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# Silent Suffering: Shedding Light on Sexual Harassment among Men

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## ABSTRACT

*Sexual harassment is often thought of as a problem that primarily affects women. However this research shows that men can also experience sexual harassment, and that they may be less likely to report it due to social stigmas and gender stereotypes. This paper aims to shed light on the phenomenon of sexual harassment among men, exploring the nature and scope of the problem, the experiences of male victims, and the barriers they face in seeking help and support. The paper sheds light on the fact that sexual harassment is not just a women's issue, and that men can also experience sexual harassment in different settings. The paper discusses the various forms of sexual harassment that men can face, such as unwanted touching, sexual comments or jokes, and even sexual assault. The paper also explores the reasons why men may be hesitant to report incidents of sexual harassment, including fear of retaliation, feelings of shame or embarrassment, and a perception that men should be able to "handle it." The paper concludes by calling for increased awareness and support for men who experience sexual harassment, and for a cultural shift that recognizes the seriousness of this issue and works towards creating safe and respectful environments for all individuals.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

A form of harassment known as sexual harassment uses overt or covert sexual references, as well as unwanted and improper offers of incentives in return for sexual favours. Verbal and physical indiscretions as well as sexual abuse or assault are all examples of sexual harassment. Harassment may happen in a variety of social contexts, including the job, the family, the classroom, the church, etc. Any sex or gender might be a victim or a harasser.

sexual harassment is forbidden under current legal regulations. because sexual harassment laws do not enforce a "general civility code," they often do not outlaw casual remarks, small isolated incidences, or simple taunting. when harassment is frequent or severe and results in a hostile or offensive work environment, or when it leads to a negative employment decision (such as the victim's promotion, termination, or resignation), it may be illegal in the workplace. however,

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there are cultural differences in how sexual harassment is seen in law and society.

A kind of unlawful employment discrimination is sexual harassment by an employer. Preventing sexual harassment and defending employees against claims of sexual harassment have increasingly become major objectives of legal decision-making for many firms or organisations.

Anyone can experience sexual harassment, regardless of age, gender, or sexual preference. In addition to sharing many of the same emotions and behaviours as other survivors of sexual harassment, men and boys who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse may also experience extra difficulties as a result of social views and prejudices about males and masculinity. Men who had sexual assault as children or teenagers may react differently than men who experienced sexual harassment as adults. Although it is not an exhaustive list, knowing that other people have encountered the same problems may be helpful:

- Steering clear of persons or locations that make you feel harassed or assaulted
- Fear of judgement or disbelief
- Concerns or questions about sexual orientation Feeling like "less of a man" or that you no longer have control over your own body
- Withdrawal from relationships or friendships and an increased sense of isolation; Fear of the worst occurring and having a sense of shortened future
- Anxiety, inability to unwind
- Trouble sleeping, Feeling on edge, feeling guilty or humiliated for being powerless to stop the harassment, especially if you had an ejaculation

Men in India may experience sexual harassment in a variety of ways, including verbal, physical, and internet forms of harassment. Sexually explicit remarks, jokes, and body language are all examples of verbal harassment. Unwanted physical contact, groping, and sexual assault are examples of physical harassment. Cyberbullying, internet stalking, and revenge porn are all forms of online harassment.

Roberta Chinsky Matuson asserts that "many people believe that sexual harassment is only committed by women." Without a doubt, there is a rapid rise in crimes against women worldwide, yet it is nevertheless true that men also commit crimes. It is unfair that crimes against males or the injustices they experience in society receive so little attention. Many individuals think that males are immune to sexual harassment. They view this conduct as a bluff since it is so out of the ordinary for them.

In India, only a woman may be legally regarded as the victim of sexual harassment, and only a

male can be seen as the offender. According to the Indian Penal Code, 1860, it is not a crime when a male is the victim.

Many nations, including Australia, the United Kingdom, and Denmark, have proposed and adopted gender-neutral laws. It is shocking that India's judiciary has continued to reject calls for the introduction of gender-neutral rules against sexual harassment in the face of these global accusations.

## **II. LAWS RELATED TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN INDIA**

- Section 354A of the Indian Penal Code, which addresses sexual harassment and its consequences

A man who engages in any of the following behaviours

354(1)(i) unwanted and explicit sexual advances made via physical contact; or

(ii) an appeal for sexual favours; or

(iii) displaying pornography against a woman's will; or

(iv) Making sexually suggestive comments constitutes the crime of sexual harassment.

