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A STUDY ON LEGAL CHALLENGES IN PROVING EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

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ABSTRACT

Emotional and psychological abuse, though equally damaging as physical abuse, presents significant legal challenges in terms of proof and prosecution. Unlike physical abuse, which often leaves tangible evidence, emotional abuse is primarily based on verbal assaults, coercion, isolation, and manipulation, making it difficult to document and substantiate in court. The aim of this study is to examine the legal challenges in proving emotional and psychological abuse, particularly the lack of physical evidence and subjective nature of harm. It seeks to analyze existing legal frameworks and evidentiary standards to identify gaps that hinder successful prosecution. The research represents the empirical approach using convenient sampling to collect data, the dependent variable is age, gender, education qualifications, marital status and the independent variable is law enforcement officers are adequately trained to handle emotional abuse cases, the most challenging aspect of proving emotional abuse in court, types of evidence do you think should carry the most weight in emotional abuse cases. Findings indicate that many jurisdictions do not explicitly criminalize emotional abuse, leaving victims with inadequate legal protection, particularly in family law cases where such allegations are frequently dismissed. In conclusion, emotional and psychological abuse remain significant legal and societal challenges due to difficulties in proving harm, inconsistent legal recognition, and limited enforcement. Many victims struggle to seek justice as laws often fail to explicitly address coercive control and manipulation. The lack of awareness and training among legal professionals further weakens the protection available to those affected.

KEYWORDS: Emotional abuse, marital status, allegations, psychological abuse, lack of awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional and psychological abuse is a widespread but often misunderstood form of maltreatment that can have long-term consequences on a victim's mental and emotional well-being. Unlike physical abuse, which can be documented through visible injuries or medical records, emotional abuse operates through subtle, often insidious means such as manipulation, gaslighting, coercive control, verbal degradation, and isolation. These forms of abuse can erode a victim's self-esteem, autonomy, and mental stability over time, yet the absence of physical evidence makes legal recognition and prosecution particularly challenging. One of the primary difficulties in proving emotional and psychological abuse in legal settings is the requirement of concrete evidence. Courts typically rely on tangible proof such as medical reports, witness testimonies, or recorded incidents, all of which are harder to obtain in cases of emotional abuse. Victims may struggle to articulate their experiences due to the psychological impact of prolonged abuse, while abusers often employ tactics that make the victim's claims appear exaggerated or unreliable. Furthermore, the subjective nature of psychological harm makes it difficult to establish a clear standard for legal evaluation, as emotional abuse affects individuals differently based on personal resilience, psychological history, and the severity of the abuse. The **aim** of this study is to examine the legal challenges in proving emotional and psychological abuse, particularly the lack of physical evidence and subjective nature of harm.

The recognition of emotional and psychological abuse as a serious legal and societal issue has evolved significantly over time. Historically, abuse was largely defined in physical terms, with legal systems prioritizing evidence of bodily harm in cases of domestic violence, child abuse, and workplace harassment. Emotional abuse, often dismissed as personal conflict or non-criminal behaviour, remained largely unrecognized in legal and social discourse for decades. However, as psychological research advanced, the profound and long-lasting impact of emotional abuse became more evident, leading to gradual shifts in legal frameworks and public awareness. The 20th century saw the emergence of psychological theories that highlighted the detrimental effects of emotional abuse. Researchers in fields such as psychiatry and social work began identifying patterns of coercive control, gaslighting, and verbal aggression as key indicators of abuse. Feminist movements in the 1960s and 1970s played a crucial role in raising

awareness about domestic violence, including the psychological manipulation and control that often-accompanied physical abuse. This advocacy contributed to the expansion of domestic violence laws, although early legal definitions still largely focused on physical harm. By the late 20th and early 21st centuries, legal systems started incorporating broader definitions of abuse, recognizing emotional and psychological harm as legitimate forms of domestic violence. Countries like the UK, Canada, and Australia introduced laws addressing coercive control, acknowledging that emotional abuse could be just as damaging as physical violence. In 2015, the UK passed the Serious Crime Act, making coercive control a criminal offense, marking a significant legal milestone. Similarly, psychological abuse was included in various child protection laws, employment regulations, and family court proceedings, reflecting a growing understanding of its impact.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

In India, the government has introduced several initiatives to address emotional and psychological abuse, recognizing its serious impact on mental health and well-being. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is a key legal framework that defines domestic violence to include emotional, verbal, and psychological abuse, providing civil remedies such as protection orders, residence rights, and monetary relief for affected women. Additionally, mental health initiatives like the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) and the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) aim to improve access to mental healthcare across the country. More recently, the National Tele Mental Health Programme (Tele-MANAS) was launched in 2022 to provide free telephonic mental health counselling and psychiatric consultations through a toll-free helpline (14416). In the education sector, the 'Manodarpan' initiative by the Ministry of Education focuses on the emotional well-being of students, teachers, and families by offering counselling services and online mental health resources. These initiatives collectively aim to strengthen legal protections and improve access to mental health support, reflecting the government's commitment to addressing emotional and psychological abuse in various spheres of society.

