

## **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: A NEUTRAL PERSPECTIVE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST MALES AND HOMOSEXUALS**

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### **Abstract**

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a crime in which a partner hurts his partner physically, emotionally, or sexually and thus, tries to have control over them. IPV is a very serious and outrageous crime that is generally assumed to be against women only whereas it is not a gender-biased crime. Thus, this research paper aims at bursting the gender myths about victims of IPV. With references to various studies, it has been observed that heterosexual males, as well as homosexuals, can also be the victims of IPV. This article talks about IPV which remained unheard of for years, its types, forms, causes, and factors giving rise to it along with some suggestions for society and legislature to prevent and curb IPV. This article also focuses on reasons for which the cases of male victims and homosexual victims stay unreported. Through this article, we briefly review the literature on IPV along with the laws for protecting victims of IPV are also discussed with respect to India.

*Keywords-* IPV, Crime, Violence, Gender Neutral, Laws.

### **IPV-Introduction**

IPV stands for Intimate Partner Violence which refers to hurting your current or ex-partner in physical, sexual, or in psychological way inclusive of coercive acts. It is a serious issue that extends from one single hit or abusive violence to severe savagery. Generally, IPV is misunderstood

with cases of domestic violence, but the former is a violent, brutal, or aggressive behaviour only by the partner (husband/wife) whereas domestic violence is an umbrella term for all types of family violence against an individual by any or all family members like child abuse, elder abuse, marital rape and much more. In IPV, any gender can be a

victim or can be a perpetrator i.e., because of the fact that fifty percent of cases are bidirectional. According to a survey, one out of three women worldwide has suffered IPV at least once in their lifetime.

There are several factors that perpetuate IPV or due to which rates of IPV have increased with time, these factors range from cultural factors to economic factors, and from political factors to legal factors. The Cultural factors include religious traditions and their interpretations which state the wife is a chattel of her husband and allows killing or beating of their wife for any undesired act. Whereas economic factor is also one of the main reasons for rising in cases of IPV. In a patriarchal society like India, many of the households do not permit women to be financially independent and thus, she ends up stuck in an abusive relationship. Due to the flexibilities of laws against IPV, there are very few numbers of people who adhere to the law, thus there is an urgent need to update IPV laws. Other factors like alcoholism which provokes an expression of masculinity and promotes abusing of another partner to showcase power adds up fuel to the fire. Excessive consumption of alcohol

exacerbates marital disharmony among the couple, leading to violence among them.

IPV has various harmful effects on an individual, it denies an individual's fundamental rights provided under the Constitution, also it leads to various health issues including physical and psychological consequences. Victims have encountered loss of eyesight, hearing, and many physical disabilities along with marks of burn or cuts on their bodies. The sexual forms of IPV can lead to unwanted pregnancies or even can lead to the transfer of HIV AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. Early minds learn the most, when a child observes his parents being victim or perpetrator, it impacts his mental state to an extent that he/she loses trust in building bonds and learns violence as the easiest way to resolve problems.

### **Types or Forms of IPV**

Intimate Partner Violence is a serious issue that can destroy a life of an individual, many different researches and studies are conducted for knowing types and forms of IPV. One of the research states that on the basis of severity of violence conducted by the partner, IPV can be divided into different levels like Level-1, Level-2, and Level-3.

- a) **Level-1** (Verbal abuse i.e., throwing objects or damage to property)
- b) **Level-2** (Physical hurt i.e., kicking, slapping, biting, beating)
- c) **Level-3** (Beating with a weapon i.e., choking, and other ways which can lead to death also)

While other types were formulated on the basis of different types of violence, types of male batterers, etc. Broadly, there are four different forms of IPV i.e.,

### 1) **Physical Violence**

Physical Violence involves all types of physical harm faced by a victim like burning, kicking, beating, slapping, punching, killing, or use of weapons, etc. to cause pain or physical injury to the victim. Physical violence can lead to breaking of bones, injury in the head, cuts, stab wounds, burns, strangulation, wounds from weapons leading to panic attacks, eating disorders, chronic pains, dehydration, and even death in severe cases.

Physical violence can be overcome by taking some measures like promoting family environments that support healthy development, providing quality education in the early phases of life, teaching children to respect other gender and other people, and

not to be violent in any case. Punishing an individual for being violent and not supporting any sort of violent behaviour towards the partner will help sort out the problem of the physical form of IPV.

