

Unveiling the Prevalence and Reporting Barriers of Domestic Violence Against Men

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Abstract

Although there is an increasing concern about Domestic abuse against males in the home Yes, it is still largely unreported particularly in patriarchal societies such as India. This study which focuses on the Lucknow Division examines the frequency of domestic abuse that men experience as well as the obstacles that keep them from getting assistance. A structured questionnaire with six Likert scale questions covering two main objectives—the prevalence of domestic violence and reporting behaviour—was distributed to 100 male respondents in this quantitative study. Frequency distribution was utilised in the data analysis. The results show that a sizable portion of male victims endure economic emotional and physical abuse but are reluctant to come forward because of social shame apprehension about not being believed and psychological trauma. The results call attention to male victimization and emphasize the necessity of gender-inclusive policies.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Men, Perceptions, Social norms, Stigma, Psychological Factors, Lucknow

1. Introduction

Although it is generally believed that domestic violence only affects women there is a growing quantity of data demonstrating that males are commonly the targets of domestic violence. Seldom do men become targets of violence at home spoken about in patriarchal societies like India where men are more frequently perceived as the aggressors than the victims. Examining the types of violence men experience as well as the social and psychological barriers that prevent them from reporting or seeking assistance this study investigates the prevalence of domestic violence against men in the Lucknow Division.

Literature on violence in homes, especially against males, is scarce in South Asian settings. Roughly 20% of men in Indias cities have experienced domestic abuse according to Simister, J., & Mehta, P. S. (2010) but only a small percentage of these incidents are reported because of social stigma and conventional gender norms. Domestic violence against men might manifest in a number of ways, such as physical abuse Economic dominance, manipulation of feelings, and sex abuse. Despite the seriousness of these abuses male victims frequently experience social pressure to keep quiet because they believe that asking for assistance would diminish their manliness (Walker A. S, et al 2020).

The underreporting of domestic abuse against men is caused by a number of factors. Men are discouraged from admitting they are victims by cultural norms that equate masculinity with power and dominance. According to studies men frequently feel ashamed afraid and responsible for their actions. These emotions are exacerbated by cultural perceptions that minimize the accounts of males who have suffered from domestic violence. Males who are sufferers of assault at home often experience psychological conditions like anxiety depression and low self-esteem “(Violence, I. P. 2002).”

For male victims Indias legal system also poses obstacles. Men have limited legal options when it comes to domestic abuse laws such as the “Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005” which are primarily intended to protect women. This legal gap (2022) hinders male victims' attempts to obtain justice. In the lack of

adequate legal aid, victims of masculine abuse are able to endure continuing violence and psychological pain. (Dim, E. E., & Lysova, A. 2022).

With a particular focus on the Lucknow Division this study attempts to fill the knowledge Lack of information about male-to-male domestic abuse in India. This research contributes to a deeper comprehension of the gender dynamics involved in domestic abuse by examining the frequency of domestic abuse and highlighting the mental health and social obstacles that prevent men from complaining or getting assistance.

2. Significance of Study

The significance of the study “*Unveiling the Prevalence and Reporting Barriers of Domestic Violence Against Men*” lies in its potential to challenge existing gender stereotypes and broaden the understanding of domestic violence as a human issue rather than a gender-specific one. In India, social discourse and legal frameworks have predominantly focused on women as victims, leaving the experiences of male survivors largely unacknowledged. This study seeks to fill a critical research gap by systematically examining the nature, extent, and barriers to reporting domestic violence against men, thereby contributing to a more inclusive and equitable perspective on gender-based violence. By identifying the social, cultural, and psychological factors that discourage men from seeking help, the research can inform policymakers and stakeholders to design gender-neutral support systems, legal reforms, and awareness programs. The study also holds social relevance, as it challenges toxic notions of masculinity that compel men to remain silent about their suffering. Moreover, it contributes to the creation of empathetic and balanced interventions in counseling, mental health, and social welfare sectors. Ultimately, the research underscores the need for an inclusive justice framework that safeguards the rights and dignity of all victims, irrespective of gender, promoting fairness, equality, and societal well-being.

3. Objectives:

- To examine the prevalence and forms of domestic violence against men in the Lucknow Division.
- To identify the social and psychological factors influencing the reporting and help-seeking behaviour of male victims of domestic violence.

