can only happen to a woman. And they live in denial when they learn that even a man can be a victim of domestic violence. So people basically never want to talk about it.

Criticism

Many critics have rejected the research cited by Men's Rights Activists (MRA) and question their claim that such violence is gender-symmetrical, arguing that the MRA's focus on women's violence against men stems from a misogynistic political agenda to minimize the issue of male violence against women and undermining services to battered women.

The current literature on IPV has alternative views in relation to gender symmetry theory. A 2008 review published in the *Journal of Violence and Victims* found that although less serious situational violence or arguments were the same for both genders, men were the perpetrators of more serious and violent abuse. Physical violence by women was also found to be more likely to be motivated by self-defense or fear, while by men it was more likely to be motivated by control. A 2011 systematic review from the journal *Trauma Violence Abuse* also found that common motives for women to engage in domestic violence against men were anger, a need for attention, or a reaction to their partner's own violence. Another 2011 review published in the journal *Aggression and Violent Behavior* also found that while minor domestic violence was equal, more serious violence was perpetrated by men. It was also found that men were more likely to hit, choke, or strangle their partners, while women were more likely to throw things at their partners, slap, kick, bite, punch, or hit them with an object.

The researchers also found different outcomes for men and women in response to intimate partner violence. A 2012 review in the journal *Psychology of Violence* found that women suffered disproportionately as a result of IPV, particularly in terms of injury, fear, and PTSD (Post-traumatic Stress Disorder). 42–45 The review also found that 70% of female victims in one of their study were "very scared" in response to intimate partner violence by their partners, but 85% of male victims reported "no fear". The review also found that IPV mediated relationship satisfaction for women but not for men.

Gender asymmetry is also consistent with government findings. According to government statistics from the US Department of Justice, male perpetrators accounted for 96% of federal domestic violence prosecutions. Another US Department of Justice report on non-fatal domestic violence from 2003 to 2012 found that 76% of domestic violence was committed against women and 24% against men. Dr. Ruth M. Mann of the University of Windsor, an expert in sociology and criminology, expressed her opposition to the theory of gender symmetry of domestic violence on the basis that the main victims of the "annual accumulation" are women as well as children. (Coyle, 2001) of intimate partner homicide victims and fathers across Canada

The Role of Gender-Biased Laws in Exacerbating the Situation

Gender is a social construction and is often influenced by race, caste, country, class, culture, sexual preferences, abilities, rituals, etc. In many South Asian countries, such as India, gender roles are very rigid. This rigidity gives rise to gender biases and stereotypes. Men who face domestic violence from their wives or their intimate partners, the perpetrators, who are usually women, are immune from the gender-based violence provisions contained in the penal provisions, i.e. the Indian Penal Code of the country.

Under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, only a man can be held liable for cruelty to his wife. There is no sub-section or provision in the law that makes a woman responsible for domestic violence. When the men try to open up and report the torture and physical violence they face, no one listens, not even the police. Complaining about domestic violence by a man can often label a man as "effeminate" or "weak" by Indian society.

Many men think that the situation will improve soon, and for this reason they do not report the domestic violence they face. Any type of violence, whether physical or mental, is a gross violation of human rights. Unreported and unspoken cases of domestic violence can eventually lead to breakups, bitter fights, divorces, depression and even suicide.

Due to the biased laws in the Indian Penal Code that favor women, there are a number of false cases where women have falsely accused men of rape or domestic violence, and the sad thing is that these biased laws automatically assume that a man can never be the victim. Women do not have to provide any evidence to prove their authenticity. Prejudiced laws regard them as real creatures.

According to a 2002 World Health Organization report, women are more likely than men to think about suicide, while men are more likely to die by suicide. Constant exposure to violence can cause many physical and mental illnesses such as depression, suicidal tendencies and chronic physical disorders such as cancer, heart attacks, HIV/AIDS, etc.

Estimates of Male Victimization

In England and Wales, the 1995 "Home Office Research Study 191" surveyed 10,844 people (5,886 women and 4,958 men) aged 16 to 59 and found that 4.2% of men had experienced IPV in the twelve months preceding the survey. Over the course of a lifetime, this number increased to 14.9% of men. Of the 6.6 million incidents of IPV in 1995, 3.25 million involved male victims, with 1 million incidents resulting in injury. Since 2004, more detailed annual records have been kept as a supplementary survey attached to the Home Office's annual reports on crime in England and Wales. These reports consistently recorded significantly higher rates of both male and female victims of IPV than standard crime surveys. For male victims, these figures range from a high of 4.5% in 2007/2008 to a low of 3.1% in 2009/2010. In the Republic of Ireland, a 2005 National Crime Council report found that 15% of women and 6% of men had experienced severe IPV in their lifetime, equivalent to approximately 213,000 women and 88,000 men. In Northern Ireland, police records for 2012 indicated 2,525 male victims of domestic violence, an increase of 259 cases on 2011.