### 2) **Sexual Violence**

Sexual Violence is a sexual activity performed without asking for consent or will, sexual violence can be experienced by anyone i.e., male, female, or any other gender but females are easy prey of sexual violence. Sexual violence consists of any type of sexual activity without consent but broadly it can be divided into 5 basic categories of Rape or penetration of the victim, Victim forced to penetrate someone, non-physically pressured unwanted penetration, unwanted sexual contact, and lastly non-contact unwanted sexual experiences. All these five categories leave a long-lasting devastating impact on an individual's mind. Individual breaks down internally and externally.

Sexual violence costs very deeply to a victim, an individual loses trust over friendship, marriage, and family. He/she can enter a state of depression leading to many psychological problems. They can face sexual dysfunction or even maybe hospitalized in severe cases leading to lower functioning of other body

parts too. In order to stop or prevent sexual violence, social norms protecting an individual against violence should be promoted, skills for self-defence and other skills (like promoting healthy sexuality, empowerment-based training, socio-emotional training, etc.) should be taught to prevent the evil of sexual violence. Life doesn't end with an incident; we must promote victims of sexual violence to live their life again and provide the necessary opportunities so that they can strengthen their economic and leadership qualities. Victims of sexual violence should be supported in all possible ways; they should be provided with the best treatment and perpetrators must be punished strictly for the act.

### 3) **Emotional Violence**

Emotional violence or emotional abuse is a way to control someone by playing with their emotions like criticizing them, embarrassing them, shaming or blaming, or manipulating them, mostly emotional violence is practiced by abusing a person which lowers down his/her self-esteem and degrades their mental health status. Perpetrators of emotional abuse have unrealistic expectations from victims, non-fulfillment of which leads to emotional abuse. Secondly, perpetrators invalidate the

victim i.e., undermine thoughts, refuse to accept the victim's feelings, etc. They create chaos and generally blackmails victims emotionally. Also, they want to be at a dominant stratum in their relationship to always control and isolate the victim.

Emotional violence is of numerous types including accusations of cheating, criticism, gas lighting, isolating an individual from everyone, silent treatment, shaming or blaming, withholding affection and attention, name-calling, or verbal abuse. Emotional abuse has so many deep impacts on the life of an individual that he/she may lose the entire sense of their life, believes themselves to be worthless, self-loathing. It impacts their relationships, friendships, and their family relations as they become internally critical about their own selves. As it has more impact on one's body and mind in comparison to physical abuse, it should be treated well, and proper aid should be provided to the concerned person. The victim should make their own selves' priority, they should practice some self-care activities, like reading some self-help books, listening to music and they should practice their hobby. The victim should establish boundaries with the perpetrators, he/she should stop blaming

their own selves for each and every wrong act, and should work upon exit plans.

#### 4) **Psychological Violence**

Psychological violence is one of the most common and detrimental forms of IPV. Every individual develops different responses to IPV, which range from resilient and adaptive behavior for such violence to mental illness along with losing self-confidence and strength. About 20% of the survivors of IPV develop problems like Major depressive disorder (MDD- depressed mood every time with the loss of interest), Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD- severe anxiety interfering in daily life practices), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD- failing to recover from a severe and harsh incident) and several other psychological disorders.

Victims of IPV suffer various mental health issues depending on the type of violence they have undergone through. PTSD is very common among the victims which includes experiencing flashbacks, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping (nightmares and insomnia), etc. Victims of IPV in order to escape from all the pain and sufferings, abuse drugs and alcohol (substance use) which can lead to several mental disorders. Many victims feel guilt and blame themselves for

being abused which opens up the door to more violence and abuse. Also, lack of societal support leads to increased levels of depression and anxiety. Victims suffering from depression face sleeping problems, lack of appetite, bodily energy, and metabolism issues. They lack their self-confidence and attempts suicide in severe cases. Different forms of depression-like Major depressive disorder and dysthymia need to be provided with proper psychological training to prevent the victim from taking any suicidal attempt.

#### **Review of Literature**

1. **Kumar, A. in Domestic Violence against men in India: A Perspective** helped in gaining a deep insight knowledge about males as a victim, most research papers are written with females as victims whereas this was one of the few exceptional articles which is written to the point with special reference to psychological violence against males.
2. Winstead, M. L., Mason, T. B., B. A., Lewis, R. J., Kelley, Fitzgerald, Calhoun, and H.N. in **“Intervention for Violence and Aggression in Gay and Lesbian Relationships”** gave a perspective on how homosexuals are also victims of IPV, what are the common problems which they have to

face in their intimate relationships. This research paper also talks about the risks and problems for people living in a same-sex relationship along with some treatment ideas for saving them.

