



INVISIBLE VICTIMS: A STUDY ON MEN AND NON-BINARY INDIVIDUALS FACING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INDIA

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Abstract: The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 frames domestic violence as a gender specific crime. The law intends to safeguard women but it exclude men and non-binary victims who also face abuse inside home. The legislative scheme present a one sided approach where protection orders, residence rights and maintenance are only available for women. In Hiral P. Harsora judgment, the Supreme Court in 2016 struck down the part restricting complaint to only women against adult male relatives. But the structure of the Act still keeps the definition limited to female victims.

The problem is more serious in practice. Social perception denies abuse against men, leading to humiliation and silence. This stigma is combined with absence of remedies in statute. Male and non-binary persons face barriers in reporting because police treat their complaint as invalid. The Atul Subhash suicide case showed the tragic outcome when suffering remains unaddressed by law and institution.

The research adopt doctrinal analysis with statutory review and case laws, along with empirical studies and NGO data. Comparative study of jurisdictions like UK, Canada and Australia shows gender neutral law which allow all victims to seek restraining orders and support services. These experiences prove the importance of equal protection. It reveal a systemic failure in Indian legal framework. It ignore constitutional mandate under Article 14 of equality and Article 21 of right to life with dignity. The inclusive reform is necessary for real justice. The law has to be reoriented towards protection of every victim without bias.

Keywords- men, non-binary, victim, domestic violence, law

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Domestic violence is recognized in India as a serious social problem that destroy family life and inflict harm on personal liberty. It include physical assault, verbal abuse, economic deprivation and emotional cruelty within household relations. The Indian legislature responded with the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. ¹This enactment marked historical moment because for the first time women received a comprehensive legal remedy beyond penal code provisions. The Act granted civil reliefs like protection order, residence order, custody of children and monetary relief to secure dignity and safety of women in domestic sphere.²

The importance of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 lies in its recognition of violence within private sphere which earlier was treated as invisible. By framing it as a gender specific legislation the law intended to correct long neglect faced by women. However, it also create what many scholars call a legal blind spot. This paradox arises because while protecting women, the statute leaves other victims outside its ambit. Men and non-binary persons who experience same abuse are excluded from its language and remedies. These invisible victim remain unaddressed in law and society. The effect is continuation of suffering with no institutional acknowledgment or support. ³

The tragic suicide of Atul Subhash in 2024 show the cost of ignoring victims of domestic violence who fall outside the legislative frame. The issue directly touch fundamental rights. Article 14 guarantee equality before law, Article 15 prohibit discrimination on ground of sex and Article 21 secure life and liberty with dignity. When men and non-binary persons are excluded from the remedies

¹ The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (Act 43 of 2005).

² B. Sivakumar, *Domestic Violence Law in India: Rights and Remedies*, 57 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2018).

³ G. S. Bajpai, "Legal Protection and Gender-Specific Blind Spots in Domestic Violence Laws," 31 *Journal of Indian Law and Society* 88 (2019).

of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 it weaken these constitutional promises. It also harm mental health by leaving victims without recognition or support.⁴

1.2 Research Question

- First, what are the legal and institutional gaps in Indian framework that exclude such victims.
- Second, what social and psychological barriers prevent reporting and access to justice.
- Third, how a comparative study of jurisdictions with gender neutral law like UK, Canada and Australia inform future reform in India

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Definition

The definition of domestic violence under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is centered on women's protection and list physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic abuse. However, domestic violence in reality cover forms that are highly relevant for male and non-binary individuals. Emotional and psychological manipulation where a partner degrade self-worth or isolate from family is a common form. The financial control where one person deny access to income or property create dependence and harm dignity. Legal abuse also arise when false cases are filed under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code⁵ (Section 85 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023) , Section 86 BNS 2023 provides an explanation of what constitutes cruelty, including both physical and mental harm, harassment related to dowry, and other forms of abuse. Reproductive coercion, such as forcing decision about parenthood, also represent a form of abuse which remains absent in statutory recognition⁶.

