

Violence against Men as Myth, Reality and Social Perception – A Study of Prayagraj District

Dr. Shalini Singh

Assistant Professor

Department of Sociology

Jagat Taran Girls' Degree College, Prayagraj

Abstract

Violence against men is an emerging yet insufficiently explored area within gender studies, despite increasing recognition that men may also experience physical, emotional, psychological, economic, and social abuse. The present study examined the myths, realities, and social perceptions associated with violence against men among respondents in Prayagraj district. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 50 respondents through a structured questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Chi-square test, independent samples t-test, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and one-way ANOVA) were used to analyse respondents' perceptions. The analysis indicated that a majority of respondents rejected the traditional myths that men cannot become victims of violence or that they should remain silent about abuse. Respondents also recognized that emotional abuse can have consequences comparable to physical violence and perceived that society generally fails to acknowledge violence against men adequately. Correlation and regression analyses suggested that awareness and perceived social support positively influenced help-seeking behaviour, whereas adherence to traditional masculine norms negatively affected reporting behaviour. Educational qualification and place of residence were also found to influence awareness levels regarding male victimization. The findings emphasize the need for gender-inclusive awareness programmes, evidence-based policy interventions, counselling services, and balanced legal and institutional mechanisms that recognize violence as a human rights issue affecting all individuals irrespective of gender. The study contributes to the expanding discourse on gender justice by highlighting the importance of acknowledging male victimization while continuing efforts to eliminate violence against women.

Keywords: *Violence against Men, Male Victimization, Domestic Violence, Gender Stereotypes, Social Perception, Help-Seeking Behaviour, Prayagraj District*

I. Introduction

Violence is a universal social problem that affects individuals irrespective of gender, age, religion, caste, or socio-economic background. While considerable academic attention has been devoted to violence against women and children due to its widespread prevalence and historical inequalities, violence against men has remained comparatively underexplored. Public discourse generally assumes that men are physically strong, emotionally resilient, and capable of protecting themselves from abuse. Consequently, incidents of violence against men are often ignored, ridiculed, or dismissed as isolated occurrences rather than recognized as legitimate social issues. Violence against men encompasses physical assault, psychological abuse, emotional manipulation, sexual victimization, economic exploitation, cyber harassment, coercive control, and institutional discrimination. Such violence may occur within families, intimate relationships, workplaces, educational institutions, public spaces, and digital environments. Although the forms and patterns of victimization may differ from those experienced by women, the psychological, physical, and social consequences can be equally severe. Depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, substance abuse, social isolation, reduced work productivity, and suicidal tendencies are among the major consequences reported by male victims.

Traditional concepts of masculinity significantly contribute to the invisibility of male victimization. Society often expects men to remain emotionally strong, independent, and capable of solving personal problems without external assistance. These expectations discourage men from reporting abuse because disclosure is frequently perceived as a sign of weakness or failure to conform to socially accepted masculine roles. Consequently, many incidents remain unreported, limiting public awareness and reducing opportunities for institutional intervention. In India, discussions concerning gender-based violence have predominantly emphasized women's safety, empowerment, and legal protection. While these efforts remain essential, recent academic discussions have highlighted the importance of adopting a gender-inclusive perspective that recognizes every

victim of violence irrespective of gender. Such an approach does not diminish the seriousness of violence against women; rather, it broadens the understanding of violence as a violation of human dignity affecting all individuals.

Prayagraj district, one of the major urban and educational centres of Uttar Pradesh, presents an appropriate setting for examining public perceptions regarding violence against men. Rapid urbanization, changing family structures, increasing educational attainment, expanding digital communication, and evolving gender roles have influenced social attitudes toward masculinity and interpersonal relationships. Understanding public perceptions in such a setting can contribute to evidence-based policy formulation and awareness programmes. The present study examines the myths, realities, and social perceptions surrounding violence against men among respondents in Prayagraj district. Particular emphasis is placed on identifying commonly held myths, assessing awareness levels, examining reporting behaviour, analysing the influence of education and residence, and understanding the role of social support in addressing male victimization. The findings are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on gender justice by encouraging balanced and inclusive approaches to violence prevention and victim support.

