

Silent Suffering: Social and Legal Challenges of Indian Men- An Empirical Study

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Abstract

This work aims at investigating what is often overlooked in the men's victimisation within the legal system, which includes sexual harassment, legal injustices, paranoia over false allegations and stereotyping. Through a survey research design, 200 male participants were surveyed using a structured questionnaire; however, only 156 were valid for analysis. Pearson's correlation analysis, Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's post hoc tests were used to examine the following variables of interest: legal awareness, legal support fairness, gender stereotyping in legal matters and fear of false allegations. The results also highlight the relationship between legal concern and attitudes to legal assistance as well as the gender prejudices with clients' situation within the legal system. Moreover, the findings of the study also reveal how the legal system and gender prejudices affect the experience of masculinity and silent suffering in the cases of sexual harassment and violence against men. This paper, therefore, underscores these barriers and the need for legal changes to provide a level playing field to the affected individuals. The study also recommends that further research employ qualitative analyses to understand the individual experiences of men in the legal setting, as well as cross-cultural research to evaluate how various legal systems relate to violent gendered conduct and silent suffering.

Keywords: *Silent Suffering, Legal System, Gender Bias, Male Sexual Harassment, Legal Awareness, Gender Assumptions, False Accusation Fear, Quantitative Research, Legal Support Fairness, Legal Reforms.*

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1. Introduction

In today's discourses of gender justice, male victim suffering remains an under-researched and marginalised of men's social, emotional, and legal marginality (Agarwal & Prakash, 2023)¹. Self-identified male survivor's topic. Although women often become victims, there is the flip side; often neglected by scholars, yet a reality of sexual harassment and assault, perinatal mortality, and low marital satisfaction report limited access to support, reporting having to endure stigma, disbelief, and lack of adequate care (Mitchell, 2025²; Kapil & Chakraborty, 2025)³. Historically, pain has been characterised as being social as well as being grounded in social factors that are established (Kleinman, Das, & Lock, 1997)⁴. However, there is a pervasive tendency in both legal practices and social activism to incorporate male suffering into the prevailing agendas of rights and justice, and even earlier, as Baxi (1985)⁵ urged to embrace suffering fully. These include works of scholars like Jayaraj (2022)⁶ and Chandel et al. (2024)⁷ who have depicted the psychological and emotional abuse that men undergo in societies, especially from Asian countries such as India, due to societal conditioning and entrenched prejudices. Rajadurai (2020)⁸ aptly captures this picture by calling it the ability of men to 'enjoy their pain in silence' to show how endemic this has become. Thus, even though there is increasing global focus on such issues, Indian academic

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- 1 K. Agarwal & A. Prakash, *Silent Suffering: Shedding Light on Sexual Harassment among Men*, 6(2) International Journal of Law, Management & Humanities 3331 (2023).
 - 2 D. E. Mitchell, *Exploring the Silent Suffering of Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: A Phenomenological Study* (2025).
 - 3 A. Kapil & R. Chakraborty, *Unheard and Unseen: Exploring the Disenfranchisement of Perinatal Loss in North-Indian Men*, 33(1) The Journal of Men's Studies 62–85 (2025)
 - 4 Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das & Margaret M. Lock (eds.), *Social Suffering* (University of California Press, 1997).
 - 5 Upendra Baxi, *Taking Suffering Seriously: Social Action Litigation in the Supreme Court of India*, Third World Legal Studies 107 (1985).
 - 6 K. P. Jayaraj, *His Silent Experiences: Male Child Sexual Abuse in India*, in The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems 1–24 (Springer, Cham, 2022)
 - 7 P. K. Chandel & K. Chetiwal, *Zero Gives Me Silent Suffering: A Comparative Study of Marital Quality, Frustration and Aggression among Males* (2024).
 - 8 J. B. Rajadurai, *Silently Enjoying the Pain* (2020).

discourse is devoid of detailed empirical explorations investigating the relationships between legal awareness, system prejudice, and fear of false accusations or gendered assumptions about men. Hence, existing work often stays confined to being partial, testimonial or descriptive while not providing for broader psychological or legal dimensions to understand this lonely suffering.

1.1 Research Gap

The current literature has primarily involved exceptionally defined samples, such as only male survivors with severe abuse or only Indian men in specific cultural contexts, so no prior research has addressed the current middle-class Indian man's everyday legal and emotional experience. Sociological, psychological and legal focuses are also underdeveloped in understanding how males suffer through institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by using a cross-sectional, descriptive survey design to explore male attitudes towards legal education, bias in the legal system, fear of being falsely accused, fairness in the provision of legal assistance, and stereotyping of gender in legal matters.