Proving emotional and psychological abuse is complicated by several factors, primarily the lack of physical evidence, subjective nature of harm, legal limitations, societal attitudes, and the psychological impact on victims. Unlike physical abuse, which can be documented through medical reports or photographs, emotional abuse often relies on verbal exchanges, patterns of

behaviour, and psychological effects, making it difficult to present concrete proof in court. The subjective nature of psychological harm further complicates legal proceedings, as its impact varies from person to person based on resilience, past trauma, and personal experiences. Additionally, legal frameworks in many jurisdictions still prioritize physical violence, requiring prolonged documentation or expert psychological assessments to establish emotional abuse claims. Societal attitudes also play a role, as emotional abuse is often minimized or dismissed, leading to victim-blaming and discouraging individuals from seeking legal recourse. Moreover, abusers frequently use manipulative tactics like gaslighting, coercive control, and psychological intimidation, making victims doubt their own experiences and struggle to present a clear case. These factors collectively create significant obstacles in legally proving emotional and psychological abuse, highlighting the need for stronger legal recognition and support systems.

CURRENT TRENDS

In **recent years**, there has been a growing recognition of emotional and psychological abuse, leading to significant legal, social, and technological advancements aimed at addressing the issue. Many countries are expanding their legal frameworks to criminalize coercive control and psychological abuse, as seen in the UK's Serious Crime Act (2015) and India's Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), which acknowledge the severe impact of non-physical abuse. Courts are also increasingly accepting digital evidence, such as messages, emails, and recordings, making it easier for victims to document patterns of abuse. Alongside legal reforms, there has been a strong push for mental health advocacy, with initiatives like India's Tele-MANAS helpline providing victims with psychological support and legal guidance. Workplaces and educational institutions are also implementing anti-bullying policies, grievance mechanisms, and mental health programs to prevent emotional abuse in professional and academic settings. Additionally, social media has played a crucial role in raising awareness, with movements like #MeToo bringing psychological abuse into public discourse and encouraging policy changes. Advances in psychological and neuroscientific research have further reinforced the understanding of how emotional abuse affects brain function and long-term mental health, leading to stronger legal arguments and better therapeutic interventions. These evolving trends indicate a shift toward greater legal recognition, enhanced mental health support, and increased societal awareness, helping to make emotional and psychological abuse more visible and actionable.

The recognition and legal handling of emotional and psychological abuse vary across countries, with some nations implementing robust legal frameworks while others still struggle with enforcement. In India, emotional abuse is primarily addressed under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA), which includes verbal and emotional abuse as forms of domestic violence. However, challenges in enforcement, societal stigma, and difficulties in proving psychological harm limit its effectiveness. Similarly, Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code criminalizes cruelty against women, but it mainly focuses on physical abuse and dowry harassment, making emotional abuse harder to prosecute. In contrast, the United Kingdom has made significant progress by criminalizing coercive control under the Serious Crime Act, 2015, which recognizes patterns of manipulation and psychological harm in abusive relationships. Australia has also strengthened its legal framework by including emotional abuse in domestic violence laws, with states like Tasmania specifically criminalizing coercive control. In the United States, laws vary by state, with some recognizing emotional abuse in restraining order cases, but there is no unified federal law addressing it explicitly. Canada has incorporated emotional abuse into its domestic violence policies, emphasizing the psychological impact of coercive control, though proving such abuse remains a challenge. While India has made progress in recognizing emotional abuse, countries like the UK and Australia have taken more proactive steps by enacting specific laws against coercive control, setting a precedent for stronger legal protections. Strengthening India's legal framework and improving awareness could help bridge the gap and provide better justice for victims of emotional and psychological abuse.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the law enforcement officers are adequately trained to handle emotional abuse cases
- To examine the most challenging aspect of proving emotional abuse in court
- To discuss types of evidence do you think should carry the most weight in emotional abuse cases

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Dayna glosser, 2002)¹ The aim of the study is to highlight the under-recognition of emotional abuse and neglect as a common form of child abuse, emphasizing the challenges professionals face in defining, proving, and intervening in such cases. The methodology involves utilizing research, clinical experience, and theoretical considerations to develop a conceptual framework with five categories of harmful parent-child interactions, which are compared to the APSAC categories. The findings suggest that different forms of emotional abuse and neglect require distinct therapeutic interventions tailored to the specific nature of the harmful interactions. The study concludes that concerns about emotional abuse should initiate an assessment process, including targeted intervention trials, with the family's response determining the need for further statutory involvement or legal action.

