



# Social Expectations and Stigmas: Unveiling the Gendered Face of Discrimination: *Based on True Events of Life*

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Received: 25 Mar 2025; Received in revised form: 19 Apr 2025; Accepted: 25 Apr 2025; Available online: 30 Apr 2025  
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**Abstract**—While societal discourse often focuses on female discrimination, men also face social stigmas and gender-disparity in various aspects of life. This paper explores the often-overlooked realities of male disadvantage, focusing prevalent social expectations and discrimination against men in the society.

**Keywords**— *Discrimination, Social expectations, Male stigma, Mental health*



## I. INTRODUCTION

While the fight for gender equality has always been focused towards women, the conversation often neglects the realities of gender-based challenges faced by men. This paper aims to shed light on the often-overlooked issue of discrimination against men in society.

Despite progress towards gender equality, men continue to encounter social stigmas and harmful stereotypes that limit their opportunities and well-being. These community expectations and biases become evident in various aspects of life, from emotional expression and mental health to caretaking roles and workplace dynamics.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This paper has been written after conducting several social experiments on both men and women in the society also interviews of various teens have been taken in which teens were asked about their past traumas, their experiences, and the pressure of being a man or woman.

2.1 Taking interviews was the first preference as it helps to understand the mental state of people better and helps to analyse the state of society also, the paper has been written after talking to various people

2.2 An extremely comfortable ambience was created so that the subjects can relax and explain better

2.3 Interview format was unstructured

2.4 The identity of the subjects has been kept hidden for privacy purposes

## III. MENTAL HEALTH

Mental well-being of an individual depends upon many factors as told below:

3.1 Family: Family can be the comfort zone for an individual or become the place from where all mental health problems start to occur saying only family is very vague there can be many problems related to family as said below:

3.2 Communication gap: Lucid communication is the key to avoid misunderstandings but many a times there is a lack of communication between the family members which further leads to family stress which kills the spirit of family well-being and makes everyone in the family go through tough times including teens making them suffer from depression and anxiety

3.3 Being orthodox: Conservative mindsets of the family make men and women suffer in the family who have modern thoughts this also becomes the reason for miscommunication between the people in family this mindset affects the other way too by destroying the society as, if kids grow up by learning from this orthodox mindset, they will teach the same to their kids.

3.4 A critical Jointure : During a pivotal phase of human development, a sense of isolation can arise. Individuals may yearn for unwavering familial support.

However, when this support is inadvertently lacking, a cascade of negative emotions can ensue. Depression and anxiety may take root, fuelled by a perceived lack of understanding from the very people one expects to be a constant source of solace.

3.5 Intergenerational Disparity: The divergence in values and perspectives across generations can sometimes lead to a sense of dissonance within families. This is particularly evident when it comes to evolving social norms, such as the roles of men and women. Steering these differences can be a challenge, as each generation seeks to reconcile their own experiences with the changing world around them.

#### **IV. TRADITIONALLY GENDERED EXPECTATIONS AND THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Socially constructed roles have historically defined a rigid division of labour within families. This has often manifested in the undue pressure placed upon men to serve as the sole bread providers. This phenomenon transcends age demographics, impacting not only adult males but also adolescent boys, particularly those who hold the distinction of being the only child of their gender within the family structure. However, a crucial disconnect exists. These individuals, both young and old, frequently lack awareness of the societal underpinnings that perpetuate this pressure. They misinterpret it as an inherent responsibility, an intrinsic character trait rather than a learned behaviour. Consequently, when faced with the unpreventable challenges of fulfilling these delusional expectations, they may internalize blame and experience feelings of failure.

#### **V. THE WORK ENVIRONMENT: A FOUNDATION OF WELL-BEING**

The workplace, encompassing both professional and academic settings, serves as a primary space for individuals to dedicate a significant portion of their time. The prevailing atmosphere within this environment exerts a profound influence on mental well-being. A positive and supportive work environment fosters a significant reduction in anxiety and stress, ultimately contributing to a more fruitful and rewarding experience.

#### **VI. THE ONSET OF ADOLESCENCE AND ITS IMPACT**

The onset of adolescence marks an essential period in human development, characterized by significant hormonal fluctuations. These biological shifts can exert a profound

influence on a teenager's mental health. Mood regulation becomes a more intricate process, potentially leading to heightened emotional instability. This increased vulnerability can create fertile ground for the disproportionate emotional triggers.