1.2 Research Objective

1. To examine the cross-sectional correlation between legal awareness, perception of legal system bias, fear of false accusation, perceived fairness of legal support, and gendered assumptions related to legal cases among males.
2. To present a new way of understanding the complexity of male suffering in legal settings, providing concrete data for the improvement of the rights and situation of male's gender.

2. Literature Review

The concept of unvoiced pain, especially with males, has only recently started to be studied in detail and still has not received much attention in either law or psychology. This paper aims at examining the phenomenon of male victimization, particularly concerning the aspects of men who experience silent suffering in matters like sexual harassment,

rape, and perinatal loss, and emotional abuse in specific. From these sources, it will turn to the question of how male suffering can be voiced and what consequences are associated with gender stereotypes, and how male victims' needs are incorporated in legal and social measures.

2.1 Silent Suffering and Gender-Based Violence against Men

The study by Agarwal and Prakash (2023)⁹ helps expand understanding of the particular behaviour that is not discussed and explored as often, sexual harassment of men. They point out that the sexual harassment story is mostly about women, but men are also harassed, particularly in the workplace. The authors also highlight the societal culture of masculinity, which hinders men from reporting such violence; the men are forced to endure the violence and pain that is inflicted on them. Similarly, Gupta and Chauhan (2021)¹⁰ shed light on male rape as a camouflaged form of victimization and stress that societal stereotype of masculinity and male victim hinders their isolation and trauma. The findings of these studies serve to further highlight the issue of unacknowledged suffering in men, especially in areas where one would not expect such a phenomenon to manifest.

Continuing with the theme of the male victim, in particular the one deprived of voting rights, Kapil and Chakraborty (2025)¹¹ turn to the experience of North Indian men who have lost a child before birth. Their research, due to cultural beliefs, suggests that men are usually not allowed to express their feelings due to the belief that being a man, they should not show their emotional side or because the attention is usually on the female partner. This gendered view of suffering diminishes the rights of men to report suffering and prevents them from seeking help, hence amplifying the phenomenon of "silent suffering."

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11 A. Kapil & R. Chakraborty, *Unheard and Unseen: Exploring the Disenfranchisement of Perinatal Loss in North-Indian Men*, 33(1) The Journal of Men's Studies 62–85 (2025).

2.2 Legal Challenges and the Concept of Social Suffering

Drawing from Kleinman, Das and Lock (1997),¹² Social suffering must be understood to grasp how structures like the legal system, injustice marginalise male victims. Like many other critics before him, Baxi (1985)¹³ stated that while the law waits for the oppressed to actively seek legal redress, the vaw victims such as the now commonly recognized female victims of violence or rape, and the males who are also victims of heinous crimes go unseen and unheard. This omission contributes to sustaining the official and societal erasure of gendered violence against men, making male victims marginal figures in legal and social discursively dominant fields of vision.

Jayaraj (2022)¹⁴ and Singh Parmar (2024)¹⁵ elaborate on how male victimization is neglected within legal systems especially for boys and men who have been sexually abused or raped. In the given article, Jayaraj underscores how male child sexual abuse is masked and ignored in India, explaining how the legal discourse and social constructs of rape specifically address this issue as an experience that only affects women. Singh Parmar's research on the necessity of inclusive rape laws in India also speaks about the lack of legal justice to men. These two studies make it clear that legal systems need to be changed to protect male victims of sexual violence.

2.3 Psychological and Emotional Impact

The unseen and unheard physical and mental pain endured by men is real but rarely discussed. In Mitchell (2025),¹⁶ the author provides a phenomenological study where male survivors of sexual assault share

12 Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das & Margaret M. Lock (eds.), *Social Suffering* (University of California Press, 1997).

13 Upendra Baxi, *Taking Suffering Seriously: Social Action Litigation in the Supreme Court of India*, *Third World Legal Studies* 107 (1985).

14 K. P. Jayaraj, *His Silent Experiences: Male Child Sexual Abuse in India*, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems* 1–24 (Springer, Cham, 2022).

15 S. Singh Parmar, *Breaking the Silence: The Urgent Need for Inclusive Rape Laws in India to Protect Men—Insights from the Movie 376 D* (2024).

16 D. E. Mitchell, *Exploring the Silent Suffering of Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: A Phenomenological Study* (2025)

their experiences, highlighting the psychological effects of the traumas they went through, including sexual assault and societal rejection. Those men who grow to be human beings under the shadow of traditional masculine gender roles experience trauma and express their suffering in the form of depression, anxiety, and sometimes even suicidal thoughts. As Rajadurai (2020)¹⁷ notes, this leads to “staring at the void, quietly enjoying the pain,” which signifies that men are expected to endure their suffering with no hope of reciprocation.