(North.G,2009)² The aim of the study is to explore the challenges statutory child protection social workers face in recognizing, evidencing, and intervening in cases of emotional abuse, particularly within legal frameworks. The methodology involves psychosocial research methods, drawing on data from an Economic and Social Research Council-funded doctoral project, with a focus on social workers' experiences and the role of attachment theory in identifying emotional abuse. The findings highlight the contested nature of emotional abuse, the difficulties in gathering legal evidence, and the preference for early preventative interventions outside the legal system, despite the necessity for statutory involvement in some cases. The study concludes that social workers often feel unequipped to navigate legal processes in emotional abuse cases, and it emphasizes the need for improved training and guidance to bridge the gap between social work practice and legal requirements.

(Riqueline Espinosa,2024)³ This ethnographic study examines how Chilean family courts adjudicate domestic violence (DV) cases, highlighting a paradoxical shift away from their intended flexibility towards rigid bureaucratic procedure by examining the undue influence of

¹ Glaser, D. (2002). Emotional abuse and neglect (psychological maltreatment): A conceptual framework. *Child abuse & neglect*, 26(6-7), 697-714.

² North, G. (2019). Assessing for bruises on the soul: identifying and evidencing childhood emotional abuse. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 41(3), 302-320.

³ RIQUELME ESPINOSA, I. G. N. A. C. I. O. (2024). 'There is just nothing to hold on to in this case': legal technicalities and the use of psychological reports in Chilean domestic violence procedures. *Journal of Law and Society*, 51(2), 239-262.

psychological reports, which are expensive and difficult-to-obtain documents, on case outcomes. This research explores the role of these reports as 'legal technicalities', serving as both products and catalysts of specific social relations and tensions, and reveals an earnest yet unsuccessful effort to establish judicial authority amid poorly conceived DV reform. The article contributes to an empirical, bottom-up analysis of authority construction techniques used in recent widespread judicial reforms in Chile, providing fresh insights into the complexities of institutional changes within these contexts.

(Ford.A, 2019)⁴ The aim of this study is to highlight the challenges in identifying, proving, and preventing emotional abuse of children with Gender Identity Disorder (GID) by their parents, emphasizing the gaps in legal protections and the difficulties faced by state investigators and judges. The methodology involves an analysis of existing emotional abuse statutes, case law, and the impact of parental actions on gender-nonconforming youth, alongside a review of discrimination and systemic barriers these children face. The findings reveal that emotional abuse statutes are too vague to effectively protect children with GID, leading to inconsistencies in legal application and a lack of awareness among judges and investigators about the specific harms caused by parents. The study concludes that states should adopt a model statute defining specific parental actions that constitute emotional abuse for gender-nonconforming children, similar to how physical and sexual abuse laws specify harmful behaviors, ensuring clearer legal standards and improved protection for these vulnerable youth.

(Riquenle espona , I. G. N. A. C. I. O. (2024)⁵ This article examines the rhetorical strategies used to legitimize classifying children's rejection of a parent as "alienation," often framed as a mental disorder or diagnosis, despite the lack of scientific consensus. The study highlights how evaluative labels in child custody evaluations obscure the need for empirical evidence and reliable assessment methods. It identifies tactics such as Distorted Claims of Consensus, Alienation Labeling, Renaming, Proof by Assertion, and Misrepresenting Endorsement by Authorities, which divert attention from observable behaviors and scientific validity. Findings reveal that these rhetorical strategies create an ideology that masks the absence of reliable

⁴ Ford, A. (2011). State child emotional abuse laws: Their failure to protect children with gender identity disorder. *Family Court Review*, 49(3), 642-656.

⁵ RIQUELME ESPINOSA, I. G. N. A. C. I. O. (2024). 'There is just nothing to hold on to in this case': legal technicalities and the use of psychological reports in Chilean domestic violence procedures. *Journal of Law and Society*, 51(2), 239-262.

prevalence data, objective assessments of parent-child relationships, and rigorous testing of treatment programs. The article concludes by advocating for improved scholarly dialogue and the development of evidence-based approaches to custody evaluations, ensuring more scientifically grounded and unbiased assessments.

