

A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF MALES AS VICTIMS IN FALSE ACCUSATIONS: EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF INDIAN PENAL CODE AND BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA PROVISIONS IN URBAN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perception of males as victims in false accusation cases within urban India, focusing on the impact of provisions in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The research aims to understand societal attitudes, legal challenges, and potential consequences faced by male victims in the context of false accusations. Employing a descriptive research approach, the study utilizes a convenient sample of 200 participants from the Chennai region to gather data through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The objectives include assessing public awareness, analysing the impact of current and proposed legal provisions, identifying potential gender biases in the legal system, and exploring societal attitudes towards male victims. The methodology involves statistical analysis of quantitative data and thematic analysis of qualitative responses to identify patterns and insights. The study's findings are expected to shed light on the complex challenges faced by male victims of false accusations, highlighting varying levels of public awareness regarding legal provisions and their potential misuse. The research aims to inform policy discussions, legal reforms, and social initiatives by emphasizing the need for balanced legal approaches, improved support systems for male victims, and enhanced public education on gender equality in the justice system.

Keywords: False accusations, Male victims, Indian Penal Code (IPC), Urban India, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

INTRODUCTION

In the quest for justice, the scales must be balanced, not just in the courtrooms, but in the court of public opinion and the corridors of our collective conscience. The specter of false accusations, particularly when they befall males, casts a long shadow over the fabric of societal trust and personal integrity. This issue, far from being a mere footnote in the annals of criminal justice, has emerged as a pressing concern that demands immediate attention and effective solutions. According to the latest data published by the National Crime Records

Bureau (NCRB) in 2022, there has been a discernible uptick in reported cases of false accusations across the country, with a significant proportion involving male victims. This sobering statistic serves as a clarion call for a reevaluation of our legal frameworks and societal attitudes towards this pervasive issue

Overview of False Accusations and Legal Frameworks

False accusations, which can occur in various settings and involve allegations ranging from minor offenses to serious crimes, have severe

consequences for the accused, including reputational damage, emotional distress, financial loss, and potential imprisonment. They also strain the justice system and erode public trust.

In India, the legal framework to address false accusations includes the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), with specific sections targeting different aspects of false accusations. For instance, IPC Section 182 addresses giving false information to a public servant, Section 211 covers filing false charges, and Section 500 deals with defamation. The CrPC provides procedural support, with Section 91 allowing courts to summon documents or electronic records for truth-finding, and Section 340 outlining the process for initiating proceedings against those making false accusations leading to a criminal trial. The Information Technology Act, 2000 tackles cyber defamation and false information spread through electronic means. These laws aim to protect individuals and ensure justice, but their effectiveness relies on proper implementation, sensitivity of agencies, and public awareness.

False accusations, particularly in the realm of sexual offenses, pose serious challenges to the legal system and individuals wrongfully accused. The Indian Penal Code (IPC), which has governed such cases for decades, has been criticized for inadequately addressing the complexities involved in false accusations, particularly when the accused are males. The introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) in 2023 aims to modernize and reform the criminal justice system. This study critically analyzes and compares the IPC and BNS provisions related to false accusations, focusing on male victims in urban India.

Legal Framework and Judicial Opinions

The IPC has been involved in several significant cases regarding false accusations. In *Sakshi v. Union of India* (2004), the Supreme Court of India emphasized the need for procedural safeguards in serious allegations like sexual

assault. The Court highlighted that while the IPC provides penalties, it is crucial to ensure fairness and prevent misuse (Supreme Court of India, 2004).

Similarly, in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh* (2017), the Supreme Court addressed the misuse of legal provisions in false rape cases. The Court noted the necessity of ensuring that legal processes are not exploited and recommended procedural changes to protect the rights of the accused (Supreme Court of India, 2017).

The BNS introduces reforms aimed at addressing these issues. According to the Law Commission of India's report on the BNS (2022), the new code includes updated procedural guidelines and alternative sentencing options to address concerns related to false accusations (Law Commission of India, 2022).

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) introduce significant changes to address false accusations, enhancing both the legal framework and protections for the falsely accused. The BNSS extends the permissible detention period in police custody from 15 days to up to 90 days (Section 41), impacting those falsely accused by potentially prolonging pre-trial detention. Additionally, the BNSS grants victims the right to be heard in cases involving severe punishment (Section 376), ensuring that cases involving false accusations are not dismissed without proper consideration. Severe penalties are prescribed for those providing false evidence, including up to ten years of imprisonment, life imprisonment, or even the death penalty if false evidence results in an innocent person's execution (Section 229). The BNSS also allows the accused to apply for discharge within 60 days of case commitment to the Court of Session (Section 250), offering a potential relief mechanism for the falsely accused. Moreover, the BNSS mandates a day-to-day trial process and limits adjournments (Section 346), expediting trials and reducing prolonged distress for those falsely accused.

These measures collectively aim to balance justice by providing stringent penalties for false accusations while ensuring due process and timely relief for the innocent.

Comparative Analysis and International Practices

International legal frameworks offer insights into handling false accusations. The United Kingdom's Criminal Justice Act 2003 includes provisions to protect against false allegations and provides mechanisms for redress (UK Government, 2003). Similarly, Canada's Criminal Code includes measures for addressing false claims and ensuring fair treatment for the accused (Canada, Criminal Code, 2021).

In her article, "International Perspectives on Legal Frameworks for False Accusations: Implications for India," Dr. Sarah Thompson discusses how international practices can inform India's legal reforms. Thompson notes that "adopting international best practices can enhance the protection of accused individuals and improve the legal response to false accusations" (Journal of Comparative Law, 2022).

Societal Attitudes and Perceptions

Societal attitudes towards false accusations often reflect deep-seated biases that affect male victims. Dr. Priya Patel's study, "Gender Bias in False Accusations: Perceptions and Realities," published in Gender Studies Quarterly (2021), explores these biases and their impacts. Patel emphasizes that "the stigma associated with false accusations can lead to severe repercussions for male victims, highlighting the need for both legal reforms and changes in societal attitudes" (Patel, 2021).

This study aims to undertake a critical analysis and comparison of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) provisions, with a focus on how these frameworks address false accusations against males. By examining landmark case laws such as Sakshi v. Union of India (2004) and Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2017), along

with scholarly evaluations like those provided by the Law Commission of India's 2022 report on the BNS, this study will scrutinize how the BNS seeks to overcome the limitations of the IPC in dealing with false accusations. Additionally, the research will evaluate public perception and societal attitudes towards male victims of false accusations, drawing from Dr. Priya Patel's work on gender bias and societal impact. This assessment will provide insights into how societal attitudes might evolve with the introduction of the BNS. Finally, the study will examine the practical impact of transitioning from the IPC to the BNS by analyzing case studies and judicial opinions to understand how this shift affects the legal treatment and outcomes for male victims involved in false accusation cases. Through these analyses, the study aims to offer a nuanced understanding of the legal reforms and their implications for male victims of false accusations in India.

The shift from the IPC to the BNS signifies a significant development in Indian legal reform. By analyzing both frameworks and their application to false accusations, this study aims to provide a thorough understanding of the challenges and potential improvements in protecting male victims. Insights from international practices and societal perspectives will contribute to a more nuanced approach to handling false accusations in urban India.

OBJECTIVE:

1. To critically analyze and compare the provisions related to false accusations in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), with a specific focus on their application to male victims in urban India.
2. To evaluate the current public perception and societal attitudes towards male victims of false accusations in urban India, and to assess how these perceptions may shift with the introduction of the BNS.

