

SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST MEN- FAKE OR UNHEARD

January 18, 2021



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The most dreadful weapon, i.e., sexual violence for men is the secret of wars. In this modern era, sexual violence can happen to anyone, including men, women, or transgender, without differentiating the age. In men's case, they have to face other challenges because of social attitudes and compartmentalise about men in society. Once sexual violence was considered a crime only against women, it's common to see for every gender. These offences have not left any gender and so-called "group".

In our culture, when heterosexual men files or reports the cases of sexual offences against them, it is viewed as a symbol of weakness and taboo. Given manhood and masculinity, the rape of males is still shown. As a result, most of the victims feared disclosure of the sexual harassment they witnessed. Men believe that they are strong enough to fight off this problem alone.

Still, the reality is whenever they experience sexual assault; they try to hide unless they have serious injuries. Sometimes, they get confused about whether this issue can be shared with anyone or not. Law based on gender violence and protection of the child is mainly concerned with girls and women's safety, a significantly less amount of recognition is given to the rape cases of boys and men, but due to this reason, they have to suffer from anxiety, flashbacks, depression.

"Men" generally feels less of a man when he has been sexually assaulted. They start ending their relationships with friends and relatives. It is a mindset of people that Men who are raped are not the real man because of the only reason that a real man can save himself from sexual abuse, including even unwanted contact, an attempt to rape or even a force to commit sexual acts.

Understanding of masculinity is far different from what it means. Masculinity is generally inclined with the concept of physical strength. People never talk about emotional strength and wellness. The rape of males goes back to the beginning of time. Even at the time of the Greek mythology king Zeus, who was the king of the gods abducted other males for sexual purposes against their will. There is a common belief in society that men must always be aroused only if they get an erection, which means that they are still happy for some form of sexual activity and enjoy it. Usually, in this busy life, sexual pressure is widespread, but this desire increases sexual pleasure for intercourse when this desire is unfulfilled. On the other hand, most of the people in our country live in a monogamous relationship. Thus, they start losing their interest after some time and want another partner for intercourse. Sexual violence against the male gender causes some serious physical health consequences like Infertility genital injuries, blood in stools, sexual dysfunctions and loss of body parts, and continuous pain in the body. Though health consequences also happen with women, they are more severe in the case of men.

According to a Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report, at some stage in their lives, 1 in 71 men had either been raped or had undergone an attempt (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention — The Gender Report, 2020). In addition, the National Violence Against Women (NVAW) survey also found that 0.1% of the total males surveyed were raped in the past year, compared to 0.3% of females. (Rape and Sexual Assault, 2020) It's just a small difference then why only laws are made on female victims, but not for the male victim? Cases in India like the Nirbhaya case in which 23-year-old women were raped and assaulted and after 8 years, convicts were hanged but when male gender is raped, why the law doesn't realise the justice for victims and not raise this issue in front of the society? Why there are no proper statistics available like the rapes of women?

We always want to fly in the face of equality, but where does this equality go whenever a male has been raped? Male victims may have fears that their judgment that they had been raped will not be believed. We should support a boy or man who discloses his experience of sexual assault by listening to him properly and understanding his condition seriously. If they fear not being trusted because of assumptions about masculinity and the protector of the house, it will be hard for them to reveal the matter.

Moreover, one should avoid overly optimistic statements like "You will get better", instead one can say that " understand your judgment." One should avoid asking all the details of sexual violence rather than try our best to hear him in a non-judgmental manner. Be diplomatic to the worries and while supporting; one should suggest them proper resources that make their life easy. We should console him that it's not his fault for the sexual assault he suffered. Many male survivors share their stories to feel less alone and try their best to connect with others in the healing process.

The person belonging to the LGBTQ+ community who faces sexual violence may be challenged with the additional challenge with a sense of vulnerability associated with their gender identity and also sexual orientation. This violence instils fear and pressure in them to hide their identity from society to feel protected from sexual violence. This sometimes creates a deep effect on their mental health and makes them feel alienated from society. They already face much higher discrimination than other people, and after such a harsh life, again, sexual violence is higher with them than straight people.