3. McLaughlin, E. M., and ROZEE, P. D. in their research paper **Knowledge about heterosexual versus lesbian battering among lesbians** explains and critically analyses battering in homosexual relationships, specifically in lesbian relationships. It also compares and states that cases of IPV are more in comparison to that of heterosexual couples. Thus, this paper helped to write more insightfully about homosexual couple's intimate violence.

### **Research Methodology**

➤ **Aim:** The research is being designed for making a qualitative investigation about the violence against males and homosexual people in their intimate relationships.

➤ **Objectives:** To critically examine the issue of IPV and to burst out the gender-biased myths. It is a very common assumption that crimes like IPV, domestic violence, marital rapes only include women as their victims whereas there are males and

homosexuals who also suffers from the same, but as they lack support from family, friends, and society, either they end up staying in that toxic relationship or they take some bold steps like suicide. Thus, this article had tried to raise the issue of violence against males and sexual minority groups occurring within their intimate relationships.

➤ **Research Design:** In lieu of the fulfilment of the above-said objective the “Analytical Method” will be employed. The method involves the use of data, facts, and information that are already published or the information available in form of books, journals, or Magazines that are already available. The critical analyses of the same yield strong observations further strengthening a particular area of research. In the case of the present study, the available data related to Males and Homosexual will be critically analysed.

➤ **Research Questions:**

- a) Is IPV a gender-biased crime, do only females are victims of IPV?
- b) Why do cases of IPV with male or homosexual victims remain unreported?

c) Are the laws present in the Indian Legal System support male or homosexual victims?

d) Reasons as to why the cases for IPV are increasing in society?

➤ **Data Collection:** The Secondary sources of data collection were used to collect data for this particular study. The secondary data sources included books, journals, magazines, periodicals, and online websites that were particularly used to analyse the problem.

### Analysis

#### Do Males also face IPV?

Women are considered to be the only victim of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) but with the modernization, researches have been conducted globally, and it has been found that men too suffer from Intimate partner violence. For a very long time, the fact that men too suffer from IPV remained in the four walls due to the societal stigmas like “men are brave, strong and men are the only perpetrators” etc. And if they try to disclose their sufferings, they are questioned in many a way by society itself. Many male members choose to be quiet instead of facing shame or

embarrassment in society, also many of them fear that their partner may become more abusive/violent on disclosure, or even they may take the children away forever. And if they decide to disclose, then instead of listening to their pain, they are judged on how they provoked their wives or girlfriend to take such an action, or they are falsely sent to jail by their wives by using false acquisitions against him and their whole life get destroyed.

Globally, Laws for IPV are made in favor of females only, whereas there are crimes against men which are unheard of in society due to the orthodox societal thinking that a male is stronger than a female, and he never feels pain. With the changing times, many countries have considered IPV as a serious and outrageous issue, thus they have taken into account that IPV is dangerous and life-taking for men too. India should also make laws gender-neutral in order to provide males with security against IPV and domestic violence. Most male victims, do not report or file a divorce, due to the fear of losing their child, as according to Indian laws, the first preference for child custody will be given to the mother itself, or to the fear of major

financial losses in filing and fighting case, and giving huge alimony to their wives.

IPV for male victims varies from physical violence to sexual violence, psychological to emotional violence, verbal abuse to blackmailing for anything, these types of practices create mental pressure on the male partner for entering into the state of depression or take some bold step like suicide. The number of male victims has seen a rise over the years due to a variety of reasons which includes poor anger management within the couples, the stress of the workplace, non-fulfillment of expectations (monetary demands, or sexual desires), also, if the salary of a wife is more than that of husband, she can expect him to earn more to meet the same standard. Due to lack of family or police support, males lower their self-esteem and accepts to remain a victim. Mostly used type of violence is verbal abuse which includes grumbling, murmuring, cursing males and his aged parents due to un-fulfillment of demands related to profession, attitude, sexual or daily life activities. Also, females blackmail males and his family members through false claims such as anti-dowry (498a) or the Domestic Violence Act.

In a recent study conducted over thousand married men of age 21-49 years of age, in the state of Haryana, India. It was found that nearly 52.4% of men have experienced Intimate Partner Violence in their lifetime and nearly 10.5% of the males have experienced IPV in the last 12 months only. Also, most men have faced emotional and physical forms of IPV, which leaves a serious impact on the victim's mind. As India is a male-dominated society, it becomes hard to believe the cases of IPV against men, but it is a reality that males too suffer from IPV.

IPV is a serious problem prevailing globally, and male victims can also be spotted all around the world. According to various researches conducted in various different countries, male victims are present all of there, just the ratio differs from place to place. In the United States of America, 1 out of 9 men, whereas in the United Kingdom 2 out of 5 men are victims of IPV, whereas 1 out of 16 men is the victim in Australia.