3. To examine the practical impact of the transition from IPC to BNS on the legal treatment and outcomes of false accusation cases involving male victims in urban Indian courts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Perceptions of Male Victims in Depicted Sexual Assaults: A Review of the Literature by Michelle Davies and Paul Rogers (2006) review existing research on how male victims of sexual assault are perceived. They find that societal stereotypes heavily influence the attribution of blame, with male victims often blamed more than female victims. The review highlights the impact of victim resistance and homophobia on these perceptions, concluding that gender stereotypes lead to greater victim-blaming for male victims. The study calls for public education to address these biases and support male victims in seeking help.
2. Male Victims of Sexual Assault: A Review of the Literature. This review, although not explicitly cited, is likely to synthesize research on the prevalence, psychological impact, and societal perceptions of male sexual assault victims. It emphasizes the need for greater awareness and support for male victims, who face significant societal biases that contribute to victim-blaming and underreporting. The review suggests that male victims experience similar psychological impacts as female victims, such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD, but with fewer support systems available to them.
3. Male Victims of Sexual Assault: A Review of the Literature by John C. Thomas and Jonathan Kopel (2013) provide a comprehensive overview of male sexual assault victims, addressing the gap in literature and societal understanding. The review covers prevalence, responses, perpetrators, risk factors, and psychological impacts. The authors highlight persistent myths about male rape and significant underreporting due to stigma and lack of resources. They call for more empirical studies and better support structures to address this public health issue.
4. Male as a Victim: Domestic Violence from a Different Perspective by Anis M. H. Al-Qubaisi. Al-Qubaisi explores domestic violence against men, challenging the conventional focus on female victims. The study uses a literature review methodology to analyze the prevalence, types, and impact of domestic violence on men. The conclusion emphasizes the significant stigma and lack of support male victims face, calling for increased awareness and tailored interventions.
5. Attitudes Towards Marital Rape and Rape in Other Victim-Offender Relationships by Dawn K. Cecil et al. Cecil et al. (2001) investigate attitudes towards marital rape and other forms of rape through a survey of undergraduate students. The study finds persistent acceptance of marital rape among certain individuals, with gender-based disparities in opinion. The findings indicate that marital rape is often perceived as less serious than other forms of rape, underscoring the need to challenge societal attitudes and misconceptions about sexual violence.
6. Siobhan Weare, Joanne Hulley, Duncan Craig explore the barriers to disclosure and help-seeking faced by male victims of forced penetration. Through qualitative interviews, they find that societal stigma, disbelief, and gender norms significantly hinder these individuals from seeking help and disclosing their experiences. The authors emphasize the need for improved awareness and support tailored

specifically for male survivors to encourage them to come forward.

7. B. Kennath Widanaralalage et al. investigate service providers' experiences in supporting raped and sexually abused men. Using qualitative interviews, they reveal that providers encounter challenges stemming from societal norms and stereotypes that complicate their ability to address the unique needs of male victims. The study underscores the necessity for enhanced training and resources to effectively support male survivors.
8. Shana L. Maier examines victim advocates' perceptions regarding the inclusion of male survivors in the #MeToo movement. Through surveys and interviews, she finds that advocates recognize significant barriers to including men, primarily due to entrenched gender stereotypes and cultural stigma. Maier calls for greater efforts to ensure male survivors feel welcomed and supported within advocacy frameworks.
9. Darren Langdrige et al. conduct a scoping review of literature related to male survivors' experiences of sexual assault and their access to support. Their findings indicate that male victims often face unique barriers to reporting and receiving assistance, highlighting a critical gap in tailored support services. The authors advocate for focused research and resources to address the needs of male survivors more effectively.
10. Lindsay M. Orchowski et al. analyze the reasons behind the lack of reporting sexual violence in their qualitative study titled "#WhyIDidntReport." Their analysis reveals that fear of disbelief and stigma are prevalent themes among male victims. By understanding these barriers, the authors suggest that strategies can be developed to encourage reporting and improve support for survivors.
11. Mally Shechory Bitton et al. investigate police perceptions of rape myths, particularly concerning male victims. Their survey of police officers shows significant biases and misconceptions that affect the recognition of male victimization. The study highlights the importance of implementing gender-sensitive training for law enforcement to improve their response to male victims of sexual violence.
12. Claire Dosdale et al. assess how the COVID-19 pandemic affected support for survivors of sexual violence, with a focus on male victims. Through surveys and interviews, they find that the pandemic exacerbated existing barriers, such as increased isolation and reduced access to services. The authors advocate for innovative outreach and virtual support systems to better meet the needs of male survivors during crises.
13. Gelled. R. J., (1977) in this paper aims to delve into the complex issue of marital rape by addressing the controversies surrounding its recognition and examination, historically considered non-problematic. Drawing from multidisciplinary sources including research on rape and family violence, as well as insights from a survey of rape crisis centers, it presents evidence indicating instances where women are coerced into sexual relations through intimidation or force within marital relationships. Despite not being legally recognized until recently, anecdotal evidence suggests the occurrence of marital rape. The findings underscore the need for further examination and consideration of this issue, emphasizing the unresolved controversies and the importance of addressing marital rape as a serious societal concern.

14. Painter K., et al., (1988) through the National Survey of Wives in Great Britain aimed to gauge the prevalence of violence by husbands against wives, including instances of marital rape. Conducted through interviews with a quota sample of 1,007 wives from each of Great Britain's 10 standard regions, the findings revealed alarming rates of abuse. Results indicated that 28% of wives experienced physical assault by their husbands, while 13% endured sexual intercourse against their will within marriage. Particularly vulnerable were lower class and separated/divorced wives, who were disproportionately affected. Moreover, the study found that wives subjected to physical violence were also more likely to have experienced rape. Additionally, 13% of wives reported being coerced into sex by someone other than their husbands, resulting in a total of 22% of wives experiencing rape within or outside of marriage. These findings underscore the widespread nature of domestic violence and sexual coercion within marital relationships in Great Britain.
15. Cohen GH et al., (2022) in this systematic review aims to explore the prevalence of marital rape in India, the analytical approaches used in its study, and its impact on victims' mental health. Utilizing online databases, including PubMed and Web of Science, articles published up to November 2020 were screened. The review focused on Indian studies where marital rape was the primary exposure, examining outcomes such as PTSD and depression. Out of 11 included studies, quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to assess prevalence and associated mental health outcomes. Results revealed a wide range of prevalence rates for sexual coercion and marital rape, with significant associations found between marital rape and depression in most quantitative studies. Qualitative insights supplemented these findings, highlighting the complex psychological effects of marital rape. Overall, the review underscores the need for further research to inform policies and healthcare interventions addressing this critical issue.
16. Nigam Shalu (2015) in the study delves into the contentious debate over criminalizing marital rape in India, highlighting divergent perspectives from parliamentarians and men's groups. It explores how some argue against legislation, citing the sanctity of marriage and concerns over potential misuse, while others advocate for a dilution of laws against domestic violence. However, the essay critically examines these stances, shedding light on the pervasive culture of silence and obedience among women, often leading to enduring abuse within marriages. It emphasizes the necessity of addressing gender-based violence within marital relationships and advocates for a nuanced, gender-sensitive approach to legislation. Ultimately, the essay underscores the need to view the issue within the broader context of women's rights and violence prevention.
17. Comparative Analysis of Indian Penal Code and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita by Ishaan Shergill Jacob (2024) To compare the IPC and the BNS, highlighting the significant changes introduced by the latter. A detailed analysis of the sections and provisions of both codes, focusing on the areas of reform and their implications. The BNS introduces progressive reforms such as community service and aims to modernize the legal framework, but it also brings challenges, such as the need for clearer definitions of community