II. Review of Literature

Existing literature indicates that violence against men remains substantially underreported because of social stigma and prevailing masculine norms. International studies have documented that men may experience physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, and economic abuse within intimate relationships and other social settings. Research further suggests that fear of ridicule, concern about social reputation, and limited institutional support discourage many male victims from seeking professional assistance. Studies on domestic violence have demonstrated that psychological abuse often produces long-term consequences such as anxiety, depression, chronic stress, and reduced quality of life. Researchers have also reported that emotional abuse frequently precedes physical violence, making early recognition particularly important. Several investigations have highlighted that educational attainment positively influences awareness regarding gender-based violence and increases acceptance of help-seeking behaviour. Research examining social perceptions consistently indicates that traditional masculine norms discourage emotional expression and reinforce the expectation that men should tolerate hardship without complaint. Such stereotypes contribute to delayed reporting and reduced utilization of counselling and legal services. Scholars have therefore recommended gender-sensitive awareness programmes that acknowledge male victimization while continuing efforts to address violence against women.

Recent literature also emphasizes the role of media representation in shaping public attitudes. Positive and balanced media coverage can reduce stigma and encourage recognition of violence against men as a legitimate social concern. Conversely, stereotypical portrayals may trivialize male victimization and discourage disclosure. Although research on male victimization has gradually increased, empirical studies conducted at the district level within the Indian context remain limited. The present study therefore attempts to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by examining public perceptions regarding violence against men in Prayagraj district through a structured survey.

III. Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine public perceptions regarding violence against men in Prayagraj district.
2. To assess the prevalence of myths associated with male victimization.
3. To analyse awareness regarding different forms of violence experienced by men.
4. To examine the relationship between awareness, myth rejection, social support, and help-seeking behaviour.
5. To compare awareness levels across urban and rural respondents.
6. To analyse the influence of educational qualification on awareness regarding violence against men.
7. To examine the role of traditional masculine beliefs in influencing reporting behaviour.
8. To suggest policy measures for improving awareness and institutional support for male victims.

Research Hypotheses

H₁: Respondents significantly reject the myth that men cannot become victims of violence.

H₂: Traditional masculine beliefs significantly reduce reporting behaviour among male victims.

H₃: Awareness regarding violence against men is positively associated with help-seeking behaviour.

H₄: Educational qualification significantly influences awareness regarding violence against men.

Significance of the Study

The present study contributes to the growing academic discussion on gender-inclusive approaches to violence by focusing on an issue that has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. The findings are expected to improve understanding of public perceptions regarding violence against men and the myths that

discourage recognition of male victimization. The study may assist policymakers in designing gender-inclusive victim support services, awareness campaigns, and counselling programmes. It may also benefit educational institutions, psychologists, social workers, law enforcement agencies, and non-governmental organizations working in the field of family welfare and mental health. Furthermore, the study contributes to the literature by highlighting the importance of balanced approaches that recognize every victim without undermining existing efforts to address violence against women.

Delimitations of the Study

The study is subject to the following delimitations:

1. The study is confined to Prayagraj district of Uttar Pradesh.
2. The study is limited to a sample of 50 respondents.
3. The study examines perceptions regarding violence against men and does not estimate the actual prevalence of violence.
4. Information is based on respondents' self-reported opinions and perceptions.
5. The study focuses primarily on physical, emotional, psychological, economic, and social dimensions of violence.
6. The findings are limited to the selected sample and should not be generalized beyond similar contexts without additional evidence.

IV. Research Methodology

The present study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine public perceptions regarding violence against men in Prayagraj district. A sample of 50 respondents constituted the study population. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to measure awareness regarding violence against men, acceptance or rejection of commonly prevailing myths, willingness to report violence, perceived social support, and demographic characteristics. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section collected demographic information relating to age, educational qualification, residence, and marital status. The second section contained statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Higher scores represented greater awareness and stronger rejection of myths concerning male victimization. The collected data were organized, coded, and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics included frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Inferential statistics included Chi-square analysis, independent samples t-test, Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis, and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). These statistical techniques were used to examine relationships among awareness, myth rejection, help-seeking behaviour, educational qualification, residence, and reporting behaviour. The findings were interpreted in relation to the stated research objectives and hypotheses, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of myths, realities, and social perceptions associated with violence against men in the selected study area.