4. Literature Review

Adebayo, A. A. (2014) focus on male perpetration and female victimization and Research on male perpetrators of domestic misconduct in Nigeria highlights a significant deficiency in the identification of males victims of this kind of abuse. It also critiques the dominant gendered framework. Adebayo highlights how gender stereotypes and cultural prejudices frequently cause male victims to be marginalized which makes it more difficult for them to get support. Adebayo emphasizes the necessity for actual investigations that rely on worldwide research in this area to gain a greater understanding the reasons for and incidence of intimate partner violence in males. According to the research, tailored treatments are necessary to address the needs of both male and female intimate relationship abuse survivors acknowledging their varied experiences. It also calls for a gender-inclusive approach to the problem.

“Allen, E., & Bradley, M. S. (2018)” compare the victimization of men and women to examine how society views domestic violence what laws are passed and how law enforcement handles cases of it. Gender-based disparities in the treatment of violence are revealed by the research which highlights a widespread stereotype that sees men as aggressors and women as victims. Male victimization is frequently dismissed as unimportant or viewed with suspicion which leads to underreporting and lax punishment for female offenders in court. According to the authors male-on-female violence receives more serious attention from law enforcement than does female-on-male violence because of this gender bias.

Kelly, L., & Westmorland, N. (2016) look into how institutional and societal reactions are shaped by definitions of domestic violence. According to the study which examines terminology used to characterize abusive behaviors traditional definitions frequently emphasize physical aggression while ignoring financial emotional and psychological abuse. The study shows how abusive men minimize or justify their actions through victim-blaming and blame-shifting strategies as revealed in interviews with the perpetrators. The significance of improving the terminology and definitions used to discuss domestic violence in order to encompass the entire range of abusive behaviors is emphasized by this study.

Kumar (2012) tackles the topic of male victimization which is frequently disregarded in his study on d"omestic violence against men in India". The study looks at physical emotional and financial abuse as well as psychological manipulation in order to investigate the prevalence manifestations and effects of domestic violence against men. Kumar draws attention to the ways in which gender norms and traditional patriarchal structures in India contribute to the underreporting of male victims and their social marginalization. Institutional impediments societal stigma and a dearth of resources for assistance confront male survivors. Kumar emphasizes the necessity of specific interventions like counselling and legal support that are adapted to the needs of victims who identify as men. In addition, the study challenges societal stereotypes that keep the conversation about male victimization of domestic violence silent and advocates for more thorough research on this issue.

5. Research Methodology

The Lucknow Divisions incidence and types of research looked at intimate partner violence against males as well as its historical and behavioural variables influencing the reporting behaviour of the participants. A quantitative research design was employed. A structured questionnaire was used by the research to collect data from 100 male respondents using the survey method. Three questions on the Likert scale were included in the questionnaire design one for each of the study's objectives.

"On a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)" the respondents were asked to rate how strongly they agreed with the statements. The first set of questions asked the respondents about the types and frequency of domestic violence they had experienced the second set of questions looked at the variables influencing their reporting behaviour. Because the survey was conducted online a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds were represented in the sample. Frequency distribution data analysis was used to see how common domestic violence is and what obstacles men have when reporting abuse.

6. Data Analysis

Domestic violence against men is a significant yet underexplored social issue that challenges traditional gender narratives and exposes the deep-rooted biases within societal and legal frameworks. Despite emerging evidence indicating that men also face emotional, physical, and psychological abuse in intimate relationships, the prevalence of such violence remains largely hidden due to social stigma, cultural expectations, and inadequate institutional support. Men often refrain from reporting abuse out of fear of ridicule, disbelief, or being perceived as weak, as societal norms have long associated masculinity with dominance, endurance, and emotional restraint. The lack of gender-neutral provisions in domestic violence laws further marginalizes male victims, leaving them without sufficient legal or psychological assistance. In many cases, law enforcement officials and support service providers are either unaware of or insensitive to the realities of male victimization, which perpetuates a culture of silence and denial. To address this issue effectively, there is an urgent need for inclusive policies that recognize domestic violence as a human rights violation rather than a gendered problem. Awareness campaigns, community outreach, and educational programs should aim to dismantle stereotypes and encourage open dialogue. Establishing gender-neutral helplines, shelters, and counseling centers will also provide essential platforms for male victims to seek help safely. Additionally, more research and data-driven studies are needed to uncover the

scope, patterns, and consequences of domestic violence against men. Recognizing and addressing these barriers is crucial to creating an equitable society where every individual, regardless of gender, can live free from fear, abuse, and discrimination.