- Any man who violates the provisions of sub-section (1)'s clauses (i), (ii), or (iii) of Section 354A of Indian Penal Code must be punished with harsh imprisonment for a term that may not exceed three years, with a fine, or with both.
- Section 377 of the IPC criminalizes sodomy without consent. This law recognizes men as victims of rape.
- Any man who commits the crime stated in clause (iv) of sub-section (1) of Section 354A of Indian Penal Code must be punished by imprisonment of any type for a term not exceeding one year, a fine, or both.
- Section 2(n) of The Sexual Harassment Of Women At Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition And Redressal) Act , 2013 defines “sexual harassment” as any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior:

(Whether directly or by implication) namely:—

(i) physical contact and advances; or

(ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or

(iii) making sexually coloured remarks; or

(iv) showing pornography; or

(v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature;

### **III. CAUSES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF MEN IN INDIA**

The root reasons of sexual harassment against males in India are intricate and varied. Power dynamics, gender stereotypes, and patriarchal views are some of the key causes of this harassment. Sexual harassment may be directed at males who defy conventional conceptions of masculinity or who are viewed as weak. Additionally, businesses without sexual harassment rules and processes risk fostering a culture where such behaviour is seen as usual.

#### **Social media and Sexual harassment**

Social media has helped raise people's awareness of these concerns, but it has also had a detrimental influence on incidences of sexual harassment. The prevalence of sexual harassment against both genders has significantly grown with the development of technology and the internet. PEW figures from 2014 show that 13% of males and 25% of women between the ages of 18 and 24 had both experienced sexual harassment online. However, we also cannot disregard the sexual harassment of males. A "right to equality" exists in India under Article 14 of the Indian Constitution. If law primarily emphasises concerns relating to women and ignores those relating to males, then this right is being violated.

Men who have experienced sexual assault may have comparable feelings to other survivors of sexual assault, but because of prevailing assumptions about masculinity and their fear of societal condemnation, these emotions are frequently suppressed. Men are prevented from speaking out against the injustices they experience because they are afraid of being teased, criticised, or insulted by others around them.

Males still face public derision when expressing their experiences with domestic or sexual assault and are frequently ignored or they are perceived as weak and advised to man up, despite the fact that these campaigns have resulted in an 18% rise in reporting of sexual violence against males.

In light of the fact that implying that sexual violence has evolved as a result of the patriarchal origins of the nation demoralizes male victims, society has to let go of the notion that rape is a men's issue.

This study would deal exclusively with female-on-male rape and sexual harassment. The researcher would look at instances of sexual harassment involving guys in various settings. The study would then go on to address case law as well as the necessity of gender neutralizing sexual harassment and rape statutes. The author ends the email by offering his recommendations for

combating the problem of sexual harassment of males.

#### **IV. SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF MEN IN THE WORKPLACE**

Our thoughts automatically presume that the victim is a woman and the perpetrator is a guy when we hear the word "sexual harassment." The workplace is one of the main settings for sexual assault. Many rules and regulations have been established throughout the years to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, such as The Sexual Harassment Act for Workplace or The Vishakha Guidelines.

Violence directed towards women at work. Men who are subjected to sexual harassment at work, meanwhile, have no legal recourse.

This does not imply that sexual harassment is not an issue for guys in the workplace. Laws have been put in place to safeguard women from the pernicious practise of sexual harassment, yet we frequently overlook the fact that males also experience workplace harassment. Male coworkers or female employers are typically the perpetrators of sexual assault against males in the workplace. Men may be requested to elevate their shirts, or there might be a trade-off comparable to the one experienced by working women. The only distinction is that women may take steps to prevent these harassments, whilst males must suffer in silence.

It's time to enact gender-neutral legislation in order to promote equality and do away with these rules that are biased towards women. males's rights at work should be protected with the same priority as women's rights, and the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2012 should be applied to males as quickly as practicable.

#### **V. STATISTICS**

Prevalence of sexual harassment among men in India:

In India, sexual harassment of males is a problem that is both underreported and stigmatized. However, new research has revealed that sexual harassment does occur against males in India. In India, 14% of males reported experiencing sexual harassment at work, according to a 2015 research by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW). In another survey from 2018 by the Centre for Equity and Inclusion, it was shown that 22% of Delhi's male population has experienced sexual harassment in some way.

One out of every 33 males has been the victim of an attempted or successful rape at some point in their lives; 75% of these incidents took place before the men were 18 years old, and 48% occurred when the men were 12 years old (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).

By the age of 18, 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys would have experienced sexual assault (Finkelhor,

Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990).

**The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that:**

1. Almost 1 in 38 men have committed or attempted to commit rape at some point in their lives.
2. Between the ages of 11 and 17, one in four male rape victims were raped for the first time.
3. Roughly 1 in 4 male rape victims said the crime happened before the age of 10.

In a 2010–2012 survey, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) discovered that 1 in 17 males have experienced forcible penetration at some time in their lives. 13.5 percent of male victims of forcible penetration rape who reported their attackers were female.

Men are more likely to take their own lives than women are, even when it comes to suicide. And the reality is that married Indian males have a double the risk of committing suicide.