In the United States, the National Violence Against Women Survey conducted by the Department of Justice in 2000 surveyed 16,000 people (8,000 men and 8,000 women) and found that 7.4% of men reported being physically assaulted by a current or ex-husband or wife, together, partner, boyfriend/girlfriend or date in their lifetime. Additionally, 0.9% of men reported experiencing domestic violence in the past year, which equates to 834,732 men. In 2000, the Canadian General Social Survey found that between 1994 and 1999, 7% of men, or 549,000 men, experienced IPV. Another 2005 Canadian General Social Survey found that between 2000 and 2005, 6% of men, representing 546,000 men, had experienced IPV. Data on campus rape, such as from a study by the National Institute of

Mental Health and the magazine Ms. Magazine, found 1 in 7 sexual assaults among men at American colleges. In 2013, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that in a sample of 16,000 US adults, 26% of gay men, 37.3% of bisexual men, and 29% of straight men had been victims of IPV. to 43.8% lesbians, 61.1% bisexual women and 35% heterosexual women. CDC Director Tom Frieden stated, "This report shows that lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in this country are more likely to experience sexual violence and intimate partner victimization."

In New Zealand, the 21-year Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study published in 1999 reported that of their sample of 1037 people, 27% of women and 34% of men reported being physically abused by a partner, with 37% of women and 22% of men reporting IPV . Also in New Zealand, a 2009 Journal of Applied Social Psychology report assessed samples of university students (35 women, 27 men), general population (34 women, 27 men), and incarcerated participants (15 women, 24 men) and found that 16.7% of male respondents reported physical abuse (12.9% for students and 15.4% for convicts), while 29.5% reported bidirectional (ie, both partners perpetrating IPV) violence (14.5% for students and 51.3% in convicts).

The 2006 International Dating Violence Study, which examined IPV among 13,601 students in 32 countries, found that "approximately one quarter of both male and female students physically assaulted a partner during the year." It reports that 24.4% of men experienced minor IPV and 7.6% experienced "severe assault".

Two Swedish studies were published in 2012 showing that men experienced IPV at similar rates to women – 8% per year in one study and 11% per year in the other.

A survey in the UK found that 9% of men had experienced some form of partner abuse, representing around 1.4 million men, including stalking, physical violence and sexual assault. A landmark US study found that IPV victims are often slapped, kicked, punched, grabbed or strangled by their partners. A growing body of international research has shown that men and women experience IPV at somewhat similar rates. An example is a recent survey by the Canadian National Statistics Agency, which concluded that "equal proportions of men and women reported being victims of spousal violence in the previous 5 years (4%, respectively). The surveys mentioned above indicated that a small percentage of men (less than 20% of victims) would tell the police or health professionals about their victimization. Perhaps this is due to a legitimate fear of being scorned, ridiculed or mistrusted by these authorities. A recent research paper by Dr. Elizabeth Bates from the University of Cumbria found that the overarching experience of male victims of IPV was that "nobody would ever believe me". One victim commented: "I told friends they laughed, while another stated... the police laughed." Laughter is a common response for male victims of IPV.

Literature Review

Kimmel M. (2001) in his book "Male Victims of Domestic Violence" stated that domestic violence is one of the major problems and men also suffer domestic violence from their wives or intimate partners. Efforts to prevent domestic violence and its successful implementation followed years of research and advocacy on behalf of their victims. New laws, police procedures, medical and forensic research have

improved conditions for men who suffer domestic violence. In recent years, domestic violence has become a hot topic among activists, individuals and many organizations. After decades of research, many political activists are now shouting at the top of their lungs that men and women can become victims of domestic violence in roughly equal numbers. Despite several studies suggesting that only women can face domestic violence by men, another 100 empirical studies suggest that both men and women can be victims of domestic violence. This has provoked enthusiastic "male gender activists" who should be kept in mind by policy makers when it comes to policies related to domestic violence, who have created policies and laws aimed primarily at women.

Lorber. J. (1991) explained in his book "The Social Construction of Gender" that gender is socially constructed and influenced by many factors. People often misunderstand the concept of gender and sex. They are quite different. In the book, sex refers to what we inherit, such as male or female, and gender is what we learn. Gender is nothing more than a device that society uses to control its members. Sometimes gender like social class and race can be used to create stereotypes and prejudices against people. Prejudice is a set of attitudes that are offensive to one part of society, while discrimination is an overt negativity towards a person depending on their redundant identity. These books also try to explain various stereotypes and gender discrimination against both sexes. The book also states that gender identity is influenced by social variables and has little or nothing to do with biological variables.

Gender Neutral Laws – The Need of the Hour

Human rights and gender equality belong to both men and women. In this day and age, when men are falsely accused of rape, domestic violence and sexual assault, gender neutral laws are the need of the hour. Domestic violence, this term nowhere indicates that only women can be victims of domestic violence, men can also be victims and not the only perpetrator. Domestic violence should be considered spousal violence because it is not limited to women.

In India, domestic violence laws only protect women, not men. It gives the false impression that men can only be the perpetrator and not the victim. Domestic violence against men is increasing day by day. Therefore, special provisions and amendments are needed to create gender-neutral laws to help victims obtain redress and punishment for the perpetrator regardless of gender. Specific laws and amendments are needed to protect both spouses from domestic violence, which is still prevalent in our society.

Conclusion

Social values, culture, and norms have changed a lot in recent times thanks to modernization and westernization. In the past, men were considered the protectors of their families, but nowadays men and women work equally, take care of their homes and manage them with equal contribution to their income. Men have now opened up about the domestic violence they face and have now openly shared their pain, agony and their struggles. Men are no longer stronger than women.

It is high time that laws and laws also recognize their problem as a social issue or problem. Domestic violence against men can be recognized through effective changes in laws, creating awareness and breaking down stereotypes and preconceived notions.