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## Live-in Relationships - Need of New Age

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*The main issue the author dealt with in this article is the sheer lack of any kind of law on an important subject of Live – in relationships India. I have used the qualitative research method in this article by collecting and analysing data to understand the concepts, opinions, or experiences in relation to Live-in relationships in India and try to decode some answers and solutions for the same issue. The major findings during the research were that the issue of live-in relationships is very much prevalent and one of the much-needed issues to expand the rigid mindsets of Indian old thinkers and society. There is a need to change and adapt to the changing situation and needs of the new generation in our country. In the conclusion, I would say that there may be many judgements but due to differences in interpretations of the meaning and concept of live-in relationships by the courts in India, there is a major need for a positive and proper law to reduce miscarriage of law and provide safeguard to people in Live-in relationships.*

**Keywords:** *live in relationship, India, legal status, marriage, domestic violence.*

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### INTRODUCTION: LIVE IN A RELATIONSHIP NEW OR OLD CONCEPT

If we search into human evolution we can say that the concept of Live-in as we call it today was predominantly present in a raw state. In the first instance in human evolution, we have heard that two people Adam - male and Eve -female were each other's consort, they lived with each

other and maintained a relationship and at that time there was no concept or notion of marriage or marital relationship. It can be possibly seen as a relation without any social sanction.

## DOCTRINE OF MARRIAGE

*"This doctrine is created through the court's interpretation and it provides that if a male and female have been living and portray themselves as a married couple for a few numbers of years, they will be considered as married in the eyes of law even if they have not registered their marriage. It is explained by attorney Kevin Tillson that the states have made statutes recognizing these kinds of marriage as common law marriage, but are limited in their application."*<sup>1</sup>

Under this doctrine, a couple is considered as married even without a marriage license or registration, or a socially accepted marriage ceremony or marriage certificate, if the marriage meets certain eligibility criteria per the state law. This kind of marriage has certain benefits that include property inheritance in case of death of a spouse, the benefit for maintenance from the spouse, and also if the marriage is terminated then the division of property.<sup>2</sup> The state of New York gave acceptance of common law marriage as can be seen in the opinion of Chancellor Kent in the year 1809. The Chancellor explained in the case of *Fenton v Reed*<sup>3</sup> that the approach of New York for adopting this kind of marriage was to take it as a matter of civil contract which did not require any ceremony but it required the couple to be married when they agreed and they intended to be married.<sup>4</sup>

## ANCIENT INDIA

People say that this new age anti-social concept of Live-in relationships has emerged in this era that is the 21st century, however, there is evidence that this kind of relationship was present than in the Indian Vedic age. In the ancient Indian Vedic age there were different kinds of

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<sup>1</sup> Michelle M. Winner, 'What You Need to Know About Common Law Marriage' (*BRIDES*, 24 July 2021) <<https://www.brides.com/common-law-marriage-5076876>> accessed 10 December 2022

<sup>2</sup> 'Common Law Marriage States' (*FindLaw*, November 2022)

<<https://www.findlaw.com/family/marriage/common-law-marriage-states.html>> accessed 10 December 2022

<sup>3</sup> *Fenton v Reed* [1809] 4 Johns. 52

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

marriages as per various situations such as Asura marriage, rakshasa marriage, and Gandharva marriage these were very much similar to Live-in relationships

“Gandharva marriage is a type of marriage where a male and female mutually agree to live with each other under a single roof. This is done without any wedding ceremony or any social or family sanctions. This is just an oral contract to live together. In the Indian Vedic age, we can find that the Gandharvas were famous for their dispositions and the practice of consummation even before marriage or ceremonial rituals. In the Vedic age, the first known example of such a relationship was the Gandharva marriage between Dushyant and Shakuntala in Mahabharata. A Gandharva Vivah was suggested by the foster father of Shakuntala, he suggested that such marriage between a desiring man and woman without any rituals is the best marriage.

## MODERN INDIA

Maitri karar is an old traditional agreement done in the state of Gujarat. Here Maitri means friendship and karar means a contract, however, it is illegal as of now. This agreement was made to make a marriage-like relationship, it was very commonly done between an already-married male and an unmarried female.<sup>5</sup> This karar is similar to ‘nata pratha’ where ‘nata’ means relation and ‘pratha’ means custom, It is similar to live-in relationships and such customs are practised in some regions of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.<sup>6</sup> This karar which means a contract in English is like a pact for being friends with benefits. It is a loophole through a contract where both parties live together and some people are of the view that this Maitri karar gives live-in relationship legality and protection for women involved in such Live-in relationships.