Statistical Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents According to Age, Place of Residence, Educational Qualification and Marital Status in Prayagraj District (N = 50)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	18–30	68	27.2
	31–45	102	40.8
	46–60	59	23.6
	Above 60	21	8.4
Residence	Urban	145	58.0
	Rural	105	42.0
Education	Graduate & Above	167	66.8
	Up to Higher Secondary	83	33.2
Marital Status	Married	176	70.4
	Unmarried	74	29.6

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the respondents selected for the study on violence against men in Prayagraj district. Out of the total 250 respondents, the largest proportion (40.8%) belonged to the age group of 31–45 years, followed by 27.2% in the 18–30 years category, 23.6% in the 46–60 years group, and only 8.4% above 60 years. This distribution indicates that the study primarily represents economically active adult males who are more likely to have experienced family, workplace, and social interactions relevant to the study objectives. Regarding residence, 58.0% of the respondents were from urban areas, while 42.0% belonged to rural areas, providing representation from both geographical settings. Educationally, two-thirds (66.8%) of the respondents were graduates or possessed higher qualifications, suggesting a comparatively educated sample capable of understanding issues related to gender, social perception, and violence. With respect to marital status,

70.4% were married and 29.6% were unmarried. The higher proportion of married respondents is particularly relevant because intimate partner relationships constitute one of the important contexts in which violence against men may occur. Overall, the demographic composition provides a balanced foundation for examining perceptions regarding myths and realities of male victimization in Prayagraj district.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Opinion on the Myth that “Men Cannot Be Victims of Domestic Violence” in Prayagraj District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	11.2
Agree	44	17.6
Neutral	31	12.4
Disagree	79	31.6
Strongly Disagree	68	27.2

Mean = **2.64** and SD = **1.31**

Chi-square Test Results : $\chi^2 = 48.62$ at $df = 4$ with $p < .001$

Table 2 illustrates respondents' perceptions regarding one of the most prevalent myths associated with violence against men—that men cannot become victims of domestic violence. The findings indicate that 31.6% of respondents disagreed with this statement, while another 27.2% strongly disagreed, resulting in a combined 58.8% rejecting the myth. Conversely, only 28.8% either agreed or strongly agreed, whereas 12.4% remained neutral. The mean score of 2.64, which is below the neutral midpoint of the Likert scale, further demonstrates an overall tendency to reject this misconception. The calculated Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 48.62$, $p < .001$) indicates that the observed distribution of responses differs significantly from what would be expected by chance, suggesting a statistically significant rejection of the myth among respondents. These findings imply that awareness regarding male victimization has gradually increased among the surveyed population. Respondents appear to recognize that domestic violence is not exclusively experienced by women and that men may also face physical, emotional, or psychological abuse within intimate relationships. The findings further suggest that public understanding is evolving towards a more inclusive perspective on domestic violence, although a considerable minority still adheres to traditional gender stereotypes. Awareness campaigns and gender-sensitive educational programmes may further strengthen public recognition of male victimization.

Table 3: Respondents' Perception Regarding the Myth that “A Real Man Should Never Complain About Abuse” in Prayagraj District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	20	8.0
Agree	39	15.6
Neutral	32	12.8
Disagree	96	38.4
Strongly Disagree	63	25.2

Mean = **2.62** and SD = **1.24** One Sample t-test results showed $t = -5.91$ at $p < .001$

Table 3 examines respondents' opinions regarding the traditional belief that men should tolerate abuse without expressing their suffering. The data reveal that 38.4% of respondents disagreed and 25.2% strongly disagreed with the statement, together accounting for 63.6% of the total sample. In contrast, only 23.6% expressed agreement, while 12.8% maintained a neutral position. The mean score of 2.62 suggests an overall rejection of this stereotype. Furthermore, the one-sample t-test produced a statistically significant result ($t = -5.91$, $p < .001$), indicating that respondents' opinions differed significantly from the neutral point. The findings suggest that most participants no longer support the traditional expectation that men must remain silent when subjected to violence or abuse. Instead, there appears to be growing acceptance that seeking help is a responsible and legitimate response rather than a sign of weakness. Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents who continue to agree with the statement indicates that conventional ideals of masculinity continue to influence societal attitudes. Such beliefs may discourage male victims from reporting violence, accessing counselling services, or seeking legal remedies. Consequently, awareness initiatives aimed at redefining healthy masculinity and promoting emotional openness among men remain essential for improving reporting behaviour and psychological well-being.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Opinion on the Myth that “Emotional Abuse is Less Harmful to Men than Physical Violence” in Prayagraj District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	19	7.6
Agree	45	18.0
Neutral	30	12.0
Disagree	92	36.8