#### **VII. ADVERSITY AND THE ADOLESCENT MIND**

Adversity and the Adolescent Mind: Adolescents who have gone through trauma, such as abuse, neglect, or the loss of a loved one, have more vulnerability to mental health challenges. These experiences can exert profound influence on the developing brain, potentially hindering its capacity for emotional intelligence and regulation.

#### **VIII. PROBLEMS FACED BY MEN**

Men have always been a victim to discrimination, but the society only acknowledges the problems faced by women in the society. Not only men but also boys are victim to social expectations and stigmas.

8.1 Emotional restrictions: Men are usually told not to express their emotions openly from an early age which later makes them feel overwhelmed and emotionally tiered they start to believe that expressing emotions make them weak

8.2 The Breadwinner complex: Often in society men are taken as the bread winners and they experience a lot of pressure to earn a living society makes them believe that taking any financial help from their female counterpart makes them weak which is not true, men have to struggle a lot to prove themselves and become sufficient for the family alone

8.3 The career expectations: Men are usually told to do the "Manly Jobs" medical professions, engineering, etc are considered as manly jobs which is not true. Being a chef or being in hotel management is not bad but society makes men believe that these jobs are feminine and are not meant for men, hence men are discouraged from pursuing their dream careers.

8.4 Physical health: Men tend to engage in riskier behaviors and avoid preventive healthcare, leading to higher rates of preventable health problems. The reason to avoid medication is the pressure to look strong

8.5 The Stoic Ideal: Redefining Masculinity: Men are usually trained to resist any emotional connect or any sort of confrontation about trauma or difficulties, this is how masculinity is defined in the society and going the other way around is considered feminine

8.6 Manipulation: Men tend to fall for a manipulation more than women do as they are not used to love and care so they cannot differentiate between the real and fake care making them vulnerable to manipulation in relationships both personal and professional.

## IX. THE PSYCHOLOGY CREATED

9.1 While facing the challenges of life, men are expected to elegantly hide the pain behind a mask of silence and strength. Society conditions them from a young age and frowning emotions as 'unmanly' as weakness. This pressure over time shapes how men view themselves, making them bury any hint of vulnerability within. Even when struggling, most feel that projecting an appearance of being calm is paramount, leading to emotional detachment from people around them. Many want to connect, but the burden of unexpressed feelings creates walls, making it more difficult for partners to comprehend them.

9.2 This form of emotional restraint has the potential to create a gap in understanding. Women tend to assume that men require no assistance and are always strong. Men's silence does not express any emotion which can easily be misconstrued as distanced affection. In reality, numerous men do yearn for comfort and connection but lack the capacity to vocalize this necessity. Such lack of expression can frustrate women, further cultivating emotional voids between both parties.

9.3 These same expectations follow men into the workplace. Regardless of whether they are dealing with mental or physical issues, they tend to push through for fear of appearing weak or inadequate. Their attempts often seem futile and result in loneliness and invisibility. They smile through pain, laugh when they're hurting, and carry hidden burdens because they feel no one would like to listen to a man who is cribbing about issues all the time

9.4 Somewhere along the way, society convinced men that tears are shameful. Many grew up hearing that "real men don't cry." As a result, many learned to hold it all in—to tough it out, no matter what. But emotions don't disappear; they pile up. And when grief or sadness comes, they don't know how to let it out. Behind the stoic front often lies someone longing to be seen, to be heard, and to simply be allowed to feel.

9.5 Men also get wrongly accused sometimes by a woman at their workplace for any sort of thing but we never try to investigate the case fully before being prejudice that if he is a man he must be wrong and girl must be right just because she is a girl we never try to see the situation from the man's perspective. It is crucial to acknowledge that accusations within the workplace, regardless of the parties involved,

require thorough and unbiased investigations. Unfortunately, there can be instances where preconceived notions may influence the initial perception of a situation. This can lead to a predisposition towards one party's narrative, potentially hindering a fair and accurate resolution. To ensure a just outcome, a comprehensive investigation that considers all perspectives is essential. By prioritizing impartiality throughout the process, we can safeguard the rights of both the accused and the accuser.

## X. THE EMBEDDED VICTIM MENTALITY

10.1 Women are considered soft delicate and sometimes weak because men are believed to be the strong and tough gender this starts giving men the superiority complex and women start to believe that they are weak or not as capable as men which is biologically true but not socially.