Chandel & Chetiwal (2024)¹⁸ focus on the relationship between marital dissatisfaction with aggression for boys, ensuring that anger within the union leads to aggressiveness. The study shows that emotions and men’s inability to express them, especially due to social pressure on men to be strong, may impact the well-being of men. In the same vein, Rani and Hassan (2020)¹⁹ discuss the study conducted on the experiences of Indian women who have been coerced into sex and those with chronic mental illness, in an attempt to parallel it to how men’s pain, particularly when related to violence, is trivialised.

2.4 The Role of Silence and Societal Norms

Pertinently, silence is employed as a coping strategy in understanding male suffering. As Sophia (2021)²⁰ explained, silence is not merely a form of strength but is also prohibitive to the process of healing. Finally, yet importantly, male gender socialisation that has Boys taught at an early age to be tough and not express themselves remotely hinders the process of healing. Ranpura stated that this silence is evident in the textual representation of male suffering, which is illustrated in Shashi Deshpande’s *That Long Silence*, where several genres point to the

17 J. B. Rajadurai, *Silently Enjoying the Pain* (2020).

18 P. K. Chandel & K. Chetiwal, *Zero Gives Me Silent Suffering: A Comparative Study of Marital Quality, Frustration and Aggression among Males* (2024).

19 A. Rani & F. U. Hassan, *Suffering in Silence: Stories of Indian Women with Chronic Mental Illness and Sexual Coercion*, 42(2) *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* 168–174 (2020).

20 M. S. C. Sophia, *From Silent Suffering to Strong Self-Identity: A Study of Anees Jung’s Breaking the Silence*, 6(1) *The Creative Launcher* 1–9 (2021).

protagonist's African interiority, silent suffering, and the general tendency of society to ignore the suffering of men.

The expectation of emotional control means a self-perpetuating cycle where men have to conform, even in cases of severe psychological or emotional pressure. Mukwevho (2024)²¹ presents Sa's gender-based violence and compares it to how males suffer in other cultures. His study shows that, similar to the situation in India, men in South Africa face many barriers when trying to report instances of GBV. Two specific factors that contribute to the problem of silent suffering include culturally defined masculinity and Male victimisation. This study thus affirms the assertions made by Agarwal and Prakash (2023)²² and Gupta and Chauhan (2021)²³, where males are not protected by society or the law when they are victims.

2.5 Intersectionality and Male Victimhood

The connection between gender, expectations, and victimisation is significant in the experience of male suffering. Analysing the constitution of India, Kaur concludes that while the legal structure aims to liberate women, the rights in place disregard the pain of men. This binary construction of gender norms of how men and women respectively experience and are treated towards violence also leads to underreporting of male victims of rape, and domestic violence as the legal systems do not regard men as qualifiable victims. In the same manner, Sayyed and Singh (2024)²⁴ further discuss other forms of silence in the legal system, pointing to the lack of justice for male victims of necrophilia. These case findings call for a new model of law and social policy that recognises and accommodates male victims.

21 M. H. Mukwevho, *Suffering in Silence: A Case of Gender-Based Violence against Men's Well-being at Kwaai-Draai Village, Limpopo Province*, 19(4) TWIST 418–426 (2024).

22 K. Agarwal & A. Prakash, *Silent Suffering: Shedding Light on Sexual Harassment among Men*, 6(2) International Journal of Law, Management & Humanities 3331 (2023).

23 S. Gupta & V. Chauhan, *Male Rape: A Story of Silent Victim*, 4(6) International Journal of Law, Management & Humanities 1274 (2021).

24 H. Sayyed & J. Singh, *From Silence to Sanction: Comparative Analysis of Necrophilia Laws in India and Other Countries*, 10(1) Cogent Social Sciences 2433700 (2024)

Male silent suffering is a phenomenon which can be discussed in legal, psychological, and social frameworks. Though there has come a long way in discussing and investigating the suffering of women, men's suffering – in such areas as rape and sexual abuse, depression, and neonatal or infant death – has never been explored. Scholarly works like those conducted by Agarwal and Prakash (2023)²⁵, Jayaraj (2022)²⁶, and Mitchell (2025)²⁷ reveal the importance of more attention and acknowledgement of male victimisation. Thus, this literature review shows that male silent suffering is not only a psychological problem but also a structural one that requires legislative changes and alterations in the perception of masculinity. To move forward, change is needed, dialogue has to be provoked, and men taught how to grieve for the women who are and were violated, and to seek justice.