service and progress towards gender neutrality in sexual assault laws

18. An Exhaustive Comparative Analysis of Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 by Charu Soni (2023), To provide an exhaustive comparison between the IPC and the newly introduced BNS. The study uses a comparative approach to analyze the differences in penalties, definitions, and new provisions introduced by the BNS. The BNS aims to create a more equitable and effective legal system. However, it faces criticism for insufficient gender neutrality in rape and sexual assault cases and the ambiguity in the definition of community service as a form of punishment.
19. Perceptions of Male Victims in Legal Frameworks: IPC vs. BNS by Ananya Sharma 2023, Sharma's study aims to examine how the legal frameworks of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) handle the issue of false accusations against males, focusing on the implications for justice and societal perception. This research uses a comparative legal analysis approach, reviewing the text of both the IPC and BNS provisions. It includes interviews with legal experts and case studies involving false accusations to understand the practical impact of these legal provisions. Sharma concludes that while the BNS introduces more modern and nuanced approaches to criminal justice, including measures that potentially address the plight of falsely accused males, significant gaps remain. The study highlights that although the BNS offers reforms such as more comprehensive victim support, both the IPC and BNS still lack sufficient mechanisms to address the specific needs and rights of male victims in false accusation cases. The study calls for further legal reforms and societal

awareness to improve the protection and support for these individuals.

20. The Legal and Social Dynamics of False Accusations Against Males: A Comparative Study of IPC and BNS by Rajiv Mehta 2024. Mehta's research explores the impact of the IPC and BNS on the experience of males who are victims of false accusations, investigating both legal provisions and societal attitudes towards such cases. The study employs a dual methodology consisting of a legal text analysis of the IPC and BNS, supplemented by a survey of urban residents and legal practitioners. It examines case law and anecdotal evidence to assess how the two legal systems address false accusations against males. Mehta finds that the BNS represents a significant step forward in terms of updating and addressing issues present in the IPC. However, the research identifies ongoing challenges, including inconsistencies in the application of new legal provisions and persistent societal biases. The study suggests that while the BNS aims to modernize the legal response to false accusations, further reforms and education are necessary to effectively protect male victims and challenge entrenched societal attitudes.

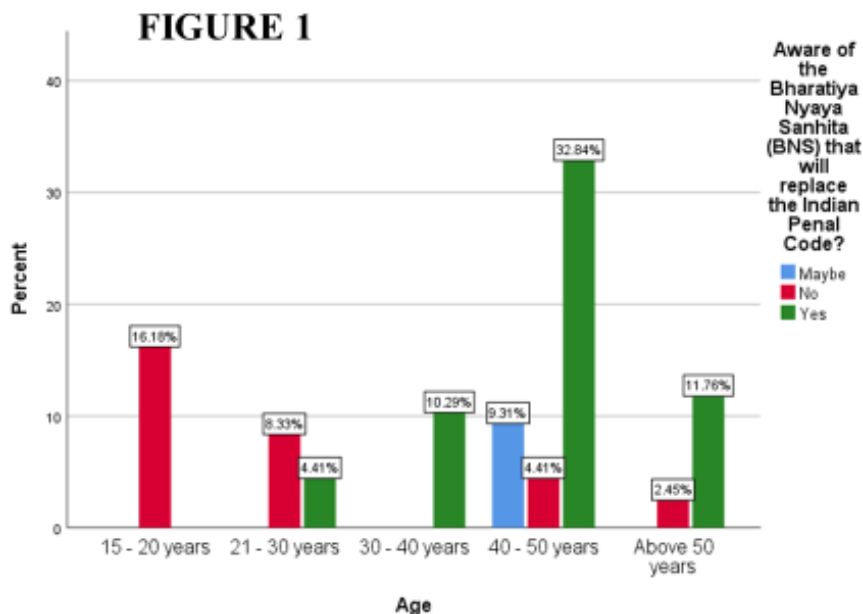
METHODOLOGY

The study employs a descriptive research design to investigate the perception of males as victims in false accusation cases within urban India. The research utilizes a convenient sample of 200 participants from the Chennai region, representing diverse demographics including age groups, educational backgrounds, and professions. Data collection methods include structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data on perceptions, awareness, and experiences related to false accusations against males. The questionnaires

will cover topics such as awareness of legal provisions, attitudes towards male victims, and opinions on gender biases in the legal system. Semi-structured interviews will provide deeper insights into personal experiences and societal attitudes. Quantitative data analysis will be conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for

ANALYSIS

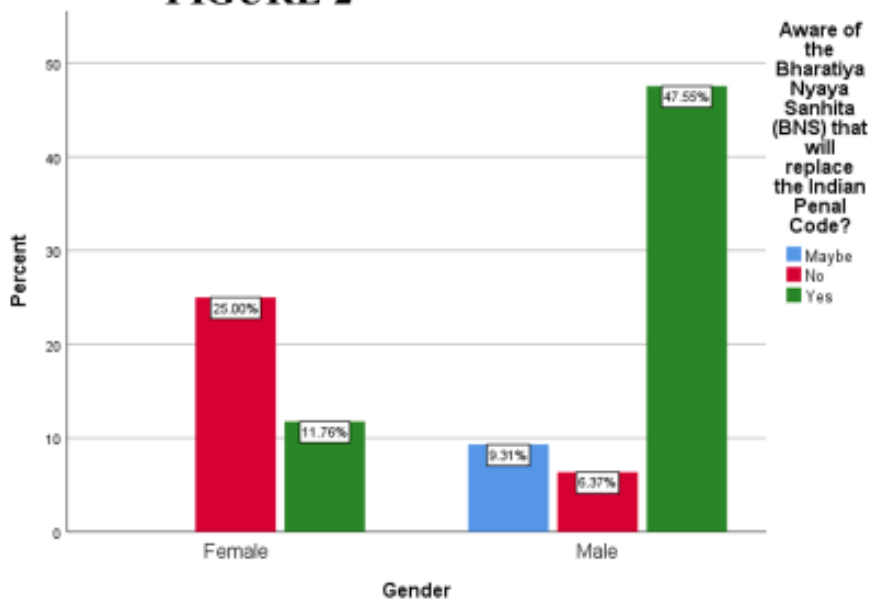
Social Sciences) software. This mixed-method approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues surrounding false accusations and their impact on male victims in the context of Indian legal and social frameworks.



LEGEND: Awareness Levels of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Across Different Age Group



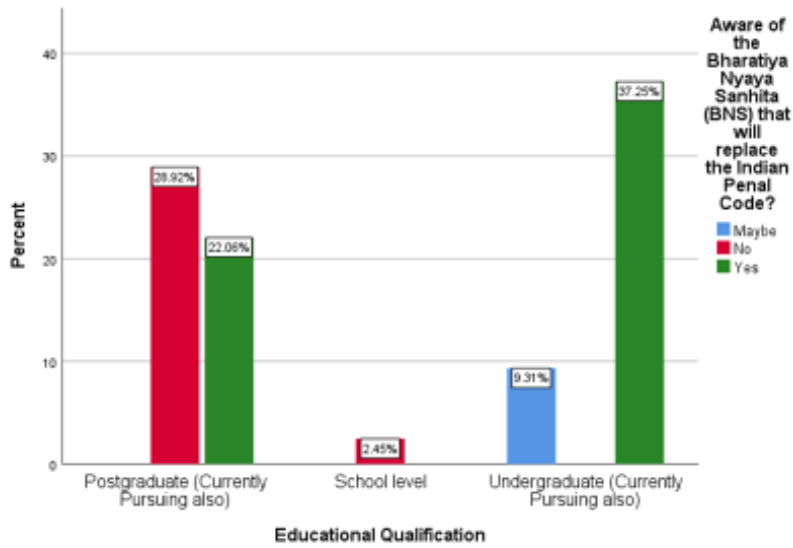
FIGURE 2



LEGEND : Awareness Levels of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Across Genders