Strongly Disagree	64	25.6
-------------------	----	------

Mean = **2.46** and SD = **1.28**

Table 4 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the seriousness of emotional abuse experienced by men. The findings show that 36.8% disagreed and 25.6% strongly disagreed with the statement, together representing 62.4% of the respondents. Only 25.6% believed that emotional abuse is less harmful, while 12.0% remained neutral. The mean score of 2.46 indicates that respondents generally rejected the misconception that emotional abuse has minimal consequences for men. These findings demonstrate increasing public awareness regarding the psychological effects of emotional violence, including depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, stress, and social isolation. Respondents appear to acknowledge that emotional abuse may produce long-lasting psychological trauma comparable to or even exceeding the effects of physical violence in certain situations. Such recognition reflects growing understanding of mental health issues and the importance of emotional well-being. However, the presence of respondents who continue to underestimate emotional abuse suggests that misconceptions persist within society. These beliefs may prevent victims from identifying abusive behaviour or seeking timely intervention. Therefore, educational campaigns emphasizing the psychological consequences of emotional violence are necessary to encourage early reporting, counselling, and community support. The findings highlight the importance of addressing emotional abuse as a significant public health and social concern affecting male victims.

Table 5: Respondents' Perception Regarding Society's Recognition of Violence Against Men in Prayagraj District

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	6.8
Agree	34	13.6
Neutral	27	10.8
Disagree	104	41.6
Strongly Disagree	68	27.2

Mean = **2.31** and SD = **1.22**

Table 5 evaluates respondents' perceptions concerning whether society takes violence against men seriously. The results indicate that 41.6% disagreed and 27.2% strongly disagreed with the statement, together accounting for 68.8% of the respondents. Only 20.4% believed that society adequately recognizes violence against men, while 10.8% remained neutral. The mean score of 2.31 reflects an overall perception that male victimization receives limited social recognition. These findings suggest that respondents perceive significant social barriers preventing male victims from receiving empathy, institutional support, or legal recognition. Traditional gender norms portraying men as physically strong and emotionally resilient may contribute to public disbelief when men report abuse. Respondents appear to believe that societal attitudes often discourage disclosure by portraying male victims as weak or incapable of protecting themselves. Such perceptions may contribute to underreporting, delayed help-seeking, and increased psychological distress among victims. The findings emphasize the need for awareness programmes that promote gender-inclusive understanding of violence and encourage equal support for all victims regardless of gender. Expanding counselling services, sensitizing law enforcement agencies, and promoting responsible media representation may reduce stigma and improve recognition of violence against men. Overall, the results highlight an important gap between public awareness and institutional response.

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship among Awareness of Violence against Men, Rejection of Gender-Based Myths, Help-Seeking Behaviour and Perceived Social Support among Male Respondents in Prayagraj District (N = 50) at $p < .01$

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Awareness	1.000			
2. Myth Rejection	0.716**	1.000		
3. Help-seeking Intention	0.681**	0.754**	1.000	
4. Social Support	0.603**	0.669**	0.724**	1.000

Table 6 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among four important variables associated with violence against men, namely awareness regarding male victimization, rejection of gender-based myths, willingness to seek professional help, and perceived social support. The findings reveal statistically significant positive correlations among all variables at the 0.01 level of significance. Awareness demonstrated a strong positive correlation with myth rejection ($r = 0.716$), indicating that respondents possessing greater knowledge about violence against men were more likely to reject traditional misconceptions concerning masculinity and victimhood. Similarly, awareness was positively associated with help-seeking behaviour ($r = 0.681$), suggesting that informed individuals were more willing to report abuse and seek psychological or legal assistance. A

particularly strong relationship was observed between myth rejection and help-seeking behaviour ($r = 0.754$), implying that abandoning stereotypical beliefs encourages victims to access available support systems. Furthermore, perceived social support exhibited significant positive relationships with awareness ($r = 0.603$), myth rejection ($r = 0.669$), and help-seeking behaviour ($r = 0.724$). These findings collectively suggest that increased awareness and supportive social environments can substantially reduce stigma associated with male victimization. Consequently, educational interventions, public awareness campaigns, and community-based support networks may significantly improve recognition of violence against men and encourage timely reporting of abuse.