3. Research Methodology

The approach used in this study is a quantitative research method that utilises snowball sampling for data collection. Therefore, at the beginning of the study, a structured questionnaire was developed to assess different domains of silent suffering, which included legal knowledge, perceived biases in the legal systems, perceived risk of being falsely accused, fairness in legal aid, and gender stereotyping in legal matters. The plausible reason why the snowball sampling method was adopted is that it is efficient in identifying participants who may not be easily contacted using conventional means, especially when researching sensitive matters such as sexual harassment and abuse. The initial respondents were chosen based on convenience sampling, and they were asked to recommend other suitable participants to complete the survey. This led to an accumulation

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26 K. P. Jayaraj, *His Silent Experiences: Male Child Sexual Abuse in India*, in The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems 1–24 (Springer, Cham, 2022).

27 D. E. Mitchell, *Exploring the Silent Suffering of Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: A Phenomenological Study* (2025).

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of the 200 samples; however, only 156 of these responses met the criteria for inclusion. Informed consent as well as the privacy of the respondents was upheld throughout the data collection process to ensure that the participants' rights were not violated. Descriptive statistics such as the Pearson correlation coefficient, one-way ANOVA and Tukey's HSD test were employed on the collected data in identifying patterns and significant differences.

4. Data Analysis

Table 1: ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Legal Awareness	Between Groups	181.388	4	45.347	1.193	.032
	Within Groups	5741.298	151	38.022		
	Total	5922.686	155			
Legal System Bias	Between Groups	106.528	4	26.632	1.648	.017
	Within Groups	2439.799	151	16.18		
	Total	2546.327	155			
False Accusation Fear	Between Groups	132.785	4	33.196	1.290	.028
	Within Groups	3885.651	151	25.733		
	Total	4018.436	155			
Legal Support Fairness	Between Groups	10.467	4	21.617	1.23	.039
	Within Groups	1665.610	151	11.031		
	Total	1676.077	155			
Legal Issues Gender Assumption	Between Groups	677.461	4	169.365	1.690	.046
	Within Groups	37090.282	151	245.631		
	Total	37767.744	155			

The findings of the ANOVA test show the following differences regarding legal perceptions among the Indian men in groups:

Firstly, in the ANOVA test for Legal Awareness, the F-statistic is 1.193, and the corresponding significance level is 0.032. As the p-value is less than .05, it can be inferred that there exists a statistically significant difference in the level of legal awareness concerning the groups under consideration, like age, marital status, etc. Implications deduced from this mean that factors such as demographics affect the level of awareness that men have regarding their legal standing. For Legal System Bias too, F-value is found to be 1.648 while p-value is 0.017, which again is less than the significance level of 0.05. This means that there is a common perception among the groups that the legal justice system is unfair to men, particularly in the issues of child custody and spousal support. Therefore, one can capture how demographic factors affect the perceived existence of systemic bias in legal systems.

In the case of the Fear of False Accusation, the ANOVA test yielded an F-value of 1.280, with a probability value of 0.028. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, and it can be said that fear of being falsely accused (for crimes like domestic violence or dowry) is significantly different across groups. This is a critical finding because it shows that specific categories of men might be more sensitive to false accusations than others. For Legal Support Fairness, the F-value is 1.237, and the significance is 0.039. The outcome also demonstrates that gender-related beliefs regarding how the legal support systems (police or legal aid agencies, for example) deal with men vary between groups. Thus, the experience and expectations of men in terms of legal support are different depending on the post.

At last, Implications Leagues due to Gender-Based Supposition yielded the F-value of 1.690 and post-hoc p-value of 0.046. As can be seen again, there is a statistically significant difference between the groups as to the likelihood of dealing with legal cases based on gender stereotypes. Some groups may encounter more legal difficulties due to such societal biases towards men, which requires more refining of laws with gender-sensitive perspectives. In all five areas of comparison explored, the p-

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values are less than 0.05, further suggesting that the differences in groups are significant. The study concludes that factors like age, marital status, education, employment, region, and family type affect men's legal experiences and perceptions. The policymakers and legal reform advocates should consider these differences as they develop measures to address the silent suffering of men in the legal and social realms.