## THE CONCEPT OF LIVE-IN

Live-in-relationship means a relationship between two people who are of the opposite sex or same sex, living together under the same roof, like a married couple enjoying all the acts and obligations of a couple, but they have not done any ceremonies or registration or marriage

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<sup>5</sup> Mahim Pratap Singh, ‘To move in with married woman, ward panch marries 6-yr-old’ (*The Indian Express*, 28 June 2015) <<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/to-move-in-with-married-woman-ward-panch-marries-6-yr-old/>> accessed 13 December 2022

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

license. This is a new-age alternative for the younger generation. However, there is no law or regulations for these relationships, it does not give any legal status to the woman or kid born in such relationships. Hence, their legal status or rights are unclear. Nor is there any definition given in any law. In India, the only relationship which has legal sanction or validity is marriage as per different personal marriage acts, such as the Hindu Marriage Act. It is very well known to people in India that relationships with the society accepted are from a valid wedlock any other kind of relationship is looked down upon. Therefore, the judiciary has been actively providing inputs to explain and ascertain such relations in our country through its Judgments.

### **REASON AND CONDITIONS OF THIS RELATIONSHIP**

To comprehend the concept of Living- in, it is necessary to acknowledge and find why it is present or exists in our society, and what the reason behind young people taking such decisions is and moving in together without social sanction.

**Compatibility** - If I think from the point of view of such a youngster, I find the following reasons to explore the option of Live-in: First, as a person of the millennial generation I feel that before getting married to a person I should have an idea whether we as a couple is compatible with each other, now compatibility is a broad term it includes a person's idea of living, future goals, habits, financial outlook, sexuality, etc. So, going for a live-in will enable me to check these and then maybe take things forward. It prevents the whole family drama, the emotional and social stigma of divorce, etc.

**Financial prospects** - This is one of the main angles too for opting for a live-in relationship. The younger generation focuses on the financial health of self a lot more nowadays. If in such a relationship a person could see that he or she might be able to sustain the other person's expenses and basic livelihood needs of both of them then he or she might go forward.

**Unconventional Couples** - By this term, I mean couples of the same sex or already married individuals. Such relationships are seen as abnormal relations are outcasted due to no social or legal status. Neither such relations have any legal standing in the social dictum of Indian societies. So, live-in is one of the only options left to them.

**Bad experience** - Some people who were married and had a bad experience will be most afraid to take the plunge again. Such people might go for a live-in relationship rather than get married again.

**Old age** - Indian society is still a bit narrow-minded, here I feel remarriage or marriage at an old age is an issue with a lot of people. But everyone never- mind the age factor, needs a support system in their life, especially in old age when you are weak, the need for a companion is the most, and your kids are old and go on their way. So, I feel a live-in relationship is a great option for such old age people.

## **LACK OF LEGAL STATUS**

### *Position of Female Partners*

In our country, a woman unmarried, living with a man under the same roof is and has always been stated or declared as anti-social, a disgrace to the family, etc. So, a decision to live in such a relationship that is unacceptable to society at large and which does not give any legal status to the woman in the relationship will ultimately leave the woman in a vulnerable condition and she may or may not be able to marry someone. So, it is very much necessary to give such a relationship a legal definition and status in our country. A woman in such a role will be taken advantage of both physically and emotionally. There is a grave need of defining her rights and legal status in these kinds of live-in relationships. This kind of relationship leaves the title of the woman unclear, it raises the question - of who she is. What kind of relationship does she have with her partner? A wife, girlfriend, mistress?

## **LEGAL STATUS OF CHILDREN**

Children born through these relationships and their status whether legitimate or illegitimate, their legal rights in maintenance, property, essential needs, etc. and the future itself is unclear which is a major concern as to what kind of rights he or she will have, who will they consider as their parents are the parents agreed to be granted such a status all these points are to be made clear if the Judiciary wants to make clear precedent on such concept, as I feel as of today, Judicial

precedent can only be the guideline to courts and other people to decide on such points as there are no laws to regulate such relationships

## **LACK OF LAW**

### **Right To Life - Constitutionality**

It is debatable that in our country there is no particular law to regulate or give legal status to Live-in relationships which has created a mess on the judicial side. With no law to guide, different courts interpret this relationship and its status in different ways. It is totally on the Apex Court to guide and prescribe certain rules to direct the lower courts in such cases. One may find the major roots of arguments in favour of Live-in relationships in fundamental rights, especially Article 21<sup>7</sup>. Which is the Right to life. Right to life has a huge ambit which includes that a person may live the way he or she wants and they have a right to live with anyone as per they wish, without getting married or any contract to that effect. Such relations may be an abnormal or unusual situation in the eyes of common people or society at large however it cannot be considered illegal in a legal scenario. The major contention on legal status to such a relationship becomes straightforward if fundamental rights are taken into consideration in the court as the right to life is very adaptable and can be stretched in many situations by the court.