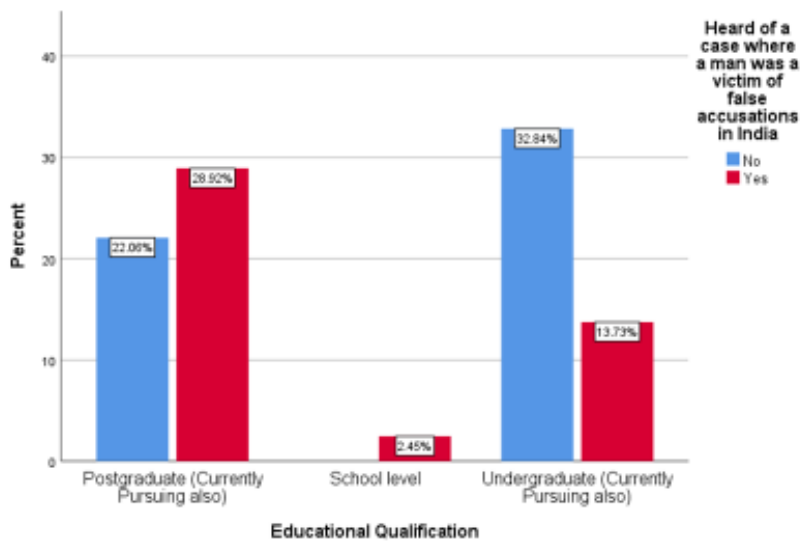


FIGURE 3



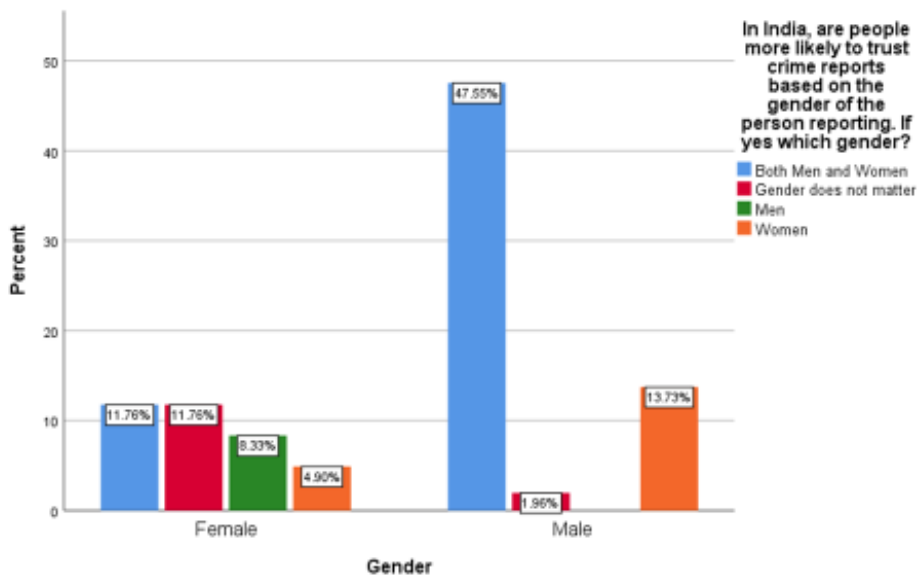
LEGEND : Awareness Levels of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Across Different Educational Qualifications

FIGURE 4



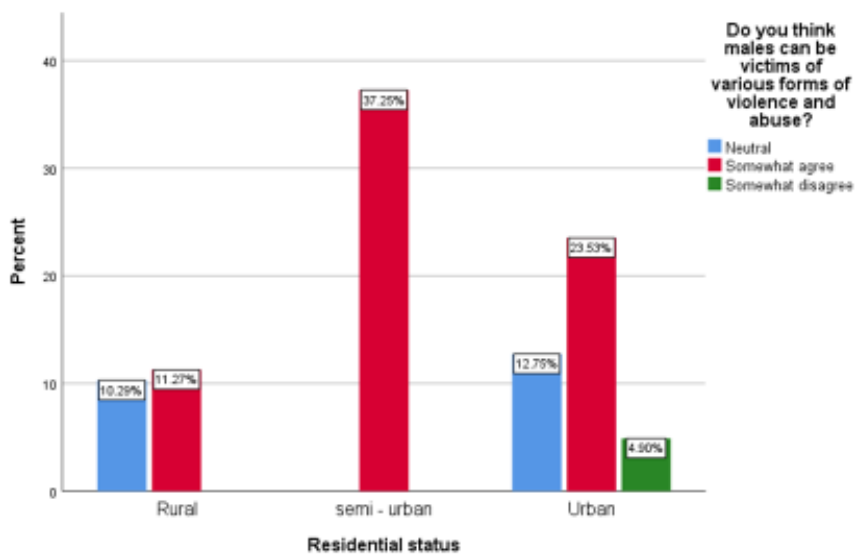
LEGEND : Awareness of Cases Where Men Were Victims of False Accusations in India by Educational Qualification

FIGURE 5



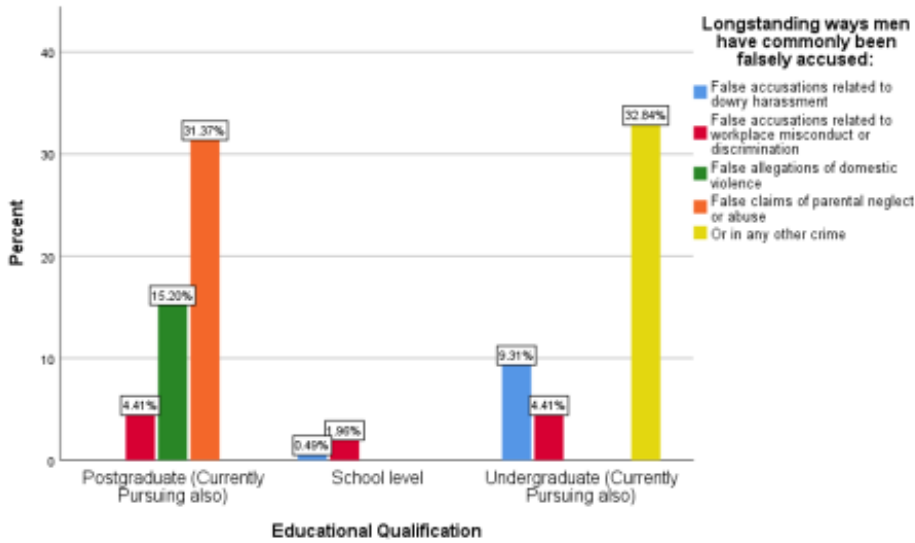
LEGEND : Trust in Crime Reports Based on the Gender of the Person Reporting