Table 7: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Influence of Traditional Masculinity, Awareness Regarding Violence against Men and Social Support on Reporting Behaviour among Male Respondents in Prayagraj District

Dependent Variable: Reporting Violence

Predictor	B	Beta	t	p
Constant	1.94		6.88	.000
Traditional Masculinity	-0.43	-0.47	-7.82	.000
Awareness	0.38	0.39	6.41	.000
Social Support	0.31	0.28	4.86	.000

$R = 0.764$, $R^2 = 0.584$, $F = 115.27$ at $p < .001$

Table 7 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the extent to which traditional masculine beliefs, awareness regarding violence against men, and perceived social support predict reporting behaviour among respondents. The regression model was found to be statistically significant ($F = 115.27$, $p < .001$), indicating that the selected independent variables collectively explained a substantial proportion of variation in reporting behaviour. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.584$) indicates that approximately 58.4% of the variation in respondents' willingness to report violence can be explained by these three predictors. Among the variables, traditional masculinity demonstrated a significant negative influence ($\beta = -0.47$), suggesting that stronger adherence to conventional masculine norms decreases the likelihood of reporting abuse. Conversely, awareness regarding violence against men ($\beta = 0.39$) and perceived social support ($\beta = 0.28$) exerted significant positive influences on reporting behaviour. These findings indicate that respondents who possess greater awareness of male victimization and perceive stronger family or community support are more likely to seek professional assistance or report incidents of violence. The results highlight the detrimental influence of rigid gender stereotypes while emphasizing the importance of awareness programmes and supportive social environments in promoting help-seeking behaviour among male victims.

Table 8: Comparison of Urban and Rural Respondents with Respect to Awareness and Perception Regarding Violence against Men in Prayagraj District Using Independent Samples t-Test

Area	Mean Score	SD	t-value	p
Urban (n=145)	3.82	0.61		
Rural (n=105)	3.34	0.72	5.71	<.001

Table 8 compares the awareness and perception scores of urban and rural respondents regarding violence against men. The findings indicate that urban respondents obtained a higher mean awareness score (Mean = 3.82, SD = 0.61) compared with rural respondents (Mean = 3.34, SD = 0.72). The independent samples t-test yielded a statistically significant difference ($t = 5.71$, $p < .001$), indicating that place of residence significantly influences respondents' understanding of male victimization. The comparatively higher awareness observed among urban respondents may be attributed to better educational opportunities, increased access to digital media, greater exposure to public awareness campaigns, and easier availability of counselling and legal support services. Rural respondents, on the other hand, may continue to be influenced by traditional gender norms that discourage men from discussing emotional or domestic problems. Such cultural expectations often reinforce the belief that men should remain silent regardless of the nature of abuse experienced. The findings suggest that awareness regarding violence against men is unevenly distributed across geographical regions, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions in rural communities. Government agencies, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and local community leaders should undertake awareness campaigns that challenge harmful stereotypes and encourage recognition of male victimization irrespective of place of residence.

Table 9: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Showing Differences in Awareness Regarding Violence against Men According to Educational Qualification of Respondents in Prayagraj District

Education	Mean Awareness Score
Up to High School	3.12
Intermediate	3.46

Graduate	3.89
Postgraduate	4.18

ANOVA results are $F = 14.37$ at $p < .001$

Table 9 presents the results of a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to examine whether respondents' educational qualifications significantly influence their awareness regarding violence against men. The findings reveal a gradual increase in awareness scores with higher educational attainment. Respondents educated up to the high school level recorded the lowest mean awareness score (Mean = 3.12), followed by intermediate respondents (Mean = 3.46), graduates (Mean = 3.89), and postgraduates (Mean = 4.18). The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference among educational groups ($F = 14.37$, $p < .001$), confirming that educational qualification has a meaningful impact on awareness regarding male victimization. These findings suggest that education enhances critical thinking, exposure to gender studies, understanding of human rights, and awareness of psychological health issues, thereby enabling individuals to reject traditional myths surrounding masculinity and violence. Higher educational attainment may also increase exposure to academic literature, digital media, and public discourse concerning gender equality and victim support. Consequently, respondents with advanced education appear more willing to recognize violence against men as a legitimate social issue rather than dismissing it as inconsistent with traditional masculine roles. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating gender-sensitive education into school and university curricula to promote informed and inclusive societal attitudes.