(Milchman, M. S., Geffner, R., & Meier, J. S. (2020)⁶ This study examines the legal protection system for children who are victims of violence in Indonesia, highlighting the gap between existing laws and their enforcement. Despite comprehensive legal frameworks such as the Child Protection Act and the Anti-Trafficking Act, significant challenges remain, particularly in addressing the psychological impact of violence, which is not explicitly covered by current legal provisions. The study aims to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges in the legal system to ensure better protection for child victims. Findings reveal that while Indonesia has established institutions like the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) and the Women and Children Protection Unit (PPA), legal enforcement is often limited to cases involving physical harm, leaving psychological and emotional abuse inadequately addressed. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for legal reforms to incorporate sanctions for psychological violence, improved enforcement mechanisms, and increased public awareness to ensure more effective child protection and a safer future for victims.

(Maulana, S. Y. (2023)⁷ Rape survivors who are believed to have mental retardation are subjected to a somewhat different sequence of legal events compared to those without this disability. Their intellectual functioning is questioned, as is their competence to give evidence in the trial of the alleged perpetrator. The authors studied 10 such cases in terms of the contextual aspects of the rape, the survivors' cognitive functioning and their ability to provide accounts of the assaults. The findings indicated that although eight of the subjects were mentally retarded, only one of them was unable to relate details of the abuse. It is the authors' contention that a non-intimidatory approach, characterized by developmentally sensitive interviewing can substantially increase the individual's level of confidence, enabling them to relate the events in simple terms. Considering the adversarial court procedure, it is advocated

⁶ Milchman, M. S., Geffner, R., & Meier, J. S. (2020). Ideology and rhetoric replace science and reason in some parental alienation literature and advocacy: A critique. *Family Court Review*, 58(2), 340-361.

⁷ Maulana, S. Y. (2023). Improving Legal Protection for Children as Victims of Violence in Indonesia: A Review under the Child Protection Law. *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities*, 14, 290-297.

that provision be made for the use of an intermediary system in cases involving rape of individuals with mental retardation, irrespective of age.

(Imbusch, P., Misse, M., & Carrión, F. 2011)⁸ Mental health counsellors serve as mandated reporters of child abuse. Considerations for practice for clinical mental health counsellors when reporting child abuse are reviewed. Issues central to the decision to report are discussed, as well as possible outcomes of the report. The nature of suspecting abuse rather than proving abuse is reviewed, as are resistance to reporting and suggestions for how to counter resistance. Counselling techniques to use in session when abuse is suspected are discussed, as are the clinical implications in the aftermath of a report. Online resources related to child abuse are provided.

(Belisle, L. A., Reed, S. 2024)⁹ The major legal and neuropsychological factors affecting unaccompanied immigrant children during the course of American immigration are reviewed and a case study provided. From a legal standpoint, the mental health of unaccompanied immigrant children is invariably impacted by US policy and regulations regarding immigration. Although some unaccompanied immigrant children may come to the USA after they have been granted refugee status abroad, the majority of unaccompanied immigrant minors come to the USA without proper documentation. Therefore, in addition to facing the neuropsychological consequences of the likely past trauma or the impact of migration itself, they necessarily face either remaining illegally in the USA or coming into contact with an adversarial legal system and on enforcement model and not on the unique needs of children separated from a parent or adult guardian.

(Rockowitz, S., Flowe, H. 2024)¹⁰ Intimate partner violence (IPV), inclusive of all forms of abuse, is an ongoing public health and criminal-legal issue that transcends social boundaries. However, there is a lack of equitable representation of diverse populations who experience IPV in the literature. To garner a holistic knowledge of diverse IPV survivor populations' experiences with seeking help from the police, the current review utilized a qualitative research

⁸ Imbusch, P., Misse, M., & Carrión, F. (2011). Violence research in Latin America and the Caribbean: A literature review. *International Journal of Conflict and Violence*, 5(1), 87-154.

⁹ Belisle, L. A., Reed, S., Clark, E. R., & Pinchevsky, G. M. (2024). Diverse Intimate Partner Violence Survivors' Experiences Seeking Help from the Police: A Qualitative Research Synthesis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25(5), 4045-4061.