10.2 People start to give sympathy to women even if it is not needed and make them believe that they need pity.

10.3 Some women revolt against this discrimination, but get hate for not accepting the societal norms and going against it. When women accept their fate and start to believe that they are the weaker section they get exploited.

10.4 Everywhere women are encouraged to take male validation in every decision of their life, when they grow up in such atmosphere they get trained to believe that they are not worthy of taking their own decisions. This makes them mentally weaker and dependent on male counter parts.

10.5 At the end this up-bringing fosters a sense of victim hood in women which at last forces them to accept injustice

## XI. THE MALE EGO AND IT'S INFLATION

11.1 The concept of a prevalent "male ego" has been a topic of discussion for some time. This notion suggests a psychological proneness in men that fosters a sense of superiority. It's further associated with justifications for anger management issues and unilateral decision-making.

11.2 It can be argued that certain societal norms contribute to a sense of inflated male ego. While men may not be solely responsible for this phenomenon, their growing years spent within a framework where female members of the family traditionally accept the superiority complex of men and start to justify it can undoubtedly create an environment where such an attitude is normalized. This, in turn, reinforces the notion of male dominance.

11.3 While it may be true that some individuals can suppress their ego around loved ones, this ability is often

limited. There may be instances where deeply ingrained self-importance manifests, creating dissonance within strong relationships that value equality. When faced with such behaviour, partners who are unwilling to tolerate such a dynamic may struggle to find understanding in the moment...

11.4 The potential for true gender equality hinges upon the fostering of positive masculinity from a young age. This involves instilling a clear understanding of appropriate conduct within boys, emphasizing respect for all individuals regardless of gender. By emphasizing the biological distinction between genders, rather than perpetuating artificial social constructs, we can cultivate a society where self-respect, not ego, is the driving force.

11.5 The development of resilience in men can be fostered through a collaborative effort with women. This requires women to embody steady strength and reject victim-hood. By challenging the outdated notion of women as delicate roses in need of male protection.

11.6 Moving beyond the inflation of egos, a truly balanced society thrives on mutual respect. By nurturing a foundation of love, providing emotional and physical support tailored to individual needs, and demonstrating genuine consideration, women can empower men without seeking dominance. Only through this collaborative approach can we create a society free from the shackles of gender-based discrimination.

## XII. CONCLUSION

Through all-inclusive analysis of various viewpoints, a captivating argument emerges: societal expectations have often placed disproportionate burdens on men. This pressure manifests in the form of emotional suppression, and the dismissal of their experiences.

Historically, the narrative surrounding gender roles has focused on the challenges faced by women. However, this half-told story neglects the emotional tax on men expected to be stoic providers, suppressing vulnerability and neglecting their own needs. This ingrained expectation has led to a situation where men are perceived as incapable of experiencing pain, a prejudice that reduces emotional expression and fosters a sense of silent suffering.

Furthermore, the society often overlooks the sacrifices made by men. The responsibility to fulfil familial aspirations while neglecting personal needs and desires becomes a normalized behaviour. On the other hand, women's sacrifices are readily acknowledged, highlighting a double standard.

This imbalance is evident in how societal judgment swings based on decisions. When a woman prioritizes living with her husband's parents and taking care of them, she is known as "duty conscious" and "caring". However, a man making the same choice for his wife's parents is deemed "weak" or sometimes a "Wife's Slave." This hypocrisy exemplifies the need for a shift in our understanding of gender roles.

### 12.1 Seeking Harmony Through Mutual Understanding

Moving forward, achieving true equality requires a collaborative effort. Men must acknowledge and appreciate the contributions women make, both emotionally and professionally. Also, women need to recognize the emotional burdens men carry and the sacrifices they make.

A crucial step is for men to re-evaluate their perception of women. Women are not fragile beings in need of constant protection. Instead, they are strong and capable individuals seeking partnership and support, not dominance. By having mutual respect and understanding, men and women can empower each other to reach their full potential.

Ultimately, a future free from the barriers of rigid societal expectations requires a collective effort. When we recognize the value of both genders and celebrate their contributions, we pave the way for a more harmonious, loving and equitable society for our future generations.

## REFERENCES

- [1] This paper is entirely based on firsthand observations, personal interviews, and original research conducted by the authors.
- [2] No secondary sources such as books, academic journals, websites, or reports were consulted or cited.
- [3] The findings and interpretations reflect the authors' direct engagement with the subject matter.
- [4] All insights were developed independently without the influence of existing published literature.