V. Discussion on Findings

The statistical analysis provides important insights into contemporary perceptions regarding violence against men and the persistence of gender-based myths within society. The demographic profile indicates that the respondents represented different age groups, educational backgrounds, residential locations, and marital status categories, thereby providing a diverse perspective on the issue. The predominance of respondents belonging to the economically active age group suggests that the findings primarily reflect perceptions developed through family, workplace, and community interactions. One of the most significant findings of the study is the rejection of the myth that men cannot become victims of domestic violence. A majority of respondents disagreed with this belief, while the Chi-square test demonstrated that the observed responses were statistically significant. This finding indicates an emerging recognition that violence is not exclusively gender-specific and that men may also experience physical, emotional, psychological, and economic abuse. Although public discourse has historically focused on violence against women, respondents increasingly acknowledged that male victimization also deserves social recognition and institutional attention.

The study further examined the traditional belief that "a real man should never complain about abuse." Most respondents rejected this stereotype, and the one-sample t-test confirmed that this rejection was statistically significant. This finding reflects gradual changes in societal attitudes towards masculinity. The expectation that men must suppress emotions and tolerate abuse without seeking assistance has traditionally prevented victims from reporting violence. The present findings suggest that respondents increasingly recognize help-seeking behaviour as an appropriate response rather than a sign of weakness. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion of respondents continued to support traditional masculine ideals, indicating that social stigma remains an important barrier to disclosure. Another noteworthy finding relates to emotional abuse. The majority of respondents rejected the misconception that emotional violence is less harmful than physical violence. This reflects increasing awareness regarding the psychological consequences of verbal humiliation, coercive control, intimidation, isolation, and emotional manipulation. Contemporary psychological research demonstrates that prolonged emotional abuse may result in anxiety disorders, depression, chronic stress, reduced self-esteem, and social withdrawal. The findings therefore suggest growing public understanding of the multidimensional nature of violence.

The perception that society does not adequately recognize violence against men emerged as another important observation. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents believed that male victims receive insufficient sympathy, legal recognition, and institutional support. This finding reflects the influence of long-standing gender stereotypes that portray men as physically strong, emotionally resilient, and capable of defending themselves under all circumstances. Such stereotypes may discourage reporting and contribute to underestimation of the actual extent of male victimization. The results therefore emphasize the need for greater public awareness and more inclusive victim support mechanisms. The correlation analysis demonstrated significant positive relationships among awareness, rejection of myths, willingness to seek professional help, and perceived social support. Respondents with greater awareness regarding violence against men were more likely to reject traditional stereotypes and express willingness to report abuse. Similarly, individuals perceiving stronger family and community support showed greater acceptance of help-seeking behaviour. These findings suggest that awareness programmes can positively influence attitudes and encourage victims to access counselling and legal assistance without fear of social rejection.

The regression analysis further strengthened these observations by demonstrating that traditional masculine beliefs negatively predicted reporting behaviour, whereas awareness and social support exerted significant positive influences. The regression model explained a substantial proportion of the variation in reporting behaviour, indicating that social attitudes play an important role in determining whether victims seek assistance. These findings support contemporary theories emphasizing that gender norms influence behavioural responses to victimization. The independent samples t-test comparing urban and rural respondents revealed significantly higher awareness levels among urban participants. Better educational opportunities, wider media exposure, easier access to mental health services, and greater interaction with awareness campaigns may explain this difference. Rural respondents may continue to experience stronger influence from traditional cultural expectations that discourage discussion of personal or family problems. These findings highlight the need for targeted awareness programmes in rural communities.

The ANOVA examining educational qualification demonstrated that awareness regarding violence against men increased progressively with higher educational attainment. Educated respondents appeared more capable of distinguishing between myths and evidence-based understanding of gender violence. Education may therefore contribute to reducing prejudice, promoting critical thinking, and encouraging more inclusive attitudes toward all victims of violence. Overall, the findings consistently indicate that public perceptions are gradually shifting towards greater recognition of male victimization. Nevertheless, traditional stereotypes, social stigma, and inadequate institutional recognition continue to influence reporting behaviour and access to support services. The statistical evidence collectively supports the proposed hypotheses and demonstrates that awareness, education, and social support represent important factors in improving recognition of violence against men. The findings therefore reinforce the importance of gender-inclusive policies that promote equal dignity, justice, and support for every victim while complementing ongoing efforts to address violence against women.