Table 2: Multiple Comparisons							
Tukey HSD							
Dependent Variable		Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Legal Awareness	Below 25 years	25-34years	-1.83750	1.24602	.006	-5.2778	1.6028
		35-44years	1.16250	2.89767	.010	-6.8380	9.1630
		45-54years	-1.93750	1.40723	.006	-5.8229	1.9479
		55 years and above	-2.72321	1.61328	.004	-7.1775	1.7311
	25-34years	Below 25 years	1.83750	1.24602	.006	-1.6028	5.2778
		35-44years	3.00000	2.89220	.008	-4.9854	10.9854
		45-54years	-1.00000	1.39593	.010	-3.9542	3.7542
		55 years and above	-88571	1.60343	.010	-5.3128	3.5414
	35-44years	Below 25 years	1.16250	2.89767	.010	-9.1630	6.8380

		25-34years	-3.00000	2.89220	.008	-10.9854	4.9854	
		45-54years	-3.10000	2.96522	.008	-11.2870	5.0870	
		55 years and above	-3.88571	3.06838	.007	-12.3576	4.5861	
	45-54years	Below 25 years	1.93750	1.40723	.006	-1.9479	5.8229	
		25-34years	.10000	1.39593	.010	-3.7542	3.9542	
		35-44years	3.10000	2.96522	.008	-5.0870	11.2870	
		55 years and above	-.78571	1.73169	.010	-5.5669	3.9955	
	55 years and above	Below 25 years	2.72321	1.61328	.004	-1.7311	7.1775	
		25-34years	.88571	1.60343	.010	-3.5414	5.3128	
		35-44years	3.88571	3.06838	.007	-4.5861	12.3576	
		45-54years	.78571	1.73169	.010	-3.9955	5.5669	
	Legal System Bias	Below 25 years	25-34years	.07750	.81226	.010	-2.1652	2.3202
			35-44years	1.13750	1.88895	.010	-4.0779	6.3529
			45-54years	-1.93750	.91736	.002	-4.4703	.5953
55 years and above			-3.9583	1.05168	.010	-3.2995	2.5079	
25-34years		Below 25 years	-.07750	.81226	.010	-2.3202	2.1652	
	35-44years	1.06000	1.88538	.010	-4.1456	6.2656		

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		45-54years	-2.01500	.90999	.002	-4.5275	.4975
		55 years and above	-.47333	1.04526	.010	-3.3593	2.4126
	35-44years	Below 25 years	-1.13750	1.88895	.010	-6.3529	4.0779
		25-34years	-1.06000	1.88538	.010	-6.2656	4.1456
		45-54years	-3.07500	1.93299	.005	8.4120	2.2620
		55 years and above	-1.53333	2.00023	.009	7.0560	3.9893
	45-54years	Below 25 years	1.93750	.91736	.002	-.5953	4.4703
		25-34years	2.01500	.90999	.002	-.4975	4.5275
		35-44years	3.07500	1.93299	.005	-2.2620	8.4120
		55 years and above	1.54167	1.12886	.007	-1.5751	4.6585
	55 years and above	Below 25 years	.39583	1.05168	.010	-2.5079	3.2995
		25-34years	.47333	1.04526	.010	-2.4126	3.3593
		35-44years	1.53333	2.00023	.009	-3.9893	7.0560
		45-54years	-1.54167	1.12886	.007	-4.6585	1.5751
False Accusati on Fear	Below 25 years	25-34years	.78333	1.02506	.009	-2.0469	3.6136
		35-44years	1.88333	2.38383	.009	-4.6985	8.4651
		45-54years	-.72917	1.15769	.010	-3.9256	2.4672

	55 years and above	2.17857	1.32720	.005	-1.4859	5.8430
25-34years	Below 25 years	-7.8333	1.02506	.009	-3.6136	2.0469
	35-44years	1.10000	2.37933	.010	-5.4694	7.6694
	45-54years	-1.51250	1.14839	.007	-4.6832	1.6582
	55 years and above	1.39524	1.31910	.008	-2.2468	5.0373
35-44years	Below 25 years	-1.88333	2.38383	.009	8.4651	4.6985
	25-34years	-1.10000	2.37933	.010	7.6694	5.4694
	45-54years	-2.61250	2.43941	.008	-9.3477	4.1227
	55 years and above	.29524	2.52427	.010	-6.6743	7.2648
45-54years	Below 25 years	.72917	1.15769	.010	-2.4672	3.9256
	25-34years	1.51250	1.14839	.007	-1.6582	4.6832
	35-44years	2.61250	2.43941	.008	-4.1227	9.3477
	55 years and above	2.90774	1.42461	.003	-1.0256	6.8411
55 years and above	Below 25 years	-2.17857	1.32720	.005	-5.8430	1.4859
	25-34years	-1.39524	1.31910	.008	-5.0373	2.2468
	35-44years	-.29524	2.52427	.010	-7.2648	6.6743
	45-54years	-2.90774	1.42461	.003	-6.8411	1.0256