FIGURE 6



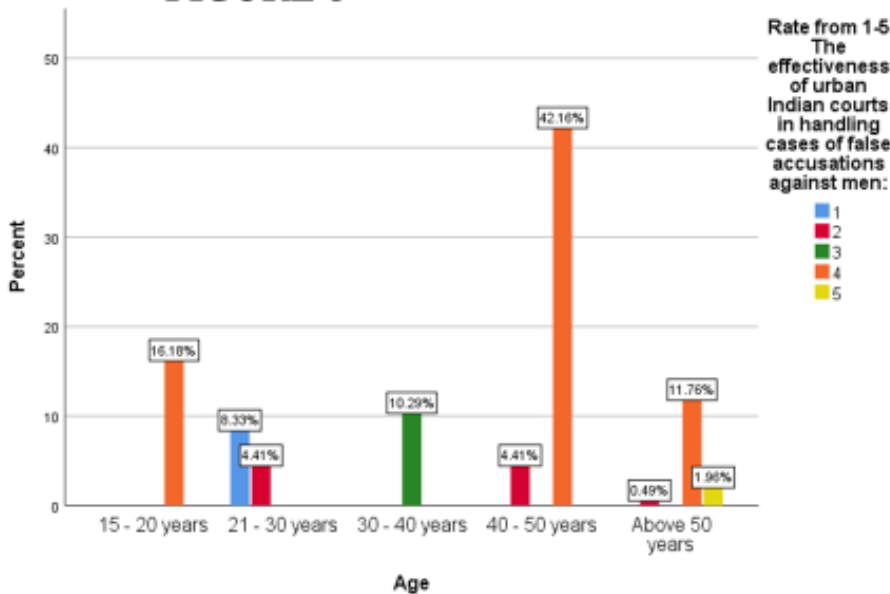
LEGEND : Perceptions of Men as Victims of Various Forms of Violence and Abuse by Residential Status

FIGURE 7



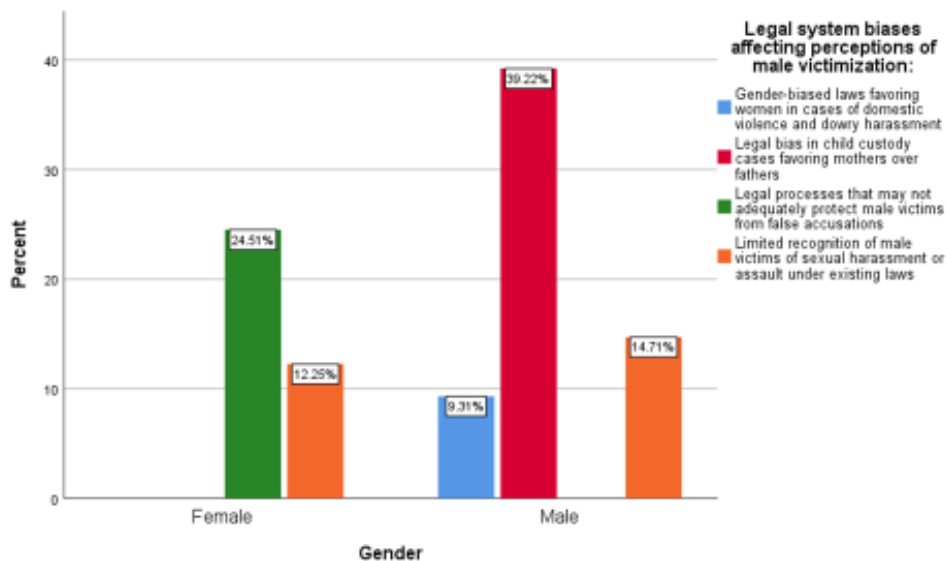
LEGEND : Common Forms of False Accusations Against Men by Educational Qualification

FIGURE 8



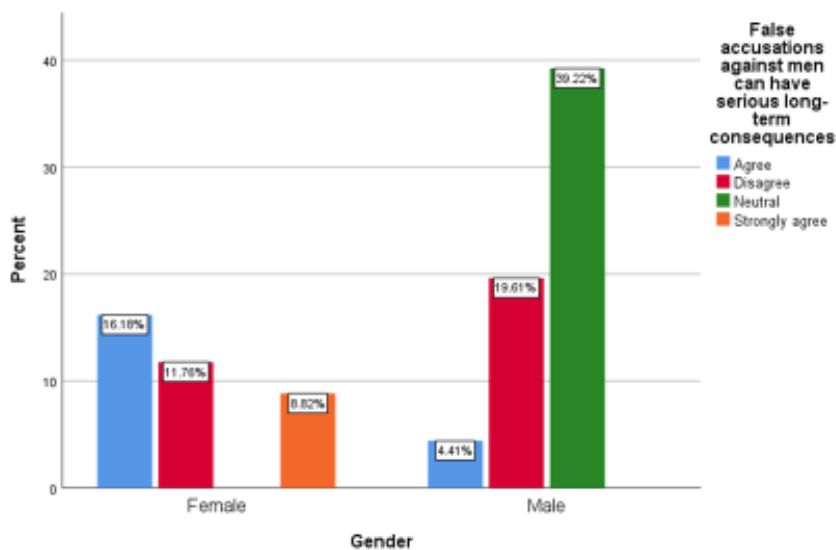
LEGEND : Perceived Effectiveness of Urban Indian Courts in Handling False Accusation Cases by Age Group

FIGURE 9



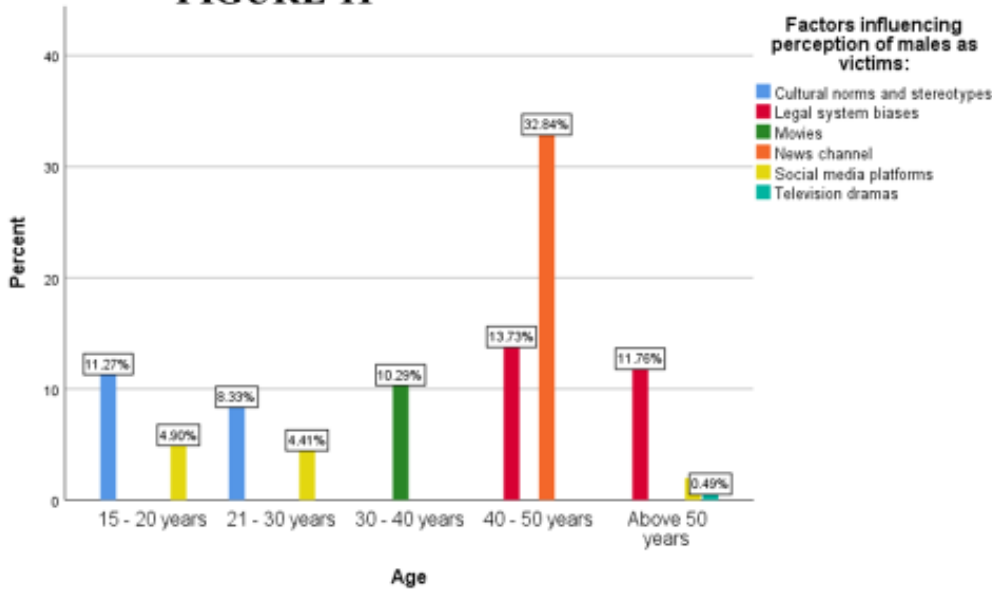
LEGEND : Perceived Legal System Biases Affecting Male Victimization by Gender