The Indian scholarly discourse on domestic violence has primarily focus on female victimization. Studies, judicial commentaries and policy papers mostly examine violence as a gendered problem. A small but emerging body of literature from NGOs and advocacy groups challenge this framework. The Save Indian Family Foundation and similar organizations present data on male victimization and criticize gender-specific protection. Academic critiques also highlight that a narrow legal definition deny equal protection promised under the Constitution. The recognition of diverse victims in literature remain limited but increasing.⁷

2.2 Theoretical Lenses

2.2.1 Feminist Theory

The feminist theory play a decisive role in shaping recognition of domestic violence as a public wrong. It shift the focus from private domain to state responsibility and gave foundation for the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The framework expose patriarchal control and justify protective remedies. However, a non-intersectional approach limit its scope. By treating women as the sole victim it ignore abuse faced by men and non-binary individuals. The theory when applied narrowly exclude diverse identities and create imbalance with constitutional guarantee of equality and dignity under Article 14 and Article 21.⁸

2.2.2 Masculinity Studies

Masculinity studies examine how hegemonic ideals shape social response to domestic violence. The cultural script of masculinity emphasize stoicism, invulnerability and dominance. This expectation deny space for male vulnerability and discourage disclosure of abuse. The man is expected to endure silently rather than seek help. Such norms create barriers in reporting to police or approaching courts. It also lead to ridicule when men identify as victim. The discourse explain why legal recognition remain absent, as social construction of masculinity contradict with the idea of protection. The result is invisibility of male victims within statutory schemes like PWDVA, 2005.⁹

2.2.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality provide a framework to examine how gender identity interacts with caste, class and sexuality in shaping domestic violence. The experience of a non-binary person from marginalized caste background differ from that of an urban upper-class male. Abuse is not uniform but layered through social location. The neglect of these intersections make non-binary victims invisible in legal discourse. It is crucial that any analysis move beyond binary categories to include diverse identities. The constitutional promise of equality under Article 14 demand attention to these differences. The framework make space for inclusive remedies within statutory and institutional response.¹⁰

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c33d6161z3yo>

⁵ The Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Act 45 of 1860), s. 498A.

⁶ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act 45 of 2023), ss. 85, 86.

⁷ Save Indian Family Foundation, *Report on Male Victimization in Domestic Violence*, 8 (New Delhi, 2022).

⁸ Nivedita Menon, *Seeing Like a Feminist*, 79 (Zubaan, New Delhi, 2012).

⁹ Michael Kimmel, *Masculinity as Homosocial Reproduction: How Men's Groups Affect Gender Inequality*, 115 (Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2008).

¹⁰ Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," 43 *Stanford Law Review* 1241 (1991).

III. LEGAL DOCTRINE: A GENDERED INDIAN FRAMEWORK

3.1. Critical Analysis of the PWDVA, 2005

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 define in Section 2(a) the term “aggrieved person” as any woman who is, or has been, in a domestic relationship. This language explicitly exclude male and non-binary victims from seeking relief. Section 2(q) further define “respondent” as an adult male person, reinforcing the assumption that perpetrators are men and victims are women¹¹. Although later the Supreme Court in Hiral P. Harsora case¹² remove part of this definition, the overall structure of the Act continue to operate on gendered lines. The statutory scheme therefore deny recognition to other categories of victims.

3.2. Alternative Legal Avenues and their Inadequacy

Alternative legal recourse for male and non-binary victims exist under the Indian Penal Code, such as Section 323 on voluntarily causing hurt (Section 115(2) BNS 2023) and Section 506 (Section 351 of the BNS 2023) on criminal intimidation. ¹³After the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 these provisions continue in new form. But these penal sections address isolated acts of violence and not the continuous relational abuse which define domestic violence. In contrast, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 provide civil remedies like protection order, residence order and monetary relief. This difference highlight the inadequacy of penal law to secure day-to-day safety or dignity within domestic relationship.

3.3. Judicial Interpretation

3.3.1 Hiral P. Harsora v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora¹⁴

The Supreme Court in Hiral P. Harsora v. Kusum Narottamdas Harsora, 2016 address the gendered language of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The Court emphasized equality under Article 14 and ruled that adult male relatives cannot be automatically exempt from complaint if women file a case. The judgment reflect incremental judicial awareness of broader abuse dynamics. However, its scope remain limited as it do not redefine “aggrieved person” to include men or non-binary victims. The legislative framework continue to operate on female-centric assumptions. The decision highlight tension between judicial reasoning and legislative inertia in domestic violence law.