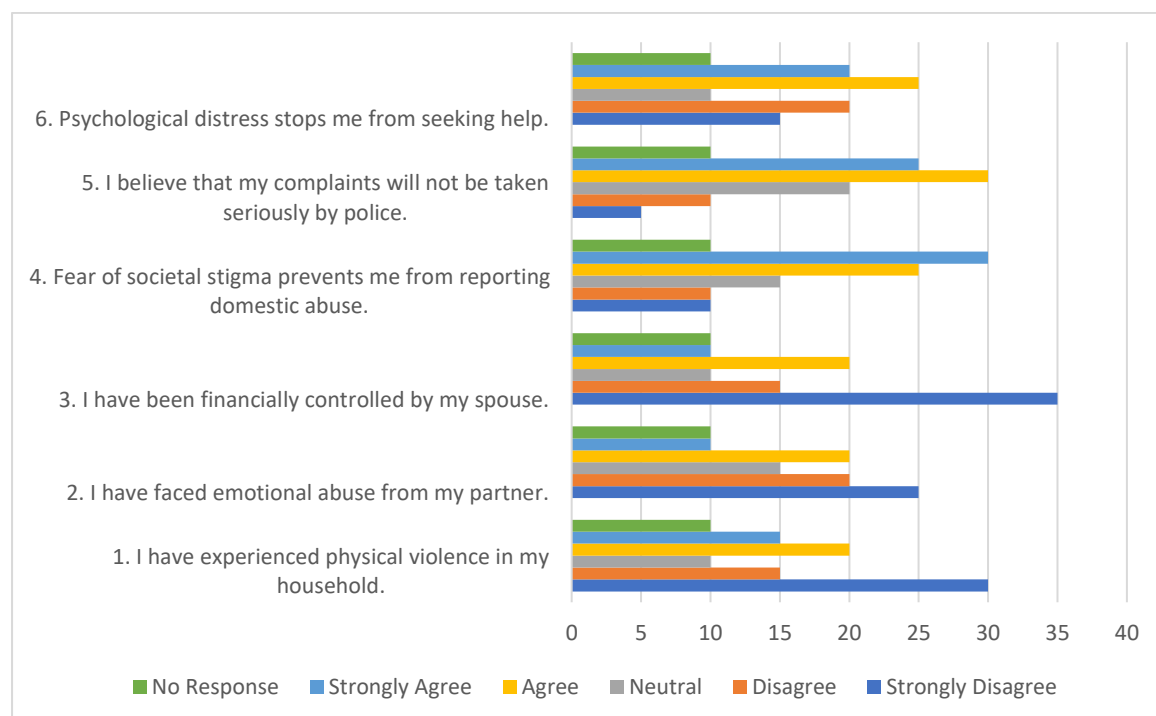


Fig 4.1 Representation of Survey Responses

Table 4.1 “Frequency Distribution of the Responses”

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I have experienced physical violence in my household.	30	15	10	20	25
2. I have faced emotional abuse from my partner.	25	20	15	20	20
3. I have been financially controlled by my spouse.	35	15	10	20	20
4. Fear of societal stigma prevents me from reporting domestic abuse.	10	10	15	25	40
5. I believe that my complaints will not be taken seriously by police.	5	10	20	30	35
6. Psychological distress stops me from seeking help.	15	20	10	25	30

The frequency table sheds light on how common domestic abuse is what kinds of abuse men experience and what obstacles keep them from getting assistance.

30% of respondents strongly disagreed meaning they had never experienced physical violence while 45% (20% agree 25% strongly agree) said they had. This was the first question asked. This implies that although a considerable fraction of the samples male participants has not experienced physical abuse a noteworthy minority have. Given the stigma associated with male victimhood it is possible that some respondents were hesitant or uncertain about disclosing their violent experiences as evidenced by the 10% neutral response rate.

In reference to the second question which deals with emotional abuse 40% of respondents (20% agree and 20% strongly agree) admitted to having experienced emotional abuse whereas 25% strongly disagreed denying this experience. Remarkably 15% of participants expressed no opinion indicating once more that they were hesitant to share their experiences in full. Because emotional manipulation is more difficult to identify and conceal especially in a culture where male victims are less likely to be believed emotional abuse appears to be more common than physical violence.