A rape has occurred in the lives of almost 1 in 5 women (18.3%) and 1 in 71 males (1.4%), including attempted forced penetration, full forced penetration, or alcohol/drug assisted penetration. It should not be forgotten that the similar ratio for women is 1 in 5, or roughly 20%, and that while it is larger for women, it is by no means insignificant for males.

A 2007 poll by the Indian government found that 57.3% of boys and 42.7% of girls had been victims of serious sexual abuse, such as rape or sodomy.

More recently, the Delhi-based Centre for Civil Society discovered that around 18% of Indian adult men who were polled said they had been compelled or forced to have sex. 16 percent of those claimed a female offender, and 2 percent a male.

Between April 2005 and April 2015, surveys by the Save Family Foundation and the My Nation Foundation polled approximately 100,000 males online. They discovered that nearly 98.2% of males had experienced significant domestic abuse at the hands of their spouses and in-laws. Men experience a variety of forms of violence, including physical, verbal, financial, sexual, mental, and emotional abuse.

Economic violence harmed 34.3% of males. Physical violence impacted 28.6% of men. Emotional violence harmed 27.5% of males. Sexual violence impacted 20.4% of males.

All of the males questioned experienced verbal abuse the least frequently as violence.

## **VI. HEALTH CONSEQUENCES RELATED TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST MEN**

Men who experience sexual harassment may experience serious physical and psychological effects. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety are among conditions that can affect males who are the victims of sexual harassment. Additionally, they could have

physical health issues including headaches and digestive issues. Additionally, men's professional and personal life, including their work performance, interpersonal connections, and general well-being, can be negatively impacted by sexual harassment.

Assuming that women are also predators and that all guys experience violence, it's critical to understand the effects that such behaviors have on one's health and behaviors. It may take many forms, including physical, psychological, social, and economic, in terms of an individual's health. If not provided enough attention, extended alcoholic habits, worry, frustration, and many other things may result.

Men reported having physical wounds (Hines and Douglas, 2010; Mills et al, 2006), but men (Reid et al, 2008; Coker et al, 2008) did not report having damaged physical health. However, males who experienced physical and psychological IPV were more likely to report severe alcohol consumption and recreational and therapeutic drug use, indicating that these behaviors may indirectly affect men's physical health.

## **VII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following suggestions are made in order to alleviate the problem of sexual harassment of males in India:

- **Educate people:** It's critical to educate people about the incidence of sexual harassment of males and its effects. Campaigns for education, seminars, and training courses can accomplish this.
- **Implement rules and processes:** To prevent and handle sexual harassment, employers and institutions should have clear policies and procedures in place. This covers procedures for filing complaints, conducting investigations, and helping victims.
- **Disprove gender stereotypes:** It's important to disprove gender stereotypes that support outdated ideas of what it means to be a man or a woman. This may be accomplished by promoting gender equality and respect for all people through media and education efforts.
- **Help the victims:** To deal with the trauma they have endured, sexual harassment victims need help. This may involve receiving counseling, legal guidance, or medical attention.
- **Hold offenders responsible:** Offenders who engage in sexual harassment must be held responsible for their conduct. This need a robust legal system that criminalises sexual harassment and guarantees victims' rights.



## VIII. CONCLUSION

Even though this research paper gives a general summary of sexual harassment of males in India, further study is necessary to fully comprehend the problem. The following areas should be the focus of future research:

More investigation is required to determine the prevalence and incidence of sexual harassment of males in various contexts, such as the workplace, educational institutions, and public areas.

Impact: More investigation is required to comprehend the physical, psychological, and societal repercussions of sexual harassment on males.

variables that contribute to sexual harassment of males, such as cultural, social, and economic variables, should also be the subject of research.

The intersectional dimension of sexual harassment, including how it affects males from various socioeconomic backgrounds, castes, faiths, and sexual orientations, has to be explored.

Research should concentrate on creating and assessing efficient preventative and intervention techniques for combating sexual harassment of males in India.

A murderer kills the body, but a rapist destroys the spirit, according to Justice Krishna Iyer. In India, males are sexually assaulted every day. It is time for the general public to recognise this truth, show support for male victims of sexual assault when they come forward with their stories, and demand equal legal punishment for both men and women who commit this heinous crime. It's important to make the following adjustments as quickly as possible:

Gender-based laws ought to be repealed and replaced with gender-neutral legislation.

The 2012 report on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace should include males.

Campaigns, publications, articles, etc. should be used to raise awareness of sexual assault against males.

Mahila Adalat, a separate court for males should be established in the same way as there is a separate court for women.

Around the world, there is a lot of research being done on sexual assault of males, and numerous nations have passed laws addressing the issue. It is time for our Indian courts to begin treating cases of sexual assault against men seriously and to pass legislation to safeguard males from such crimes.

Why do people not raise their voices in protest when males are the victims of injustice when women are the victims? There should be no discrimination in the name of gender equality and

everyone should be treated equally in the eyes of the law.

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