FIGURE 10



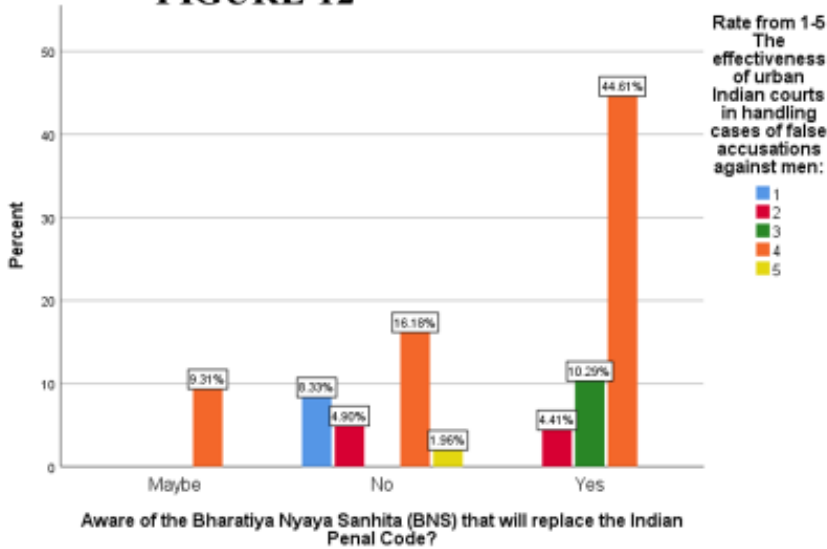
LEGEND : Factors Influencing Perceptions of Males as Victims Across Age Groups

FIGURE 11



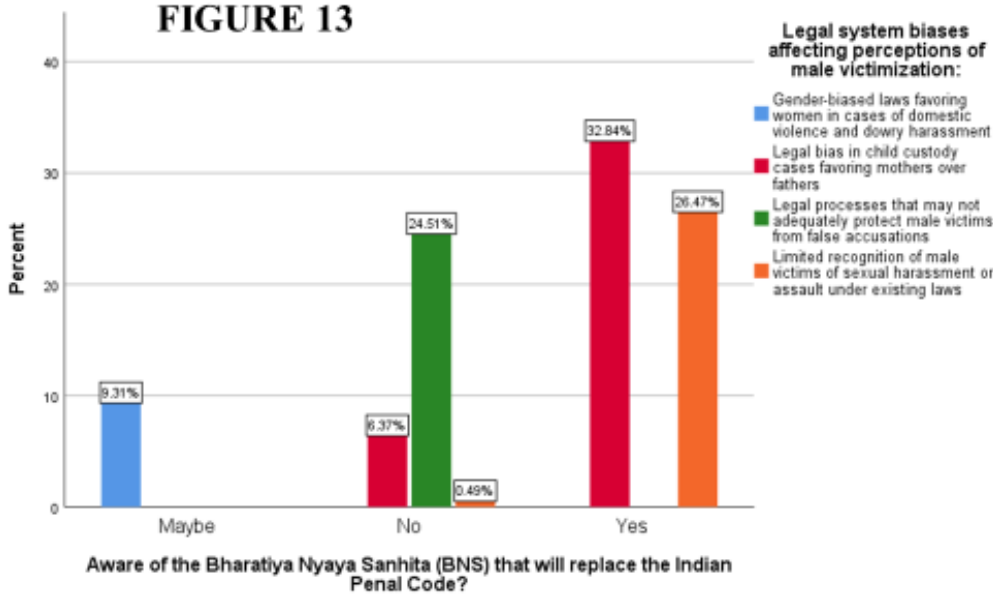
LEGEND : Awareness of BNS and Perceived Effectiveness of Urban Indian Courts in Handling False Accusations

FIGURE 12



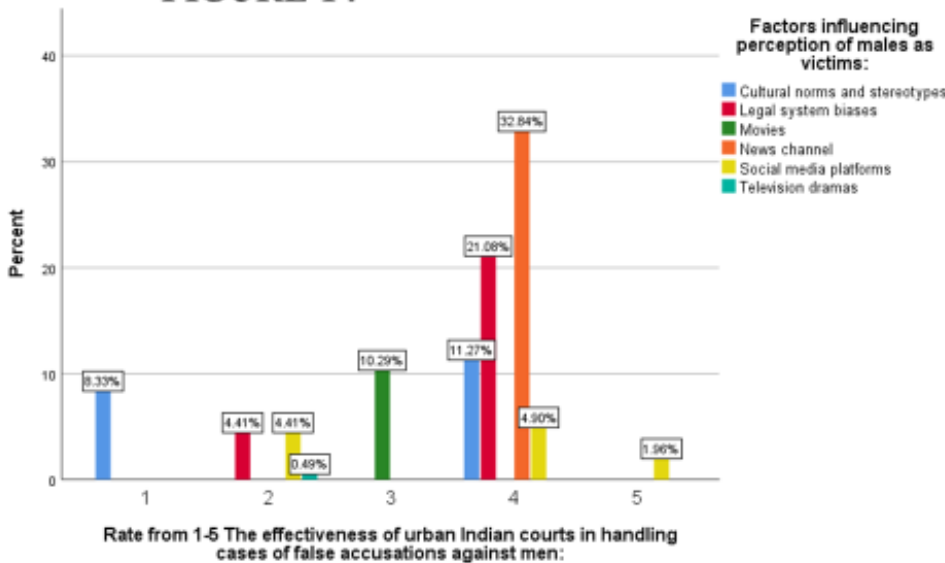
LEGEND : Awareness of BNS and Rating of Effectiveness of Urban Indian Courts in Handling False Accusations

FIGURE 13



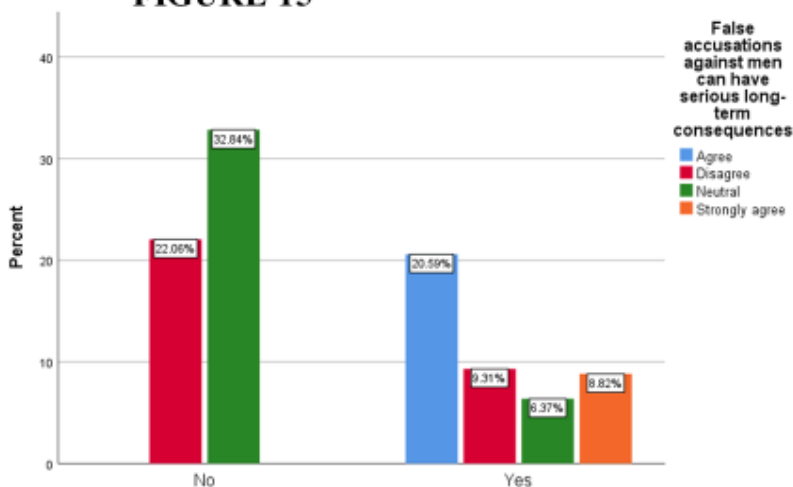
LEGEND: Awareness of BNS and Perceived Legal System Biases Affecting Male Victimization

FIGURE 14



LEGEND : Factors Influencing Perception of Males as Victims in the Context of False Accusations

FIGURE 15



Heard of a case where a man was a victim of false accusations in India

LEGEND : Opinions on the Long-Term Consequences of False Accusations Against Men Based on Awareness of Such Cases

RESULT:

The **figure 1** graph presents awareness levels of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which is set to replace the Indian Penal Code, across different age groups. The data is categorized into "Yes," "No," and "Maybe" responses. The 40–50 years age group shows the highest awareness, with 32.41% responding "Yes." Interestingly, the youngest group (15–20 years) has the highest "No" response at 16.13%, indicating lower awareness. The 30–40 years group shows a balanced distribution, with "Yes" at 10.29% and "No" at 9.41%. The oldest group (Above 50 years) has a notable "Yes" response at 11.76%. The "Maybe" category is consistently the lowest across all age groups, suggesting most respondents have a definite opinion on their awareness. Overall, the graph indicates that awareness of the BNS varies significantly with age, with middle-aged and older adults generally being more aware than younger individuals.