¹⁰ Rockowitz, S., Flowe, H., & Bradbury-Jones, C. (2023). A Scoping Review on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Medicolegal Service Provision in East Africa. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(5), 3579-3592.

synthesis methodology to explore police interactions among six IPV survivor populations that are underrepresented in the current literature: women with substance use issues, immigrant women, women in rural localities, heterosexual men, racially/ethnically minoritized women, and sexual minority women. Seven electronic databases were searched to identify peer-reviewed articles on IPV survivors' narrative descriptions (qualitative or mixed-methods) of their encounters with law enforcement. The final analysis included 28 studies that were then coded with an iterative coding strategy. The analysis uncovered the following themes: (a) revictimization by the police, (b) police negligence, (c) discrimination, (d) cultural differences, and (e) positive experiences. These themes demonstrated that while some experiences with law enforcement were shared between under-researched survivor groups, some experiences were explicitly tied to some aspects of survivors' identities. Recognizing the potential law enforcement has to support survivors, the findings of the current review reiterate the need for ongoing efforts to improve law enforcement knowledge and overall response to IPV, especially for diverse populations of IPV survivors.

(Barrio, C., Palinkas, L.A 2008)¹¹ Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a leading cause of physical, emotional, and psychosocial problems around the world, with many countries in East Africa having rates above the global average. Despite the high prevalence in the region, service provision for post-SGBV care is often poorly funded, difficult to access, or simply non-existent. This review reports the findings of a scoping review of literature from East Africa. The goals of this research were to evaluate existing service provision practices throughout the region, understand how provider bias may affect service provision, and compare existing practices to national policies and internationally agreed human rights treaties. This review identified 54 academic papers and reports through a search of electronic databases and grey literature sources, and four main themes emerged: (1) current models of service provision are inadequate to address the medical and psychosocial needs of survivors; (2) countries are not providing sufficient funding for services; (3) further research is needed into how to incorporate SGBV care into existing health systems and align with international human rights treaties; and (4) there is limited research in many countries in East Africa. The findings are

¹¹ Barrio, C., Palinkas, L.A., Yamada, AM. et al. Unmet Needs for Mental Health Services for Latino Older Adults: Perspectives from Consumers, Family Members, Advocates, and Service Providers. *Community Mental Health J* 44, 57–74 (2008).

likely to be of use to policy makers, nongovernmental organizations, and service providers working in the medical, legal, and justice systems.

(Diko, M. 2023)¹²This study qualitatively assessed the need for mental health services among Latino older adults in San Diego, California. The primary mental health issue was depression. Primary organizational barriers to accessing services were language and cultural barriers secondary to a lack of translators, dearth of information on available services, and scarcity of providers representative of the Latino community. Other challenges included a lack of transportation and housing, and the need for socialization and social support. Latino older adults experienced their unmet needs in ways associated with their cultural background and minority status. Age- and culturally-appropriate services are needed to overcome these barriers.

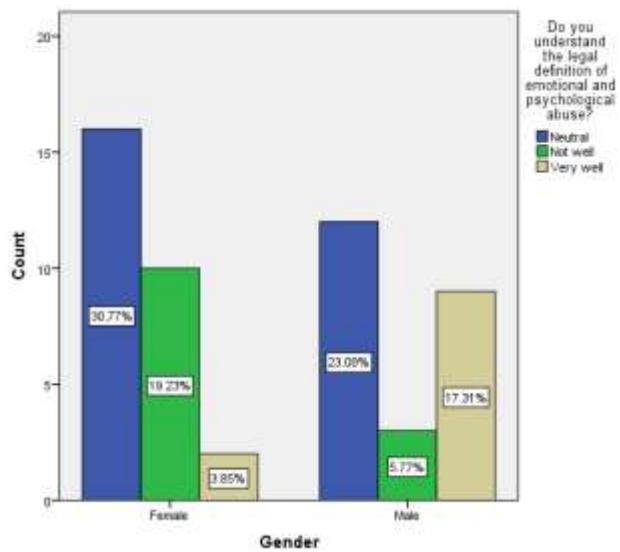
METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted using the **empirical research** method. The samples have been collected using the convenient sampling method. A total of **200** samples have been collected for the study. The **independent variables** are gender, age, occupation, educational qualifications. The **dependent variables** the most common legal challenges faced by backers, The crowdfunding platforms are in addressing disputes Data analysis is conducted using **SPSS** (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), with a Chi-square test applied to explore relationships between

¹² Diko, M. (2023). Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in South Africa: An interdisciplinary discourse of one selected isiZulu and one selected isiXhosa literary text. African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies, 5(1), 1-11.