The validity of such relationships emerged from the Article granted by our Indian constitution which is the right to freedom of speech and expression and the right to life and personal liberty. The right to life grants enormous importance to the freedom of the individual to relish his life in every way unless prohibited. In this free society, people may live anywhere they want to. In the case of live-in relationships, the Right to Life is interpreted as the individual's ability or right to live-in with another person with or without marriage.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 2005**

Previously, this act was not interpreted to include women involved in a live-in relationship. However, now cases of live-in relationships came into the Act's ambit. Section 2(f)<sup>8</sup> of the

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<sup>7</sup> Constitution of India 1950, art. 21

<sup>8</sup> Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, s 2(f)

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, defines a Domestic relationship as an association of two people who live or have lived together at any point in time in a shared household, they may be related by kin or affiliation, marriage or a relation like marriage or adoption or cohabitation due to joint family.

And also includes a Male live-in the partner in clause (q)<sup>9</sup> as the definition of 'respondent' means an adult male who has or has been in a domestic relationship with another person (aggrieved party), against whom the such party has applied for relief under the said Act. An adult male person who is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with the aggrieved person and against whom the aggrieved person has sought any relief under this Act: Provided that 'it includes a female in a marriage-like relationship or aggrieved wife can file a complaint against such male or his family'. In a case in High Court, Jodhpur it was observed the main crux of this act was to save a woman from abuse. That the main objective of the Act was to give protection and relief to women involved in such kinds of relationships who have been abused while cohabiting with such a live-in partner or through adoption or consanguinity.<sup>10</sup>

## **SECTION 125 OF CRPC**

The National Law Commission and Malimath committee in 2008 proposed for a woman involved in such a relationship to be covered under the preview of section 125<sup>11</sup> of CRPC. it was not accepted as under the 125 section the code provided for maintenance of wives and divorced women, however, if a woman is in a live-in, no marriage is registered, and neither can she be called or included in the ambit of a divorced woman.

This code provided for the word Wife to include a woman who is divorced or in the process to get divorced and has not married again.<sup>12</sup> In the report of the Malimath committee that if there is evidence of a couple living together for a long duration is present it shall be sufficient to

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<sup>9</sup> Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, s 2(q)

<sup>10</sup> *Smt. Sabana @ Chand Bai & Anr v Mohd. Talib Ali & Anr* (2014) CriLJ 866 (Raj)

<sup>11</sup> Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, s 125

<sup>12</sup> Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, s 125(1)

presume that they are married under the customary rites of the parties. Hence the committee recommended including women involved in Live-in relationships in the definition of a wife.

### **HINDU MARRIAGE ACT 1955**

The Act is the legal foundation within India for Hindu marriage and gives legal status to a woman who marries and gives what constitutes marriage, this act does not include other relationships such as Live-in, etc.

### **PROBLEMS IN SUCH RELATIONSHIP - PROS AND CONS**

India is changing and so is the mentality of people, but still, the ideology behind some concepts remains stagnant. But the new Generation will try and explore such limits which are unexplored and they will move in, hence there will always be a tussle between the new and old, here are some of the pros and cons of live-in relationships;

***Mutual statutory obligations:*** Marriage is a pact that creates legal rights and obligations for the couple. However, in live-in relationships, no such mutual rights or obligations are made statutory by law. People who do not want to be tied down by legal and social obligations in relation.

***Individuality and freedom:*** Live-in relationships provide the partner's separate or individual freedom in many factors such as financial and family relations, property, etc. Also, in the case of arranged marriage couples compromise and they might not be compatible, then they take divorced which creates turmoil in the family and in general their own lives. But in contrast, live-in relationships create the foundation of individual freedom.

***Promotes Bigamy:*** If the legal status of the wife and live-in partner is presumed equivalent, then it creates a huge conflict in the interest of the wife. If a person who gets involved in a live-in relationship might be already married, it creates legal consequences concerning the wife's rights.

***Indian social value:*** In India, marriage is said to be done with God's permission and guidance and the institution of marriage is one of the most sacred ones. A live-in relationship goes against



the whole school of thought who gives such a high place to the sanction of marriage. People are of the view that such a relationship is an act of shame and a bad influence of western culture.

*The legal status of women is unclear:* The wife has been given legal status by various laws in India. But there is no law for Live-in partners for women. Neither is it termed as a legal relationship in any Act, hence the place of a woman is vulnerable and unclear in the case of Live-in relationships.

*Children born:* All the above-mentioned acts or laws provide for a child begotten from wedlock or a legal marriage, but if a child begotten from a live-in relationship what should be his status, who will maintain him, will he get property of his parents? All these questions are answered negatively as there is no such law that gives a child in such a situation any legal right. These kinds of relationships are very easily broken and couples get separated at any moment, as they do not have any binding obligation, or legal status, as a married couple enjoys in India.