In the times of pandemic, all people residing in their homes, cases for IPV have raised many a fold, which is faced not only by women but in many cases, males have also suffered from the same. According to the Mankind Initiative, a UK-based organization,

the number of cases of IPV with male victims has increased by 35% in the lockdown period.

In a democratic country like India, laws are made gender biased i.e., those laws favor females and assume that females are only victims, they can never be a perpetrator, if a male try to report a case, then society, law, and police, nobody trusts him and believes him to be the perpetrator and assumes his wife/girlfriend to be a victim. Section-498 of the Indian Penal Code states that a man is liable for cruelty towards his wife, but no subsection or any clause is written for a woman being liable for cruelty towards her husband. Because the males do not get support from family, society, and law, they often try to commit suicide to get rid of IPV. According to research by WHO, males are more likely to commit suicide in comparison to female victims.

### **Do Homosexual Adults also face IPV?**

In recent times, IPV (Intimate Partner Violence) has received great attention globally, but many people assume it to be a sort of violence among heterosexual couples only, whereas in the recent studies, it is proved that IPV is violence occurring between both Heterosexual and Homosexual

couples, even it is not wrong to say that IPV among Lesbian and Gay couples is more serious than Heterosexual couples. In the research of 2015 over IPV, it has been found that only 3% of the total focus for IPV research was put on the lesbian or gay community, rest all focus was towards heterosexual couples, indicating that IPV among LGBT communities is not even studied properly. According to some other reports, cases for IPV are either equal or higher in the LGBT community. Also, nearly 50% of gay males and 75% of lesbian woman have undergone psychological IPV in the United States. In severe IPV cases, it is observed that LGBT adults have a higher number of cases with respect to Heterosexual adults.

From time immemorial LGBT community are regarded as an unsocial community, they are neither given respect nor their rights in society, similar is the case with recognising violence or crime against or among them. There are a variety of viewpoints that creates hindrance in recognising violence against Gay or Lesbian adults. One of the views is that recognising IPV among homosexuals will give power and support to them in society. Whereas feminists believed that

raising awareness for lesbian's IPV cases will have a negative impact on the goals and stand of feminism. Also, many societal stigmas which demoralise the confidence of LGBT adults (like homosexual men are less powerful, lesbian IPV is harmless, men fight equally, gay men can easily escape from an abusive relationship) play a vital role in raising IPV.

LGBT victims of IPV are more likely to consume drugs, indulge in stressful and violent activities and intensive drug abuse for momentary escaping from depression and anxiety. Meyer conducted another experiment, and observed and formulated another theory, he states that homosexuals face unique stressors which includes internal and external stressors, internal stressors are internal homophobia, stigma consciousness etc. whereas external stressors are violence, harassment etc. His research indicates that internal stressors of homos lead them to physical, sexual or psychological IPV whereas external stressors do not. Thus, Internal homophobia or other forms of internal stressors should be treated first in order to get out of the circle of IPV. Also, around 60% of lesbian women don't leave their violent or abusive partner due to lack of

financial interdependence, thus shelters for supporting such women to be made in order to help lesbian women from falling into a vicious circle of IPV. IPV Stigmatization Model also gained popularity in 2013 for its 3 aspects of an individual experience: "Stigma Internalisation" (Decreased Self-efficacy i.e., individual suffering IPV can feel guilt, shame and self-blame him/herself for the same), "Anticipated Stigma" (Affecting their own decision due to fear of how others will take it), "Cultural Stigma" (Notion stating that IPV victims are responsible for IPV).

According to research and studies on Same-Sex Intimate Partner Violence Victims (SSIPV victims), they need individual mental health counselling sessions, as the couple counselling is not found very effective due to fear of abuser in the mind of the victim. A team of psychologists and clinicians have researched for the same, and finally, they prescribed 2 types of counselling (Person-Centred Therapy and Gestalt Therapy) which will be effective in dealing with SSIPV victims. These therapies will make victims aware of their status, sufferings, associated consequences and their own personality, it will build trust and rapport between client

and therapist with a goal to effectively direct the lives of the client such that he come out from depression and know their capabilities. Also, abusers in IPV are provided with therapies (Duluth Model and Cognitive Behavioural Theory) for reducing the risk of crimes by the abuser. These therapies were designed for heterosexual couples but are also applied in homosexual couples too. While there should be a psychological model, more culturally and specific towards LGBT perpetrators.

### **Laws related to IPV in India**

The Indian Constitution, 1947 provides many laws to protect a woman from Intimate Partner Violence. Under part-3 of the Constitution, violation of fundamental rights can be challenged by a woman facing IPV.