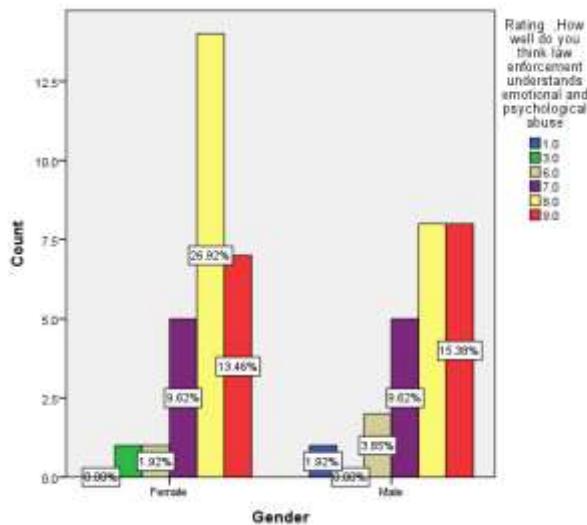
DATA ANALYSIS

FIGURE 1



LEGEND : The above graph represents the relationship between the gender and the legal definition of emotional and psychological abuse of the respondent the majority is 30% by the people.

FIGURE 2



LEGEND: The above graph represents the relationship between the gender and the rating of the think law enforcement understands emotional and psychological abuse the majority is 26% of the people

RESULT

The above graph represents the relationship between the gender and the legal definition of emotional and psychological abuse of the respondent the majority is 30% by the people.(FIG 1)The above graph represents the relationship between the gender and the rating of the think law enforcement understands emotional and psychological abuse the majority is 26% of the people(FIG 2)

DISCUSSION

With 30%, one gender may have a better grasp of legal definitions, which could reflect societal exposure or educational differences.(FIG 1)A 26% majority indicates whether men or women perceive law enforcement as more or less competent.(FIG 2)

LIMITATIONS

Legal challenges in addressing emotional and psychological abuse arise due to difficulties in proving abuse, as it does not leave visible evidence like physical harm. The subjective nature of psychological abuse makes legal interpretation complex, with varying definitions across jurisdictions. Many legal systems lack specific frameworks addressing emotional abuse separately, placing the burden of proof on victims who must demonstrate patterns of coercion, manipulation, or gaslighting. Law enforcement may be hesitant to intervene unless physical violence is involved, limiting immediate protection for victims. In family law cases, allegations of emotional abuse can be dismissed as part of contentious disputes, making it harder for victims and children to receive legal safeguards. Additionally, victims often struggle to report abuse due to its psychological impact, such as fear and self-doubt. A lack of awareness and training among legal professionals further exacerbates the issue, reducing the effectiveness of legal remedies. Efforts to overcome these limitations include enacting coercive control laws, raising awareness, and improving enforcement mechanisms to provide better protection for victims.

SUGGESTION

Emotional and psychological abuse present significant legal challenges due to the difficulty of proving harm, the lack of clear legal definitions, and the reluctance of law enforcement to

intervene without physical evidence. Many jurisdictions fail to recognize coercive control and manipulation as standalone offenses, placing the burden of proof on victims who may already be suffering from fear and self-doubt. In family law, allegations of emotional abuse are often dismissed as part of contentious disputes, limiting protections for victims and children. Additionally, inadequate awareness and training among legal professionals further hinder enforcement. Addressing these issues requires legal reforms to establish clearer definitions, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and greater awareness through education and judicial training. Strengthening support systems for victims and encouraging early intervention can also help ensure better protection and justice for those affected by emotional and psychological abuse.

CONCLUSION

Emotional and psychological abuse present significant legal challenges due to the difficulty of proving harm, inconsistent legal definitions, and limited law enforcement intervention. This type of abuse, often involving coercive control and manipulation, does not leave physical evidence, making it harder for victims to seek justice. To analyse the law enforcement officers are adequately trained to handle emotional abuse cases, To examine the most challenging aspect of proving emotional abuse in court. This empirical study analyzes 200 samples using SPSS and a Chi-square test to examine the relationship between demographics and legal challenges in crowdfunding disputes. Future research can focus on developing standardized legal definitions and stronger enforcement mechanisms for emotional and psychological abuse. Findings indicate that many jurisdictions do not explicitly criminalize emotional abuse, leaving victims with inadequate legal protection, particularly in family law cases where such allegations are frequently dismissed. In conclusion, emotional and psychological abuse remain significant legal and societal challenges due to difficulties in proving harm, inconsistent legal recognition, and limited enforcement.