3.3.2 Ravi Kumar v. State of Himachal Pradesh¹⁵

The High Court in Ravi Kumar v. State of Himachal Pradesh recognize male victimization in domestic settings and consider complaints under general IPC provisions. The judgment note the psychological and physical abuse faced by men and acknowledge the gaps in the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Other High Court cases also show similar recognition of male suffering. However, these decisions do not create binding precedent at national level. The statutory framework remain female centric and the male victims continue to face legal invisibility. The judicial acknowledgment highlight the tension between incremental case law and absence of comprehensive legislative reform.

3.3.3 Save Indian Family Foundation v. Union of India¹⁶

The Public Interest Litigation of Save Indian Family Foundation v. Union of India, 2020 address the exclusion of male victims from the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The petition seek gender-neutral recognition and remedies. The judiciary acknowledge the concerns but show reluctance to alter statutory framework. The Court emphasize separation of powers and note that legislative amendment remain the proper route. This response underline judicial deference and highlight the gap between societal need and legislative action. The decision reflect tension between incremental judicial awareness and the inertia of law reform in domestic violence legislation.

3.4 The Non-Binary Void

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and related Indian family and criminal law provide no recognition or protection for non-binary individuals. The statutory definitions such as Section 2(a) “aggrieved person” and Section 2(q) “respondent” assume a female victim and male perpetrator, leaving non-binary persons entirely outside the scope. The absence extend to civil remedies like protection order, residence order and monetary relief.¹⁷

Other criminal provisions under Indian Penal Code, like Sections 323(Section 115(2) 2023 BNS) , 506 (Section 351 BNS 2023), address isolated acts of violence but fail to capture the ongoing relational abuse which affect non-binary persons in domestic settings. The judiciary has yet to recognize non-binary victimhood in any binding precedent. Even Public Interest Litigations, including Save Indian Family Foundation v. Union of India, 2020, fail to explicitly include non-binary rights.¹⁸

¹¹ The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (Act 43 of 2005), ss. 2(a), 2(q).

¹² AIR 2016 SC 2522.

¹³ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act 45 of 2023), ss. 115(2), 351.

¹⁴ AIR 2016 SC 2522.

¹⁵ 2021 HPHC 78.

¹⁶ W.P. (C) 245/2020.

¹⁷ Save Indian Family Foundation, *Report on Gender-Neutral Domestic Violence Protections*, 15 (New Delhi, 2022).

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch, *Invisible Victims: Male and Non-Binary Experience of Domestic Violence in India*, 21 (New York, 2021).

The result is a complete non-binary void where legal and institutional support is absent. This gap leave victims without remedies, protection or acknowledgment of constitutional rights under Articles 14, 15 and 21. The invisibility in law reinforce social marginalization and silence the lived experience of abuse.¹⁹

IV. CASE STUDIES

4.1 The Atul Subhash Case²⁰

Atul Subhash case of 2024 represents watershed moment in the understanding of the domestic violence against the men. It involve his suicide then prolonged emotional and financial abuses in marital relationship. The video and suicide note left by Atul serve as primary testimony. They document coercion, harassment through legal avenues, and continuous psychological distress. The evidence show that statutory protection under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is unavailable for him.

The case also illustrate the systemic failure of institutions. Police, courts and support mechanisms do not provide recourse for the male victims in India. The documentation of repeated threats, economic deprivation and false complaints under Section 498A IPC highlight the insufficiency of the current legal remedies.

The Atul Subhash case underline the urgency for gender-neutral reforms. It show the human cost of legal invisibility and demonstrate why reforms must address emotional abuse, financial control and legal harassment as integral part of domestic violence law. The case serve as both qualitative evidence and policy signal for legislative action.