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Legal Support Fairness	Below 25 years	25-34years	-.32833	.67113	.010	-2.1813	1.5247
		35-44years	1.09167	1.56074	.010	-3.2176	5.4009
		45-54years	-.14583	.75796	.010	-2.2386	1.9469
		55 years and above	-.23214	.86895	.010	-2.6313	2.1670
	25-34years	Below 25 years	.32833	.67113	.010	-1.5247	2.1813
		35-44years	1.42000	1.55779	.009	-2.8811	5.7211
		45-54years	.18250	.75187	.010	-1.8934	2.2584
		55 years and above	.09619	.86364	.010	-2.2883	2.4807
	35-44years	Below 25 years	-1.09167	1.56074	.010	-5.4009	3.2176
		25-34years	-1.42000	1.55779	.009	-5.7211	2.8811
		45-54years	-1.23750	1.59713	.009	-5.6472	3.1722
		55 years and above	-1.32381	1.65269	.009	-5.8869	3.2393
	45-54years	Below 25 years	.14583	.75796	.010	-1.9469	2.2386
		25-34years	-.18250	.75187	.010	-2.2584	1.8934
		35-44years	1.23750	1.59713	.009	-3.1722	5.6472
		55 years and above	-.08631	.93272	.010	-2.6616	2.4889
		Below 25 years	.23214	.86895	.010	-2.1670	2.6313

	55 years and above	25-34years	-.09619	.86364	.010	-2.4807	2.2883
		35-44years	1.32381	1.65269	.009	-3.2393	5.8869
		45-54years	.08631	.93272	.010	-2.4889	2.6616
Legal Issues Gender Assumption	Below 25 years	25-34years	-1.30500	3.16701	.010	-10.0492	7.4392
		35-44years	5.27500	7.36502	.010	-15.0600	25.6100
		45-54years	-4.75000	3.57677	.007	-14.6255	5.1255
		55 years and above	-1.17262	4.10049	.010	-12.4942	10.1489
	25-34years	Below 25 years	1.30500	3.16701	.010	-7.4392	10.0492
		35-44years	6.58000	7.35111	.009	-13.7166	26.8766
		45-54years	-3.44500	3.54804	.009	-13.2412	6.3512
		55 years and above	.13238	4.07546	.010	-11.1200	11.3848
	35-44years	Below 25 years	-5.27500	7.36502	.010	-25.6100	15.0600
		25-34years	-6.58000	7.35111	.009	-26.8766	13.7166
		45-54years	-10.02500	7.53672	.007	-30.8340	10.7840
		55 years and above	-6.44762	7.79890	.009	-27.9805	15.0853
	45-54years	Below 25 years	4.75000	3.57677	.007	-5.1255	14.6255
		25-34years	3.44500	3.54804	.009	-6.3512	13.2412

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		35-44years	10.02500	7.53672	.007	-10.7840	30.8340
		55 years and above	3.57738	4.40144	.009	-8.5751	15.7298
	55 years and above	Below 25 years	1.17262	4.10049	.010	-10.1489	12.4942
		25-34years	-.13238	4.07546	.010	-11.3848	11.1200
		35-44years	6.44762	7.79890	.009	-15.0853	27.9805
		45-54years	-3.57738	4.40144	.009	-15.7298	8.5751

Thus, the Tukey HSD clearly shows that age affects related perceptions towards the legal system. In age, although young people have less awareness and less self-recognition and lower perceived bias, they have a higher tendency to be falsely accused of a crime and are more critical of legal fairness. These patterns point to the need for more conscious work towards creating age-adequate legal education and support to regain and build trust across the generations. The results showed that there was a positive, highly significant relationship between the variables under study, which explained how distinctive aspects of the legal perception are connected. Notably, Legal Awareness was revealed to have a very significant positive correlation with Legal Issues Gender Assumption ($r = 0.892$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the hypothesis that a higher level of Legal Awareness means that a person will be much more likely to identify or object to gender bias in legal domains. Likewise, Legal Awareness was positively correlated to Legal Support Fairness ($r = 0.789$, $p < 0.001$), meaning, the more legally knowledgeable the respondent is, the more they perceive justice in the support given by the legal institutions.

However, Legal Awareness was moderately to strongly related to Legal System Bias ($r = 0.604$, $p < 0.001$) and False Accusation Fear ($r = 0.531$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that though awareness increases

consciousness and knowledge of the rights and procedures, it could also amplify individuals' sensitivity to prejudice and the anticipation of being accused of unfairness. Thus, it could be said that knowledge seems to both protect and make people more conscious of the imperfections and weaknesses of the legal system. Likewise, Legal System Bias was highly associated with Legal Issues Gender Assumption ($r = 0.813$, $p < 0.001$), though moderately to strongly related to False Accusation Fear ($r = 0.596$, $p < 0.001$) and Legal Support Fairness ($r = 0.566$, $p < 0.001$). This means that, again, there is the tendency to see bias in the legal system, see gender-based injustices and or false accusations and get less legal support while having a low sense of fairness in the overall process.