The **figure 2** graph presents awareness levels of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) across genders. The results show a significant disparity between male and female respondents. For males, there's a high level of awareness, with 47.55% responding "Yes" to being aware of the BNS. In contrast, only 11.76% of females

responded "Yes." The "No" responses are notably higher for females at 26.09% compared to just 5.1% for males. Interestingly, males have a higher percentage of "Maybe" responses at 9.13%, while females show no "Maybe" responses in the data presented. This suggests that males are not only more aware of the BNS but also more likely to be uncertain about their knowledge. The stark difference in awareness levels between genders indicates a potential gender gap in the dissemination or accessibility of information regarding this significant legal change.

The **figure 3** graph illustrates awareness levels of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) across different educational qualifications. The results reveal varying degrees of awareness among different educational groups. Undergraduates (Currently Pursuing also) show the highest awareness, with 37.25% responding "Yes" and 9.81% responding "Maybe." Postgraduates (Currently Pursuing also) display a more divided response, with 20.09% saying "Yes" but a higher percentage (29.82%) saying "No." Interestingly, the School level category shows only a "No" response at 2.12%, suggesting a lack of awareness among this group. The data indicates that higher education levels, particularly at the undergraduate level,

correlate with increased awareness of the BNS. However, the significant "No" responses across all categories, especially among postgraduates, suggest that there's still a considerable portion of the population, even among the highly educated, who are not aware of this important legal change.

The **figure 4** bar graph titled "Heard of a case where a man was a victim of false accusations in India" presents data on awareness of such cases across different educational qualifications. Among postgraduates (currently pursuing also), there's a higher awareness with 28.92% responding "Yes" compared to 23.07% saying "No." The school level category shows minimal awareness, with only 2.18% responding "Yes." Undergraduates (currently pursuing also) demonstrate the highest level of "No" responses at 32.84%, significantly outweighing their "Yes" responses at 13.71%. This data suggests that awareness of cases where men are victims of false accusations varies considerably across educational levels. Postgraduates appear to be more aware of such cases, while undergraduates show the least awareness. The school level category's low response rate might indicate limited exposure or understanding of this issue among that group. Overall, the graph reveals that educational background plays a role in awareness of this sensitive social issue, with higher education levels generally correlating with increased awareness, though undergraduates show an interesting exception to this trend.

The **figure 5** bar graph titled "In India, are people more likely to trust crime reports based on the gender of the person reporting. If yes which gender?" presents data on trust in crime reporting across genders. For females, 11.76% believe both men and women are equally trusted, 11.76% think gender does not matter, 6.37% trust men more, and 4.90% trust women more. In contrast, for males, a significant 47.55% believe both men and women are equally trusted, while only 0.39% think gender does not matter. Notably, there's no data shown for males trusting men or women more specifically.

The graph also reveals a substantial 13.73% of respondents (not gender-specific) who believe gender does not matter in trusting crime reports. This data suggests that male respondents overwhelmingly perceive equal trust in crime reporting regardless of gender, while female respondents show more varied opinions. The results indicate a complex perception of gender bias in crime reporting trust in India, with notable differences between male and female perspectives.

The **figure 6** bar graph titled "Do you think men can be victims of various forms of violence and abuse?" presents opinions across different residential statuses. In rural areas, 10.59% of respondents are neutral, while 11.37% somewhat agree. For semi-urban areas, a significant 37.25% somewhat agree, with no data shown for other response categories. Urban areas show the most diverse responses: 12.75% are neutral, 23.53% somewhat agree, and 4.90% somewhat disagree. Notably, the graph doesn't show any "somewhat disagree" responses for rural or semi-urban areas, nor any neutral responses for semi-urban areas. The data suggests that across all residential statuses, there's a tendency to agree that men can be victims of various forms of violence and abuse, with semi-urban respondents showing the highest level of agreement. Urban areas display the most varied opinions, being the only category to show disagreement. Rural areas have a more balanced split between neutral and agreeing responses. Overall, the graph indicates that residential status may influence perceptions of male victimhood in cases of violence and abuse.

The **figure 7** bar graph titled "Longstanding ways men have commonly been falsely accused" presents data across different educational qualifications. For postgraduates (Currently Pursuing also), 4.41% report false accusations related to workplace misconduct or harassment, 15.20% for false allegations of domestic violence, and 31.37% for false accusations related to sexual harassment. Among those at the school level, 2.45% report

false accusations related to sexual harassment, and 1.96% for workplace misconduct or harassment. Undergraduates (Currently Pursuing also) show the most diverse responses: 9.31% for false accusations related to sexual harassment, 4.41% for workplace misconduct or harassment, and a significant 32.84% for "Or in any other crime." Notably, the category "False claims of parental neglect" is present in the legend but shows no data for any educational group. The graph suggests that the nature of false accusations perceived by men varies with educational background, with postgraduates reporting higher rates of sexual harassment and domestic violence accusations, while undergraduates report a high rate of other unspecified crimes.

The **figure 8** bar graph illustrates the perceived effectiveness of urban Indian courts in handling cases of false accusations against men, rated on a scale from 1 to 5 across different age groups. The highest percentage (42.16%) of respondents aged 40–50 years rated the courts at effectiveness level 1, indicating strong dissatisfaction. In contrast, the age group 21–30 years showed a relatively balanced distribution across all ratings, with 8.33% rating at level 1 and 4.41% at level 5. The youngest group, 15–20 years, predominantly rated at level 1 (16.19%). Interestingly, the 30–40 years group had a significant portion (10.29%) rating at level 3, showing a moderate view. Lastly, those above 50 years exhibited a mixed response, with 11.76% rating at level 1 and 1.96% at level 5, indicating varied perceptions.

The **figure 9** bar chart shows the perceived biases in the legal system affecting perceptions of male victimization, broken down by gender. Among women, the highest percentage (24.51%) believes the bias is due to laws favoring mothers in child custody cases, followed by 12.25% who perceive inadequate legal processes to protect male victims from false accusations. Among men, the majority (30.22%) perceive a bias due to laws favoring women in domestic violence and harassment cases, while 14.71% point to the limited recognition of male

victims of sexual harassment or assault under current laws. Additionally, 9.31% of men feel that child custody laws favour mothers.

The **figure 10** bar chart illustrates the factors influencing the perception of males as victims across different age groups. The age group of 40–50 years shows the highest percentage (32.84%) of influence from news channels, significantly higher than other factors. Cultural norms and stereotypes are most influential among males aged 15–20 years at 11.27%. Legal system biases are most significant for those aged 21–30 years at 5.33%. Movies have the least impact, notably evident in the 30–40 years group at 0.29%. Social media platforms influence males above 50 years the most at 11.75%, while television dramas have minimal influence across all age groups, with the highest being 4.61% for the 40–50 years group.

The **figure 11** bar chart depicts awareness of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which will replace the Indian Penal Code, and the perceived effectiveness of urban Indian courts in handling cases of false accusations against men. Among those aware of BNS, 44.61% rate court effectiveness at level 3, the highest single percentage in the chart. Those unaware of BNS also mainly rate court effectiveness at level 3, with 16.16%. Respondents who are uncertain about BNS show a more even distribution across ratings, with the highest being 9.31% for level 3. Ratings for levels 1, 2, 4, and 5 are considerably lower across all awareness categories, with level 5 being the least chosen, peaking at 1.96% among those unaware of BNS.