• Following are the fundamental rights that are infringed of a victim of IPV:

- 1) **Article-14 of the Indian Constitution, 1947:** i.e., Right to life and equal protection before the law.
- 2) **Article-15 of the Indian Constitution, 1947:** i.e., no discrimination on the basis of caste, race, gender, religion, or place of birth.
- 3) **Article-21 of the Indian Constitution, 1947:** i.e., Right to life and

personal liberty which also provide right to live with dignity.

• It is also an infringement of human rights under the protection of the **Human Rights Act, 1993.**

• **Section 498A to the Indian Penal Code (1983)** states that if a husband or his family member performs any act cruel towards his wife, then he/she will liable for an offense under Section-498A and will be imprisoned for a maximum of three years along with a specified amount of fine.

• **The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961)** and **the Domestic Violence Act (2005)** also provide protection to a victim of Intimate Partner Violence.

### **Way Forward-Possible Remedies**

- 1) A Forum should be established for drafting modern methods to fight and prevent cases of Intimate Partner Violence.
- 2) Proper implementation of laws should be there, there are many laws which are drafted like laws for domestic violence are present, which also includes marital rape, but people do not follow them, their guidelines, punishments are not available to everyone. The courts should ensure the implementation of laws for such serious crimes.

3) Intimate Partner Violence is an untouched crime, which is neither talked about nor discussed in any society, school, or anywhere. Thus, it should be added to the education system, so that people will become aware of it and can hence fight against it and stop it.

4) Awareness of IPV should be spread through conducting various types of webinars, seminars, and workshops on preventing and stopping IPV, laws related to IPV, help available to IPV victims, etc.

5) A redresser committee should be drafted to ensure all laws are redressed properly and ensure the proper functioning of the legal department towards IPV victims.

6) All laws related to Intimate Partner Violence, should be made gender-neutral, as all laws right now are concerned with females only.

7) As seen in many cases, police refused to accept cases of males and homosexuals as victims, thus police should be ordered to accept cases of all types.

8) As Sheroes café is open to provide support and provide strength to Acid-attack victims, more such cafes should be opened in order to support and fill victims of IPV with

the courage and strength to face life. It will provide victims the strength to start their life again with all joys.

9) Post Traumatic Therapy centers particularly for Intimate Partner Victims should be opened, as many victims are reluctant to go to a common therapy center, thus a specified center will ensure that victims will not hesitate in entering the therapy center.

### **Conclusion**

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) refers to hurting a current or physical partner which ranges from a single hit to severe abusive violence. It is different from the crime of domestic violence as IPV is a crime committed by a partner whereas domestic violence is committed by any family member. There are many factors, due to which rates of IPV have increased over time, these include Cultural factors (Religion and traditions state women as a property of male), Economic factors (Women is not permitted to be financially independent, thus she is stuck in an abusive relationship), and many other factors like alcoholism (alcohol exacerbates marital disharmony among the couple, leading to violence among them). Victims of

IPV suffer through various health problems including body disfigurements, loss of eyesight, hearing, and many other problems. Sexual violence can lead to the spreading of STDs and other related diseases. Broadly, IPV can be characterized into four different forms (Physical, Sexual, Emotional, and psychological violence).

Most people assume IPV to be a crime against women only whereas IPV is not a gender-biased crime, any gender (male, female, homosexuals) can suffer through it. Most cases of IPV with a male as victims remain unreported because of several reasons which include they do not want to feel shame, embarrassment, fears from their abusive partner, fear of losing a child to another partner, or if they report the case, they are sent to jail by their wives by claiming false acquisitions. Also, one of the main reasons is that there are no laws or provisions for male victims of IPV. Many forms of violence take place against males, but the most common form of violence is verbal abuse, which includes grumbling, murmuring, cursing males and his aged parents due to un-fulfillment of demands related to profession, attitude, sexual or daily life activities. These types of practices create mental pressure on

the male partner for entering into a state of depression or take some bold step like suicide.

Another assumption is that IPV prevails within heterosexual couples only, but it is observed globally, that many homosexuals also face IPV. Most researches have been conducted on heterosexual couples only, very few researches are conducted on homosexual couples. Even some reports have stated that most severe cases of IPV are reported by homosexual couples only. Thus, IPV is a serious and outrageous crime, which is not a gender-specific crime, it can be faced by any gender, in any country. Laws should be made strict and gender-neutral; awareness should be spread regarding the same. Thus, it is needed for a society that IPV should be addressed as a crime and strict regulations should be passed to prevent the same.

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