4.2 NGO Data and Emerging Patterns

The Centre for Men's Welfare and other NGOs document patterns of abuse faced by men in domestic environment. The data reveal emotional manipulation, financial control and legal harassment as common forms. The reporting remain low because of stigma, social expectation and fear of disbelief. The demographic trends show that victims span across age, class and region, showing no single profile. The cases involve continuous relational violence instead of isolated events, showing mismatch with criminal law provisions like Sections 323 (BNS Section 115(2)) and 506 IPC (BNS Section 351) . The evidence emphasize the invisibility of male victims within statutory and institutional frameworks and the urgent demand for inclusive legal reforms.²¹

V. SOCIETAL STIGMA AND BARRIERS TO REPORTING

5.1. The Tyranny of Masculinity

The societal norms of the masculinities create a barrier for men to be recognized as victims of domestic violence. The expectation of stoicism, strength and invulnerability prevent men from acknowledging own suffering. The other demonstrative such as police, family and community often dismiss or minimize male complaints. The perception of weakness associated with victimhood reinforces silence.

The legal framework under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 reinforce this perception by framing abuse exclusively in gendered terms. The male victims find that civil remedies like protection order or residence order are unavailable. The false complaint under Section 498A IPC²² (Section 85 of the BNS) and economic abuse remains unaddressed.²³

The combination of social stigma, legal invisibility and community disbelief create a cycle where reporting is rare and support structures is absent. The cultural script of hegemonic masculinity therefore operate as a form of tyranny, leaving male victims without recourse or recognition, and emphasizing the need for gender-neutral legislative and institutional reforms.²⁴

5.2. Institutional Bias

The institutional response to the male victim of domestic violence remain largely dismissive and inadequate. The law enforcement personnel treat male complaints with scepticism or ridicule reflecting deep-seated gender bias. The absence of gender-sensitive training in police academies and judicial workshops reinforces this dismissive attitude.

The other demonstrative, such as shelters, helplines and counselling services, do not exist for male victims. The civil remedies under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, provide no parallel support for men. The psychological traumas, financial abuses and relational coercion experience by male victim remains unaddressed.

The bureaucratic procedure for filing complaints under Sections 323 and 506 IPC are ill-suited to handle ongoing domestic abuse, leaving victims without protection.²⁵ The combination of institutional neglect, lack of resources and societal disbelief creates a

¹⁹ Aparna Vaidik, *The Subversive Family: Gender, Caste and Violence in India*, 114 (Penguin Random House, New Delhi, 2015).

²⁰ CRL.P 14463/2024

²¹ Human Rights Watch, *Invisible Victims: Male Experience of Domestic Violence*, 12 (New York, 2015).

²² The Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Act 45 of 1860), s. 498A

²³ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act 45 of 2023), s. 85.

²⁴ Priya Pillai, "Male Victimization and Legal Invisibility in India," 29 *Indian Journal of International Law* 211 (2021).

²⁵ The Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Act 45 of 1860), ss. 323, 506

structural barrier. The evidence emphasises that legal reform must include the creation of support infrastructure and training to make justice accessible for all victims regardless of gender.²⁶

5.3. The Dual Invisibility of Non-Binary Individuals

The non-binary individuals face a dual invisibility within the legal and social frameworks of India. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 explicitly defines an “aggrieved person” as a female, and a “respondent” as a male. The other demonstrative frameworks in family law and criminal law similarly rely on a gender binary, leaving non-binary persons entirely unrecognized. The absence of legal recognition itself create a foundational barrier where their very identity is ignored.

The social stigma compound this legal void. The non-binary victims encounter disbelief from family members, law enforcement and even community organizations. The societal scripts do not accommodates their experience, leading to dismissal of abuse allegations. The emotional abuse, financial control and coercive behaviors within relationship remain unaddressed. The documentations for legal remedies, protection orders and counseling explicitly or implicitly require gendered identification, making it inaccessible for non-binary individuals.²⁷

The cumulative effect is a structural and interpersonal invisibility. The lack of shelters, helplines or specialized support networks magnifies the marginalization. The reporting rates are therefore extremely low, while the trauma persists without intervention. The judicial system show incremental awareness in some High Court observation but there is no binding precedents or legislative amendments that directly protect non-binary victim.²⁸

The intersectional dimension further intensify vulnerability. The gender identity intersect with caste, class and sexuality to shape unique experiences of abuse and neglects. The legal and policy framework must therefore evolve to integrate gender-neutral definitions inclusive remedies and targeted support services. The evidence underscore an urgent need for reforms that recognize non-binary persons as legitimate victim and ensure constitutional protection under Articles 14, 15 and 21 are meaningfully applied to all regardless of gender identity.²⁹

