Does India Need a Men’s Commission

Description

Following tragedies like the Bengaluru suicide by a software engineer, reports from Meghalaya, and widespread concerns over misuse of Section 498A (dowry law), many argue that **men today face specific legal, social, and mental health challenges**. Some believe a **National Commission for Men**—similar to the existing women’s commission—is overdue. Can it help? Or will it distract from gender equality goals?

Context & Recent Incidents

- A Bengaluru man took his life amid marital disputes, sparking national debate.
- Meghalaya’s matrilineal society has seen men’s rights activists raise concerns about property and family biases.
- Section 498A misuse statistics: Delhi courts saw only ~0.2% convictions in nearly 10,000 dowry cruelty cases (2021–25), with nearly half quashed
- Recent rallies—like a 16,000 km bikers’ campaign—pressed for a Men’s Commission citing rising suicides, domestic violence against men, and false cases

? Arguments in Favour

1. **Legal Representation**
    - A commission could review misuse of laws like 498A, and campaign for fair, gender-neutral legislation
2. **Mental Health & Suicide Prevention**
    - With ~80,000 married men committing suicide in 2022, focused interventions are needed
3. **Voicing Domestic Violence Cases**
    - Male victims often face social stigma and lack of legal support; a dedicated body could address underreported domestic abuse
4. **Abuse of Legal Procurements**
    - Court and academic studies highlight misuse of anti-dowry laws; a commission might advocate safeguards and reforms
5. **Policy Review and Awareness**
    - Can review policies affecting male healthcare, child custody, and societal expectations—spotlighting male victims who currently lack institutional support.

? Arguments Against

1. **Risk of Political Tokenism**
    - Critics point to Bihar’s spate of caste-based commissions before elections, warning a Men’s

Commission might be used for political gain instead of genuine reform

2. **Gender Equality Balance at Stake**
    - Women's rights are still fragile; diverting attention may stall crucial reforms for women.
3. **Potential Antagonism to Women's Safety**
    - Activists like Deepika Bhardwaj argue such commissions could embolden backlash against survivors and weaken protections for abused women
4. **Already Turned Down by Courts**
    - The Supreme Court previously dismissed a PIL for a Men's Commission, noting that presenting one-sided grievance reflects bias
5. **Need for Evidence-Based Approach**
    - Critics suggest focusing on better implementation of existing gender-neutral systems and improving men's mental health coverage within mainstream institutions.

Conclusion

India's men face **real issues**—legal misuse, mental health struggles, suicide, and domestic abuse remain overlooked. But a **standalone Men's Commission** risks **politicizing gender debates** and might dilute focus on women's safety and empowerment.

A more pragmatic path:

- Strengthen **gender-neutral grievance redressal**,
- Build **mental health frameworks** for all,
- Ensure justice systems are **fair and evidence-driven**—and possibly pilot state-level commissions before going national.

? Quick Summary Table

Pros	Cons
Manages misuse of dowry and abuse laws	May be used as political gimmick
Mental health & suicide support for men	Could undermine women's rights focus
Platform for male domestic violence	Court previously dismissed proposal
Pushes for gender-neutral legal reforms	May weaken overall gender justice framework

FAQs

Q1. What issues would a Men's Commission handle?
It could oversee false dowry and domestic violence cases, promote mental health, address male suicide, and advocate fair family law reforms.

Q2. Has India ever considered such a commission?
Yes—judicial petitions and activism led to court deliberations, but the Supreme Court rejected the idea,

citing bias and one-sided framing

Q3. Are other countries' Men's Commissions effective?
Many nations promote **gender equality via umbrella commissions** handling both men's and women's issues—offering a more balanced model than segregated bodies.

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/rjd-mocks-formation-of-new-commissions-by-govt-in-election-year/articleshow/121552362.cms

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