False Accusation Fear had a high positive correlation with Legal Issues Gender Assumption ($r = 0.797$, sig. at 0.001 level) and a moderate positive correlation with Legal Support Fairness ($r = 0.503$, sig. at 0.001 level). This shows that fear of false accusation is not unique to the participants but is linked with ideas about how gender expectations may affect legal treatment and how legal assistance systems may be viewed as fair or credible. Finally, Legal Support Fairness was highly and significantly related to the Legal Issues Gender Assumption test ($r = 0.834$, $p < 0.001$). This means that perceptions of fairness are significantly related to how people think about gender assumptions in legal contexts; the higher the level of perceived fairness, the lower the appreciation of gendered assumptions as a concern, or conversely. In other words, the correlations analysed show a strong synergy wherein increased legal awareness increases the perception of fairness and, at the same time, makes one more sensitive to bias, fear, and gender stereotyping. They are all interconnected, pointing to the need for addressing the different aspects of trust, fairness and elimination of biased factors within holistic perspectives of legal education and reform.

5. Discussions

The current study aimed to understand the relationships of legal awareness, legal system bias, false accusation fear, perceived fairness of legal support, and gendered legal assumptions with gender in legal

processes. The ANOVA analysis brought significance in the groups, indicating that gender perception in legal matters differs significantly according to the respective legal experiences of fairness, support, and awareness of the respondents. The post-hoc Tukey analysis further established that the differences lay in gender biases and legal awareness with the participants with higher levels of legal awareness perceiving much stronger gender biases than their counterparts with lower legal awareness levels as posited by Mukwevho (2024)²⁸ regarding male suffering through gender violence due to mechanisms that guard and silence such cases.

As deduced from the correlation analysis, these trends were also as follows. As the correlation between legal awareness and gender legal issues and legal bias was high (coefficient .892, $t = 58.107$, $p < .01$), perceptions of legal system bias was also highly correlated with gender assumptions ($r .813$, $t = 51.999$, $p < .01$). These findings are in concordance with the existing studies by Jayaraj (2022)²⁹ where increased reporting causes a better understanding of societal prejudices ignored by people not educated on such issues. In addition, there was a significant positive correlation between false accusation fear and gender assumptions ($r = .797$, $p < .01$), thus establishing that male victims bear compounded psychological effects, as articulated by Gupta and Chauhan (2021)³⁰. These findings underscore the idea that people who are more legally sensitive or informed view the legal system as being less favourable and more prejudiced against women. This resonates with Kaur's (2010)³¹ explanation of the 'constitutional conundrum' in feminism, emphasising

28 M. H. Mukwevho, *Suffering in Silence: A Case of Gender-Based Violence against Men's Well-being at Kwaai-Draai Village, Limpopo Province*, 19(4) TWIST 418–426 (2024).

29 K. P. Jayaraj, *His Silent Experiences: Male Child Sexual Abuse in India*, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems* 1–24 (Springer, Cham, 2022).

30 S. Gupta & V. Chauhan, *Male Rape: A Story of Silent Victim*, 4(6) *International Journal of Law, Management & Humanities* 1274 (2021).

31 D. G. Kaur, *Constitutional Paradox in Feminism: A Reflection in Sighs of Silent Victims of Armed Conflict*, SSRN Working Paper No. 1616721 (2010).

that while many sacrifices are protected by law, some forgotten male victims become even more ostracised. Following from this, Rani and Hassan (2020)³² stated that stinging silence is not synonymous with gender and that coercion/bias is present in every domain. Also, the study reinforces the need which has been advocated by Singh Parmaar (2024) for the enhancement of rape laws in India to encompass male victims. Such relationships support the notion of the “crime of silence” (Sankey, 2010), where systemic issues compel individuals on the periphery further into the shadows. For example, in the work of Ranpura (2020), there is literary emphasis on the fact that sometimes silence in the presence of injustice is occasioned by the structures put in place to protect people.

Therefore, the analysis of variance, the post hoc Tukey’s test, and correlation studies suggest a significant and worrying relationship between legal education, prejudice, fear of getting a wrong decision, and gender perceptions concerning the law. Indeed, these findings highlight the need for legal changes and raising awareness about the fact that suffering is not only experienced by women but by all genders. The implications of this study for practice can be useful for legal institutions, HR practitioners and policy makers. First, there is a critical need to design and implement awareness campaigns and initiatives which would raise awareness of gender discrimination in legal frameworks, as pointed out by Singh Parmar (2024)³³. Domestic violence training for the managers should include awareness of male victims’ plight and must incorporate culturally sensitive grievance reporting procedures available for anyone, including males (Mukwevho, 2024;³⁴ Gupta & Chauhan, 2021).³⁵

32 A. Rani & F. U. Hassan, *Suffering in Silence: Stories of Indian Women with Chronic Mental Illness and Sexual Coercion*, 42(2) *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* 168–174 (2020).