VI. COMPARATIVE JURISPRUDENCE: LESSONS FROM GENDER-NEUTRAL FRAMEWORKS

6.1 United Kingdom

The comparative legal landscape present different approach that recognise domestic abuse as a universal issue beyond gender binaries. The United Kingdom enacts the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 which provides a gender-neutral definition of abuse. The law acknowledges emotional, psychological, financial and coercive control as forms of harm irrespective of the victim's gender.³⁰ The other demonstrative element in this legislation is the creation of dedicated support service like the Men's Advice Line, which assists male victims and non-binary individual. The evidence from the UK show that inclusive legal definitions do not weaken protection for women but extend the human rights framework to all victims experiencing abuse.

6.2 Australia

In Australia the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 also applies a gender-neutral lens. The legislation recognises victims of all gender and emphasises the relational and ongoing nature of domestic abuse. The statutory framework is supported by awareness campaigns like “One in Three”, highlighting that one in three domestic violence victim is male. The other demonstrative feature includes protection orders, counselling services and accessible support networks for all genders creating a comprehensive civil and criminal response.³¹

6.3 Canada

Canada demonstrates another model where criminal law and provincial statutes apply gender-neutral definitions. The focus remain on psychological abuse, coercive control and repeated patterns of violence rather than limiting the scope to female aggrieved persons. The other demonstrative outcome is that recognition of male and non-binary victims improves early intervention, reduces long-term harm and maintains balanced justice. The evidence shows that legal recognition for all victims does not diminish women's protection but strengthens universal protective measures.³²

6.4 Lesson

The synthesis of these international models offers lessons for India. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, restricts its definitions to female aggrieved persons. The other demonstrative limitation is the exclusion of male and non-binary individuals from civil remedies and statutory protection. Comparative evidence shows that a gender-neutral legal definition aligns

²⁶ The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Act 45 of 2023), ss. 115(2), 351

²⁷ G. S. Bajpai, “Honor Killings and Law Enforcement in India,” 24 *Journal of Indian Law and Society* 67 (2012).

²⁸ The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (Act 43 of 2005), s. 2(a).

²⁹ The Constitution of India, 1950 (Act 26 of 1950), arts. 14, 15, 21.

³⁰ Marianne Hester, “The Three Planet Model: Towards an Understanding of Contradictions in Approaches to Women and Children's Safety in the Context of Domestic Violence,” 41 *British Journal of Social Work* 837 (2011).

³¹ Greg Andresen, “One in Three Campaign: Raising Awareness of Male Victims of Family Violence,” 19 *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy* 111 (2015).

³² Elizabeth Sheehy, *Defending Battered Women on Trial: Lessons from the Transcripts* 212 (University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 2014).

with continued protections for women. Inclusive laws facilitate reporting, reduce stigma, and provide tailored support without weakening existing safeguards.³³

The universal human rights perspective embedded in these models emphasises equality under Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution and the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21. The demonstrative implication is that legislative reform in India can ensure that protection orders, counselling, shelters, and helplines are accessible to all victims. Recognition of male and non-binary victims does not compromise women's protection but strengthens societal understanding of domestic abuse as systemic and relational.

The conclusion from these models is that India can adopt a gender-neutral definition of domestic violence while retaining the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 safeguards for women. The other demonstrative measure includes establishing infrastructure such as dedicated helplines, safe housing, and counselling for men and non-binary individuals. Legislative reform should reflect equality, non-discrimination, and human dignity to create a comprehensive framework responding to the lived realities of all victims. The international experience provides a roadmap for India to adopt a more inclusive, balanced and effective domestic violence framework which strengthen human rights, social awareness and equitable statutory protection.³⁴

VII. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Synthesis of Findings

The legal void in India is extensive as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, limits aggrieved persons to women only. The other demonstrative gap is that non-binary and male victims remain outside statutory protection.³⁵ The societal barrier are profound with stigma, gendered expectations and disbelief discouraging reporting. The other demonstrative point is that institutions including police and court show limited sensitivity towards male and LGBTQ+ victims.³⁶ Comparative models from the UK, Australia and Canada offer viable solutions demonstrating that gender-neutral laws and support services strengthen human rights protections without weakening women's safeguards.³⁷