As the third question made clear 40% of respondents said they had financial control whereas 35% percent strongly disagreed. While a sizable fraction of men reported having no financial control the 20% of respondents who agreed with the statement suggest that financial control is still a problem for some. The 10% neutral response rate could be an indication of confusion about financial control or a reluctance to acknowledge such vulnerabilities. The social and psychological determinants that impact the disclosure of abuse are especially significant.

The fourth question asked Does fear of societal stigma prevent me from reporting domestic abuse? revealed that 65% of respondents (25% agreed & 40% strongly agree) said that stigma and societal expectations prevented them from seeking assistance highlighting the cultural pressures men face to keep quiet. It is clear that stigma plays a significant role in silencing male victims because only 20% of respondents disagreed with this statement and 15% were neutral

Regarding the perceived lack of support from authorities in the fifth question 65% of men (30% agree 35% strongly agree) thought that law enforcement would not take their complaints seriously. This is a significant obstacle to getting help because the legal system frequently Favors female victims making men feel abandoned and powerless.

The sixth question indicates that 455 percent of respondents (25% agree & 30% strongly agree) believe that psychological distress is a major barrier to getting help. Although 35% of respondents disagreed with the statement suggesting resilience or a reluctance to acknowledge emotional distress the 10% of respondents who were neutral suggested that some men are still struggling with their feelings. These factors contribute to a culture of silence reinforcing the need for better awareness and legal protection for male victims.

Domestic violence against men is an emerging but often neglected social issue that demands systematic examination, particularly in urban and semi-urban regions like the Lucknow Division. Traditionally, the discourse on domestic violence has focused primarily on women as victims, thereby overlooking the silent suffering of men within domestic spaces. Preliminary studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that men in Lucknow, irrespective of socio-economic class, may experience physical assault, verbal abuse, emotional manipulation, economic deprivation, and sexual coercion at the hands of their partners or family members. However, due to a lack of awareness and gender-neutral data, the actual prevalence remains underestimated. A detailed investigation into the extent and nature of this violence can help reveal the hidden realities faced by men in domestic settings and contribute to more inclusive policymaking.

The forms of domestic violence that men experience are often psychological and emotional rather than overtly physical. Men may be subjected to constant humiliation, threats of false legal accusations, social isolation, or control over finances. In some cases, physical abuse may occur but remain unreported due to fear of disbelief or mockery. Emotional abuse, such as manipulation and verbal aggression, is particularly widespread yet difficult to identify or prove. Within the cultural context of the Lucknow Division, where patriarchal values and traditional

gender expectations remain strong, men are often conditioned to suppress emotional pain and maintain an image of strength, which further prevents them from acknowledging victimhood.

The social factors influencing the reporting of domestic violence against men are deeply intertwined with cultural norms and gender expectations. Society often perceives men as protectors and providers, not as potential victims of abuse. Consequently, when men face domestic violence, they fear social stigma, loss of respect, and ridicule from peers and authorities. Many also distrust the justice system, as legal frameworks like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, are perceived as biased toward women. The lack of institutional mechanisms, such as male-focused counseling services or shelters, further discourages men from seeking help. Additionally, family pressure to preserve honor and social standing often compels men to endure violence silently. Psychologically, male victims often suffer from depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and post-traumatic stress but rarely seek professional help. The internal conflict between their lived reality and societal expectations of masculinity creates emotional distress and self-blame. Shame and fear of being labeled “weak” or “unmanly” prevent them from reporting the abuse. To address these issues, there is a pressing need to promote awareness about gender-neutral domestic violence, sensitize law enforcement agencies, and provide confidential support services. Only through breaking the silence surrounding male victimization can society ensure justice, equality, and emotional well-being for all individuals, regardless of gender.

7. Revealing the Hidden Epidemic: Domestic Violence Against Men

Domestic violence (DV) is often framed as a women's issue, but men suffer in silence too. Intimate partner violence (IPV) against men is a pervasive yet underreported crisis, shrouded in stigma and systemic neglect. As awareness grows, recent data underscores its scale, while entrenched barriers keep victims trapped. Unveiling these realities is crucial for fostering equitable support.