The **figure 12** illustrates the awareness of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that will replace the Indian Penal Code among individuals and their rating of the effectiveness of urban Indian courts in handling cases of false accusations against men. Among those who responded "Yes" to being aware of the BNS, 44.61% rated the effectiveness of the courts the highest (5), while 10.29% gave it a 4, and smaller percentages gave lower ratings. For those who responded "No," the majority, 15.18%, rated effectiveness as

3, with fewer participants giving it lower ratings. Among the "Maybe" group, the ratings were more evenly distributed, with 9.31% giving a 5, 6.33% giving a 3, and smaller percentages for other ratings. Overall, the highest rating (5) was most common among those aware of the BNS, indicating a positive correlation between awareness of the BNS and a higher perceived effectiveness of the courts.

The **figure 13** displays the awareness of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) that will replace the Indian Penal Code and the perceived legal system biases affecting male victimization. Among respondents aware of the BNS, 26.47% believe the biases are due to legal processes that may not adequately protect male victims from false accusations, and 20.64% cite limited recognition of male victims of sexual harassment or assault. Among those unaware of the BNS, 24.51% attribute biases to legal processes favoring women in domestic violence and dowry harassment cases. In the "Maybe" category, 9.31% see biases in legal processes favoring women in domestic violence and dowry harassment cases. The data indicates a significant awareness gap, with those aware of the BNS more likely to perceive biases in legal processes and limited recognition of male victimization.

The **figure 14** bar graph shows the factors influencing the perception of males as victims in the context of false accusations, rated in terms of the effectiveness of urban Indian courts in handling such cases. It reveals that the highest percentage of respondents (52.84%) rated the effectiveness as 4, with movies being the most influential factor. This is followed by news channels at 21.08%, cultural norms and stereotypes at 11.27%, legal system biases at 10.29%, and social media platforms at 4.95%. Television dramas were the least influential, with only 1.96% of respondents considering them significant. Lower ratings (1, 2, and 3) have relatively low percentages, with cultural norms and stereotypes, legal system biases, and social media platforms being more prominent in these categories.

The **figure 15** bar graph illustrates the opinions on whether false accusations against men can have serious long-term consequences, segmented by whether the respondents have heard of a case where a man was a victim of false accusations in India. Among those who have not heard of such a case, 32.84% are neutral, 22.06% disagree, and 9.31% strongly agree. In contrast, among those who have heard of such a case, 20.59% agree, 8.62% strongly agree, and 6.37% are neutral, with a smaller percentage (0.31%) disagreeing. Overall, the perception of the serious long-term consequences varies significantly based on awareness of false accusation cases.

The data presented across various figures provides a comprehensive insight into the awareness levels and perceptions regarding the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), false accusations against men, and the effectiveness of urban Indian courts in handling such cases. The findings reveal several key trends and disparities across different demographic groups, including age, gender, educational qualifications, and residential statuses.

DISCUSSION

1. Awareness of BNS and False Accusations: The data indicates a significant disparity in awareness levels of the BNS across different age groups, with middle-aged and older adults showing higher awareness than younger individuals. This trend could be attributed to various factors, including the channels through which information is disseminated and the interest or engagement of different age groups with legal and social issues. Similarly, the stark difference in awareness levels between genders, with males showing higher awareness of the BNS and false accusations against men, suggests a potential gap in information accessibility or dissemination strategies targeting females.

2. Educational Qualifications and Awareness: Higher educational qualifications, particularly at the undergraduate level, correlate with increased awareness of the BNS. However, the

significant "No" responses across all educational categories, especially among postgraduates, indicate that there's still a considerable portion of the population, even among the highly educated, who are not aware of this important legal change. This underscores the need for targeted educational campaigns to bridge this awareness gap.

3. Residential Status and Perceptions of Male Victimhood: The data suggests that residential status may influence perceptions of male victimhood in cases of violence and abuse, with semi-urban respondents showing the highest level of agreement that men can be victims of various forms of violence and abuse. This could reflect differences in exposure to information, cultural norms, and the prevalence of such issues across different residential settings.

4. Perceived Biases in the Legal System: Both men and women perceive biases in the legal system affecting male victimization, albeit for different reasons. Men are more likely to perceive biases due to laws favoring women in domestic violence and harassment cases, while women are more concerned about laws favoring mothers in child custody cases. This highlights the complex interplay of gender dynamics within the legal framework and the need for laws that are fair and equitable to all parties involved.

5. Influence of Media and Cultural Factors: The influence of media, including news channels, movies, and social media, on perceptions of male victimhood varies significantly. While news channels are the most influential for the 40–50 years age group, social media platforms have a significant impact on those above 50 years. This suggests that different media channels cater to different demographic groups and can shape perceptions in diverse ways.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance Public Awareness Campaigns: There is a clear need for more effective public awareness campaigns regarding the BNS and issues related to false accusations against men.

These campaigns should be targeted specifically at younger individuals and females, given the lower awareness levels in these groups. Utilizing multiple channels, including social media, could help reach a wider audience.

2. Address Educational Gaps: Educational institutions, from schools to universities, should incorporate modules that address legal changes like the BNS and issues surrounding false accusations. This will not only increase awareness but also foster a more informed and empathetic society.

3. Promote Gender-Neutral Legal Reforms: The perceived biases in the legal system highlight the need for gender-neutral legal reforms that protect all individuals equally from violence, harassment, and false accusations. This includes revising laws to ensure they are fair and equitable to all genders.

4. Engage with Different Residential Areas: Efforts to raise awareness and change perceptions should be tailored to different residential settings, acknowledging the varied cultural norms and access to information in rural, semi-urban, and urban areas.

5. Leverage Media for Positive Change: Media outlets, including news channels, movies, and social media platforms, should be engaged to promote accurate and empathetic portrayals of male victimhood. This can help in changing societal perceptions and fostering a more supportive environment for male victims of violence and abuse.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1. Limited geographical scope: The study's sample is confined to the Chennai region, which may not be representative of urban India as a whole. This limitation could affect the generalizability of the findings to other urban areas or the broader Indian context.

2. Potential sampling bias: The use of convenience sampling may introduce bias into the study, as participants who are more readily available or willing to participate might not

represent the full spectrum of perspectives on this sensitive topic. This could potentially skew the results and limit the study's ability to capture a truly diverse range of opinions and experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study provides valuable insights into the perception of males as victims in false accusation cases within urban India, specifically in the Chennai region. The findings reveal a complex landscape of societal attitudes, legal challenges, and potential consequences faced by male victims of false accusations. Our analysis demonstrates varying levels of public awareness regarding the provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the proposed Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) as they pertain to false accusations. The results suggest a significant gap in understanding the potential misuse of these legal provisions and their impact on falsely accused males.

The study highlights a persistent gender bias in perceptions of victimhood, with many participants expressing skepticism towards the idea of males as victims of false accusations. This bias appears to be influenced by cultural norms, media portrayals, and a lack of public discourse on the topic. Statistical analyses reveal correlations between demographic factors such as age, education level, and profession with attitudes towards male victims and awareness of legal provisions. These findings underscore the need for targeted awareness campaigns and educational initiatives. These narratives highlight the urgent need for improved support systems and legal reforms to address the unique challenges faced by falsely accused males. While the study is limited by its geographical scope and sampling method, it nonetheless provides a foundation for further research and policy discussions. The findings call for a more nuanced approach to legal reforms, balancing the need to protect genuine victims with safeguards against false accusations.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the necessity for a more inclusive and gender-neutral approach to victimhood in the Indian legal system. It underscores the importance of public education, legal reforms, and social initiatives aimed at addressing the issues faced by falsely accused males while maintaining robust protections for all victims of crime. Future research should expand on these findings, exploring the topic across diverse geographical and socio-economic contexts within India to develop a more comprehensive understanding of this complex issue.

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