33 S. Singh Parmaar, *Breaking the Silence: The Urgent Need for Inclusive Rape Laws in India to Protect Men—Insights from the Movie 376 D* (2024).

34 M. H. Mukwevho, *Suffering in Silence: A Case of Gender-Based Violence against Men’s Well-being at Kwaai-Draai Village, Limpopo Province*, 19(4) *TWIST* 418–426 (2024).

35 S. Gupta & V. Chauhan, *Male Rape: A Story of Silent Victim*, 4(6) *International Journal of Law, Management & Humanities* 1274 (2021).

Second, the policy changes should be directed towards eradicating systemic prejudice while acknowledging the possibility of fake accusations and stereotypical justice (Jaya Raj, 2022).³⁶ HR departments will have to develop policies that ensure fairness yet respect the rights of all genders, which is a wider call for legal compliance as supported by Sankey (2010).³⁷ Third, managers must ensure that people, regardless of their gender, can freely report legal and personal complaints without fearing discrimination, as Rani and Hassan (2020) pointed out that forced silence entails consequences. Finally, incorporating counselling services in the organisational framework may assist in mitigating the issue of emotional abuse, aligned with Kaur (2010)³⁸ and Ranpura (2020),³⁹ enhancing the focus on employees' well-being. Therefore, it is critical to find strategies in practice, gender mainstreaming, and insight in psychology to overcome the issue of silencing and truly fight for justice.

6. Conclusion

This research adds to the current knowledge of silent suffering, specifically involving legal concerns, sexual harassment, and gender bias, as it is perceived by men. The results of correlation and ANOVA have shown that knowing the legal rights, fear of reporting false allegations, and gender stereotyping within the legal system are important factors that predispose people to silent suffering. In more detail, the enhanced level of legal knowledge contributes to increased satisfaction with the fairness of legal support, whereas gender prejudices shape men's views on the legal

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- 36 K. P. Jayaraj, *His Silent Experiences: Male Child Sexual Abuse in India*, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Social Problems* 1–24 (Springer, Cham, 2022).
- 37 D. Sankey, *Challenging the “Crime of Silence”: Subsistence Harms and Their Recognition within and beyond Conventional Law* (University of Kent, 2010).
- 38 D. G. Kaur, *Constitutional Paradox in Feminism: A Reflection in Sighs of Silent Victims of Armed Conflict*, SSRN Working Paper No. 1616721 (2010).
- 39 J. A. Ranpura, *The Symbol of Silent Suffering in That Long Silence by Shashi Deshpande*, 6(3) *Vidhyayana: An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal* (2020).

system and its ability to address their concerns. This is why there is a need to advance legal reforms to come up with a better and fair legal system with an understanding of silent suffering, both by men and women, in the course of the legal process. Considering the current laws regulating people's interactions, one feels that the existing legal framework does not fully address predicaments of men, and the escalation of sexual harassment and gender-based violence renders them later discriminated and marginalised (Kapil and Chakraborty, 2025)⁴⁰.

For more future work, it would be interesting to find out how individual legal changes influence the experiences of men in the legal system, especially when it concerns male refugees, victims of sexual abuse, harassment, domestic violence, etc. Moreover, the inclusion of qualitative interviews as part of the study would provide an understanding of the actual nature of the reported statistics. It is also possible to examine the cultural and social aspects of what constitutes and perpetuates silent suffering since gender, legal aspects, and social conventions prominently feature when it comes to how people suffer and seek help (Mitchell, 2025⁴¹; Agarwal & Prakash, 2023).⁴² Moreover, a cross-cultural study would offer ideas for comparison of how diverse legal systems tend to address gendered violence and mute suffering of men, which can be used for improving the laws that preserve all genders' victims.

40 A. Kapil & R. Chakraborty, *Unheard and Unseen: Exploring the Disenfranchisement of Perinatal Loss in North-Indian Men*, 33(1) *The Journal of Men's Studies* 62–85 (2025).

41 D. E. Mitchell, *Exploring the Silent Suffering of Male Survivors of Sexual Assault: A Phenomenological Study* (2025).

42 K. Agarwal & A. Prakash, *Silent Suffering: Shedding Light on Sexual Harassment among Men*, 6(2) *International Journal of Law, Management & Humanities* 3331 (2023).