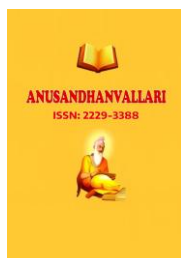
The prevalence of DV against men is staggering. In the United States, over 28.5% of men have experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime, with 13.8% facing severe physical abuse. Psychological aggression affects nearly half (48.8%) of men. Globally, patterns hold: more than two in five U.S. men report lifetime IPV exposure, and one in four endure severe physical harm. In the UK, approximately 757,000 men are victims annually.

Why do so few men come forward? Barriers are multifaceted, rooted in societal norms and institutional gaps. Foremost is stigma tied to masculinity: men fear appearing “weak” or emasculating themselves by admitting vulnerability, a notion ingrained from upbringing that equates help-seeking with failure. Embarrassment and shame compound this, leading to denial—many refuse to label their experiences as abuse, viewing themselves as outliers who should “man up.”

Fear of disbelief is rampant. Male victims anticipate skepticism from police, healthcare providers, and even friends, who may ridicule claims or assume the man, as the “stronger” partner, provoked it. This is exacerbated by media portrayals and policies framing DV as male-perpetrated, rendering men's stories “unbelievable.” Counter-accusations loom large: abusers often flip narratives, alleging the man is the perpetrator, risking false charges, job loss, or imprisonment.

Family dynamics intensify isolation. Men dread losing child custody—courts often favor mothers—or harming children by disrupting the home, prioritizing stability over escape. For LGBTQ+ men, additional fears include outing their orientation or community backlash. Systemic voids persist: shelters and hotlines rarely cater to men, with funding skewed toward female victims, leaving them without tailored resources.

These hurdles foster secondary victimization, where seeking help invites further trauma, like dismissive responses or legal reprisals. The result? Delayed disclosure—21% of men only reveal abuse post-relationship—and worsened mental health.



Breaking this cycle demands action: destigmatizing male victimhood through education, expanding male-inclusive services, and training responders to believe all survivors. Hotlines like the National Domestic Violence Hotline offer confidential support for men too. By amplifying these voices, society can dismantle barriers, ensuring no victim suffers unseen. True equity in DV prevention recognizes that abuse knows no gender—only pain.

8. Conclusion and Suggestions

This study examines the social and psychological variables influencing men's help-seeking behaviour and provides information on the types and prevalence of domestic violence against men in the Lucknow Division. The results show that many men experience financial emotional and physical abuse but they are afraid to report it because of social stigma and the impression that law enforcement doesn't care about them. Because of the psychological effects of domestic abuse many men are also discouraged from seeking assistance which adds to the stigma associated with male victimhood.

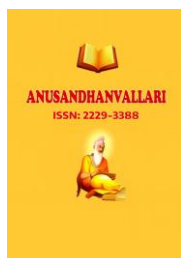
Evidence suggests that societal norms and legal systems that do not adequately meet the desires of the male victims of violence in the home contribute towards the failing to report of incidents of domestic abuse. To solve this issue, policies that assist each victim of domestic abuse—regardless of gender—are required. Awareness drives are essential because they debunk stereotypes of what it means to be a man and educate the general public to the frequency of domestic violence against males. Ultimately, raising awareness of domestic abuse against males requires a multipronged approach that incorporates legislative changes, cultural change, and mental health assistance.

Suggestions:

Addressing the prevalence and reporting barriers of domestic violence against men requires a multidimensional approach that combines awareness, legal reform, and social support mechanisms. Despite growing recognition, many male victims remain invisible due to deep-rooted gender stereotypes, fear of ridicule, and lack of institutional support. There is an urgent need to expand the legal framework to ensure gender-neutral protection under domestic violence laws and to sensitize law enforcement agencies, counselors, and healthcare providers to the realities of male victimization. Awareness campaigns should challenge traditional notions of masculinity that equate suffering in silence with strength, encouraging men to seek help without shame. Establishing confidential helplines, shelters, and counseling centers dedicated to male victims can promote trust and accessibility. Furthermore, systematic research and data collection on male victimization are essential to understand its patterns, causes, and socio-psychological effects. Media and educational institutions should play an active role in destigmatizing the issue, portraying domestic violence as a human rights concern rather than a gender-specific one. Only through inclusive policies, empathy-driven awareness, and equitable legal mechanisms can society begin to unveil the true extent of domestic violence against men and ensure justice and rehabilitation for all victims, irrespective of gender.

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