Among this population, sexual violence starts from childhood, but they have to keep that secret due to safety reasons. After being assaulted, they hesitate to seek help from hospitals, police, or rape crisis centres. "I was afraid of what people would think. I was ashamed that a man sexually assaulted me...that didn't fight hard enough." – Keith's story (The Male rape survivor). Inexperience and scepticism about men's sexual assault have preserved myths about this phenomenon in law, medicine, and psychology.

In some places, officers use rape as a tool of ill-treating the male gender for getting their work done. It is very common in Syria, where men are transferred to different detention facilities run by the military or government officials. After this, some men are targeted by some individuals for sexual intercourse and rape detainees by penetrating their rectums with different kinds of objects. Whenever one or the other detainee sees the officer committing sexual assault, if he exposes his sexual identity to his mates, the officer threatens him with rape.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and nongovernmental organisations, including Lawyers and Human Rights physicians, have provided significant authentication of sexual abuse against men in Syria. Though men rapes exist, we often cease to deny it because of the upbringing and culture we have grown up. The facts cannot be nullified, but still, even the victims avoid accepting the truth in public. Male children, even if they say, nobody believes them. Listening, accepting, reacting positively are essential tools in dealing with the rising situation of such cases.

Section 375 of the Indian penal code (IPC) states that Rape is something that only a man can do to women. For this reason, there is no statistical comparison of the exact male survivors between different countries. Under Sec 377 of the Indian Penal Code, which is based on the Buggery Act 1533, where unnatural sex is an act against God, they can only be sodomised at most.

All other laws are made for women only, except for this particular section. Even many parliamentarians and social activists argue that only two different genders can have intercourse. Though there is an act passed for child survivors of both sexes called the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences.

There are no such rape laws for male victims due to which they cannot get proper justice owing to a lack of legal resources. Though the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, 1994 was for the first time for which efforts are put forward to acknowledge the male survivors of rapes in the UK legal system. Why society only encourage to help a girl or woman when she has been raped, but not a boy or a man?

There is a common notion about the males in society that males are subjected to less traumatising. Hence, their probability of getting affected is significantly less for any abuse. These notions are just leading to males being silent victims of such offences in society. Males are, therefore, not only prone to social abuse but physical as well. Rape should not stick to only one gender; rather, it should be made genderneutral to avoid discrimination against any particular gender. Rape laws should also be shaped as gender-neutral for the protection of male victims.

According to the 172nd Law Commission of India, the fundamental premise behind it is that the crime of rape will be de-sexualised the disgrace linked to it will fade away. Unfortunately, the government did not act positively for implementing suggestions. As a result, in 2017, the PIL was brought before the Delhi High Court by Sanjiv Kumar, who is a lawyer there, questioning the constitutionality of the IPC rape laws and, in his petition, he stated: "Gender neutrality is a simple recognition of reality — men sometimes fall victim to the same or at least very similar acts to those suffered by women...Male rape is far too prevalent to be termed as an anomaly or a freak incident. By not having gender-neutral rape laws, we are denying a lot more men justice than is commonly thought " In Rajya Sabha, KTS Tulsi, a senior lawyer and parliamentarian, also introduced a genderneutral bill to form gender-neutral rape laws in India. The bill's fundamental aim is to provide equal rights for all the forms of gender, i.e., men, women, and transgender and to replace gender-neutral phrases such as any person.

The only insistence for insertion is to expand the scale of these sexually violated actions and put them under the eyes of the law of the land. Many issues have to be viewed in the counselling sessions and the methods of treating male victims. Law should be made in treating the male victims. For this very reason, general awareness and mutual understanding can work to a greater extent, and counselling is the first step towards it. Proper research should be conducted about the actual needs of male victims to make them comfortable. Sex education can also help, which should be more accurate and comprehensive, and this education should be made compulsory from the small classes, and this education must be in non-sexual nature

for unwanted sexual arousal. Controversial opinions should be avoided. In conclusion, the cases of men's rape are not fake, but they are unheard of, and an offense is an offence for a woman or a man. Every gender faces it equally, but not every crime for a particular gender is accepted by society. Whenever any such case comes forward, society should reassure them that it's not their fault and must keep their disclosure confidential until and unless reporting is required. Stringent laws should be made in which the victim should be given proper justice. It cannot be eliminated until its real causes are addressed and accepted by society. Laws made, but not accepted or followed are just mere instructions. Awareness drives acceptance. We should address the concerns raised by any individual.

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