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**The Grass is Not Always Greener on the Other Side: A
Study on Male Marginalization and Victimization**

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Our history and society are witness to years of intense male domination, stifling social structures and practices, restricting cultural values and norms that have repeatedly assigned women the status of being marginalized. The polarization of the two genders in the psyche of people is so much that terms like ‘opposite gender/sex’ or ‘sex war’ are not surprising. There are increasing evidences of domestic violence against men, discrimination of men, misuse of law against sexual offence and anti-dowry laws to falsely implicate men etc. Yet, these are either unreported or under-represented. Recent legal discourses and arguments point towards increasing misuse of gender related laws (Dowry Prohibition Act, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (prevention and prohibition) Act 2013 and the new rape laws), something which has been termed as ‘**legal terrorism**’! Laws are being abused, particularly by women to harass their husbands, in-laws and male colleagues in the work-place. Against this background, it becomes imperative to bring this aspect of gender discrimination under research exploration. Our work seeks to explore the experience, process and dynamics of male victimization and the causes

of these kinds of oppressive acts against men, apart from this study also try to study the changing gender role and male status in society. A series of 4 studies were conducted.

The first 3 studies are qualitative in approach. Study 1 is based on interviews of 25 males and study 2 explicates case studies of 5 victims of male victimization. Interviews of 25 male participants in the age range of 23-56 years ($M = 39.4$ years and $SD = 10.98$) from lower to middle socio economic status (3 were from lower SES and 22 were from middle SES) of Delhi-NCR region within the age range of 23-56 years were analysed. Study 3 is based on the review and analysis of stories from Hindi and English literature, as well as movies, television serials, and you tube videos. Analysis of Savdhan India, popular movies (*Ki and Ka*, *Aitraaz*) and novels (*Aadhe Adhoore*, *Surya ki antim Kiran se*, *Surya ki Pehli Kiran tak*, *The Pregnant King*, *The Kite Runner*) were a part of this study. Study 4 is the quantitative study of the changing gender roles and perception of males and has been conducted on a sample of 280 males and females from the Delhi NCR region. The mean age of respondent 32.58 year ranging from 22 to 55 years. The measures used for quantitative study included scales measuring decision making and power, gender role, gender role in family, gender equality, physical victimization and psychological victimization.

The qualitative analysis rests on triangulation and three different sets of data sources have been included for analysis. One is the analyses of literary stories that deal with this side of gender dynamics, and the other is qualitative interviews and case studies of discrimination against men. Findings reveal intriguing dynamics of gender relationships and gender perception. The perception of males regarding male-female relationship is quite divergent, with three major themes characterizing equality of the sexes (the grass is equally green on both sides), equality of sexes in terms of dealing with struggles of life (grass is not green on either side) and inequality of the sexes in terms of greater privilege still being associated with being a male (grass is greener on the other side). Themes of masculinity as a trap, female empowerment and positive social perception and representation of females, their overprotection, urban nature of victimization, sickness of society, one-sided laws in favor of women emerge as the causes of male victimization. Male victimization manifests as suppression and subjugation by powerful, false allegations, misuse of legal rights, harassment and psychological torture, sexual abuse and violence. It is subtle as well as blatant, multi-dimensional and multi-level.

In quantitative analysis, findings reveal that both male and female respondents believe that men have greater decision making and power, show masculine behaviour and fulfil gender role expectations in the familial context and also expect gender equality; and they don't perceive men as experiencing victimization. It is also interesting to note that despite the fact that male respondents are perceiving themselves as higher on the dimensions of decision making and power, gender role fulfillment, regard gender equality as a necessity, they also at the same time experience physical victimization. On the contrary female respondents do not perceive men to be physically victimized. The findings further show that joint family respondents agree more about fulfilling gender role expectations in comparison to nuclear family respondents. However nuclear family respondents perceive greater gender equality as compared to respondents living in joint family. Married respondents agree that they have more decision making and power, masculinity and fulfil gender role in comparison to respondents who are single. However, respondents from dating relationship exhibit low gender equality expectation in comparison to single and married respondents. In terms of occupation, employed participants experience more physical and psychological victimization, as well as expect more gender equality in comparison to unemployed participants. There is no significant effect of education on experiences on victimization and its related domains. The research has far reaching implications for acknowledging the existence of male victimization and marginalization, creating awareness in the masses and creating change in the legal system. It has far reaching consequences for understanding gender dynamics in female centric workplaces and occupations.