7.2. Integrated Discussion

The legal invisibility of men and non-binary persons reinforces social stigma and internalized shame. The other demonstrative effect is that stigma discourages victims from accessing existing legal remedies. The interplay between law and society show that reform must target both legal definitions and social attitudes. The constitutional framing under Articles 14, 15 and 21 highlight that denying protection based on gender identity constitutes inequality and violation of personal liberty. The other demonstrative insight is that recognizing all victim aligns domestic violence protection with principle of justice, equality and human dignity.³⁸

7.3. Concrete Recommendations

7.3.1 Legal Reform

The PWDVA should be amended to include all genders or a parallel, inclusive Domestic Violence Protection Act should be enacted. The other demonstrative step ensures male and non-binary victims have statutory remedies.³⁹

7.3.2 Institutional Mechanisms

The government should establish helplines, shelters, and legal aid cells funded for men and LGBTQ+ victims. The other demonstrative measure provides accessible support and immediate relief.⁴⁰

7.3.3 Training and Awareness

The police, lawyers, and judges require mandatory gender-neutral and LGBTQ+ sensitive training. The other demonstrative action is launching public awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and normalize reporting.⁴¹

7.3.4 Data Collection

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) should include gender-disaggregated data including male and third-gender categories in crime reports. The other demonstrative benefit is better policy-making and resource allocation to address all victims of domestic violence.⁴²

³³ Rashmi Tiwari, "Revisiting Domestic Violence Laws in India: Gender Neutrality and Human Rights," 13 *NALSAR Law Review* 201 (2022).

³⁴ G. S. Bajpai, *Gender, Law and Violence in India* 142 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2020).

³⁵ The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (Act 43 of 2005), s. 2(a).

³⁶ Priya Pillai, "Male Victimization and Legal Invisibility in India," 29 *Indian Journal of International Law* 211 (2021).

³⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Invisible Victims: Male Experience of Domestic Violence*, 12 (New York, 2015).

³⁸ The Constitution of India, 1950 (Act 26 of 1950), arts. 14, 15, 21.

³⁹ G. S. Bajpai, *Gender, Law and Violence in India*, 75 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2020).

⁴⁰ Amnesty International, "Out of the Shadows: Male and LGBTQ+ Survivors of Domestic Abuse," 19 (2021).

⁴¹ Kalpana Kannabiran, "Equality and the Constitution: Gender and Liberty," 12 *NUJS Law Review* 145 (2019).

⁴² National Crime Records Bureau, "Crime in India Report" 56 (2022).

VIII. CONCLUSION

The current legal frameworks of domestic violence in India, established through the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 has historically addressed the vulnerability of women. The other demonstrative aspect is that while this law represents a landmark intervention, its gendered scope now shows constitutional and moral inadequacies. The exclusive focus on women as aggrieved persons leaves male and non-binary victim without statutory remedies or protection creating a gap in the realization of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21.

The societal perception of domestic abuse is similarly narrow where men and non-binary individual face disbelief, stigma and institutional neglect. The other demonstrative effect is that these invisible victim experience compounded harm from the intersection of social norms and legal void. The evidence from comparative jurisdictions such as the UK, Australia and Canada shows that inclusive gender-neutral legislation strengthens protection for all victims without undermining safeguards for women.

The recognition of male and non-binary victimhood is not a zero-sum proposition. The other demonstrative insight is that extending legal protections to all gender align domestic violence law with constitutional guarantees under Articles 14 and 15, ensuring equality, dignity and non-discrimination. The other demonstrative benefits is that a comprehensive approach also enhance reporting access to support services and early intervention in cases of relational abuse.

The call to action for legislators and policymakers is urgent. The other demonstrative step involves amending the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act or enacting a parallel inclusive statute establishing dedicated shelters, helplines and counseling services and mandating gender sensitive training for law enforcements and judiciary. The other demonstrative responsibility rests with society to challenge stereotypes, reduce stigma, and recognize all victims of domestic violence.

The universal principle is that every individual, irrespective of gender identity, has the right to a life free from violence and coercion. The other demonstrative conclusion is that only through legal reform, social awareness, and institutional accountability can India make its invisible victims visible and establish a domestic violence framework that is truly just, equitable, and reflective of constitutional values.

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