VI. Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that violence against men is increasingly recognized as a genuine social issue rather than merely a cultural myth. The statistical analysis indicates that respondents largely rejected the belief that men cannot become victims of violence and acknowledged that emotional and psychological abuse can have serious consequences comparable to physical violence. At the same time, the findings reveal that societal recognition of male victimization remains limited because traditional gender norms continue to portray men as emotionally invulnerable and self-reliant. The study further establishes that awareness, education, and perceived social support play significant roles in encouraging help-seeking behaviour, whereas rigid masculine stereotypes discourage reporting of abuse. Significant differences based on educational qualification and place of residence suggest that awareness programmes should be tailored to specific social and geographical contexts. Strengthening public education, promoting mental health services, sensitizing law enforcement agencies, and encouraging responsible media representation may contribute to reducing stigma associated with male victimization. The findings support the broader principle that violence should be understood as a human rights issue affecting individuals irrespective of gender. Addressing violence against men should not be viewed as competing with efforts to eliminate violence against women; rather, both objectives contribute to a more inclusive framework of gender justice. Future research involving larger and more diverse samples across different regions of India would provide a deeper understanding of the prevalence, determinants, and consequences of violence against men and assist in the development of evidence-based social policies and intervention programmes.

References

- [1]. Chattopadhyay, A., & Dutta, A. (2023). Prevalence and risk factors of physical violence against husbands: Evidence from India. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 56(1), 1–17.
- [2]. De Sousa, A. (2022). Domestic violence against men: A lesser explored issue. *Archives of Indian Psychiatry*, 24(1), 1–4.
- [3]. Malik, J. S., Nadda, A., Kumar, N., & Yadav, R. K. (2019). A cross-sectional study of gender-based violence against men in the rural area of Haryana, India. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, 44(1), 35–38.
- [4]. Sharma, I. (2015). Violence against men: A neglected issue. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 57(2), 197–199.
- [5]. Satapathy, S. (2025). Intimate partner violence: A qualitative exploration of lived experiences of men. *Journal of Comprehensive Health*.
- [6]. Shikhila, T., et al. (2023). Intimate partner violence among married couples in India: A systematic review. *Open Psychology Journal*, 16, Article e187435012309110.
- [7]. Nayak, P. (2021). Domestic violence against men in India: A serious issue. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 9(12), 1–7.
- [8]. Kaur, N. (2024). Domestic violence against men in India: A critical analysis with special reference to Indian laws. *South India Journal of Social Sciences*, 22(1), 70–81.
- [9]. Senthil, N., Vajiram, J., & Nirmala, V. (2023). The misuse of law by women in India: Constitutionality of gender bias. *SSRN/Preprint*.
- [10]. National Crime Records Bureau. (2023). *Crime in India 2023*. Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- [11]. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), & ICF. (2021). *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019–21: India Report*. IIPS.
- [12]. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. (2021). *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5): India Fact Sheet*. Government of India.
- [13]. National Commission for Women. (2022). *Annual Report 2021–22*. Government of India.
- [14]. Law Commission of India. (2015). *Report No. 243: Section 498A IPC*. Government of India.

- [15]. Ministry of Women and Child Development. (2022). *Annual Report*. Government of India.
- [16]. Census of India. (2011). *Primary Census Abstract*. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.
- [17]. Planning Commission of India. (2013). *Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017): Social Justice Chapter*. Government of India.
- [18]. Indian Council of Medical Research. (2020). *National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research Involving Human Participants*. ICMR.
- [19]. National Human Rights Commission. (2022). *Annual Report*. Government of India.
- [20]. National Legal Services Authority. (2022). *Access to Justice Report*. Government of India.
- [21]. Singh, R. (2022). A critical analysis of domestic violence against men in India and the role of gender-biased laws in it. *International Journal for Legal Research and Analysis*.
- [22]. Thanvi, V. J. (2023). Critical analysis on domestic violence against men in India. *International Journal for Legal Research and Analysis*.
- [23]. Bhardwaj, D. N. (2022). Men's rights and domestic violence discourse in India. *Journal of Legal Studies*.
- [24]. Sandhu, G. (2020). Domestic violence against husbands in India: Emerging concerns. *Indian Journal of Social Research*.
- [25]. Kumar, A., & Singh, P. (2021). Social stigma and help-seeking behaviour among male victims of domestic violence in India. *Indian Journal of Social Work*.