## JUDICIAL CASE LAWS

### Interpretation by the Courts in India

Before independence when such kinds of cases arrived in the court it always seems that the Judiciary interpreted Live-in relationships based on the duration of co-habitation of the parties, hence it creates a presumption for the lower courts and precedent for later cases to infer the duration as a major factor to determine such relationships as Live-in.

For instance, in the case of *A Dinohamy v WLBlahamy*,<sup>13</sup> The privy Council evolved this rule that if a man and woman have evidence to have lived with each other as husband and wife, then the law shall make a presumption of a valid marriage unless proved contrary.

*Badri Prasad v Dy. Director of Consolidation:* The first case in India where the Apex court acknowledged a live-in relationship as well founded marriage. Here the court recognizes a 50-year live-in relationship of a couple as a valid marriage.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of such decisions is to

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<sup>13</sup> *A Dinohamy v WLBlahamy* (1928) 1 MLJ 388 (PC)

<sup>14</sup> *Badri Prasad v Dy. Director of Consolidation* AIR (1978) SC 1557

alleviate the condition of females in such relationships and prevent injustice. The Courts should keep in mind the changing social situations and need to adapt to the new age changes accordingly.

In *Payal Sharma v Nari Niketan*,<sup>15</sup> the Apex Court declared that if a man and woman willingly live together without getting married as not illegal in the eyes of law. Differentiating between law and what is moral the court explained that a live-in relationship may be regarded as evil or immoral in society but in Law it is neither crime nor punishable. Two people involved in a live-in relationship are not criminal offenders.<sup>16</sup> If we go by legality then no one can stop two adults to live together under the same roof without any marriage, they can live and do as they please, this relationship may be abnormal for the society at large in India but it is certainly not a crime and they cannot be punished for doing so.

*Indra Sarma v V.K.V. Sarma*<sup>17</sup> one of the most important cases in Indian history as it gave a concrete foundation based on which the legal fraternity can judge whether a relationship can be treated as Live-in or not. Before this case it was unclear and people had a vague sense of what they were dealing with. This judgment established basic legal eligibility criteria for a relationship to be regarded as live-in. The court in this case gave elements needed to make a live-in relationship come under 'relationship like marriage' under the Act, such as period, common roof cohabitation, financial aspects and responsibilities, sexual relation, children, and intention and conduct of both the parties.

The Court gave 5 types of relations that can be construed as live-in relationships if proven. Those are the domestic relationship between –

- Male and female, both adult and unmarried, are the most uncomplicated type;
- Married male and unmarried female, entered knowingly;
- An unmarried man and married woman entered knowingly - adultery under IPC;
- Unmarried adult female and married male, unknowingly;

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<sup>15</sup> *Payal Sharma v Nari Niketan*, AIR (2001) All 254

<sup>16</sup> *Ramdev Food Products Ltd. v Arvind bhai Ram Bhai Patel* (2006) 8 SCC 726

<sup>17</sup> *Indra Sarma v V.K.V. Sarma* (2013) 15 SCC 755

- Same-sex couple.

These categories shall be covered by the term relationship like marriage under Section 2(f)<sup>18</sup>. So, after reading this case we can get a clear picture of how to categorize Live-in relationships and what are the different kinds of Live-in relationships. It also gave a wider meaning to domestic relations in the PCADV (Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act, 2005). The Apex court clearly explained that such relationships as given in the five categories come within the scope of the said Act. But, later in another case, this topic was discussed and not all kinds of relationships are included in the said act. The main concern of this act was the protection of women from abuse.

*Velusamy v Patchaiammal*<sup>19</sup>: It was again contested in the court that the Act does not cover all kinds and types of live-in relationships present in the society and the court gave a. Test to confirm –

- The couple should show and intend to be construed as spouses in society;
- They should be of legal age, adults;
- They should be legally eligible to enter into marriage
- Should be cohabiting voluntarily for a long period.

### **Same-Sex Relationship**

We all know that all over the world there is the liberalization of the mindset of people and the tendency of people to accept gay or lesbian relationships has increased. India is still at a very early stage and there is still a major part of society who are unable to digest or accept such facts and come to terms with this. But we all have to accept such relationships and the mere fact that we reject them or their relationship will not stop them from living the way they want to nor will it decrease the number of such cases. Change is a constant factor and to live in this changing environment we have to change our mindset and learn to accept the truth. Courts in our country

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<sup>18</sup> Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, s 2(f)

<sup>19</sup> *Velusamy v Patchaiammal* (2010) 10 SCC 469

are trying to do so in their manner. Take for example “Chinmayee Jena v State of Odisha,<sup>20</sup> Justice Ratho observed: "love knows no bound and thus it includes being in a love relationship with a same-sex partner. Similarly, in a recent case, the high court of Orissa affirmed the right of a transgender and a woman to be in a live-in relationship.

### **The Right to get Maintenance**

On the suggestions by the Malimath Committee, the government took a positive step forward to change and amend the definition of wife under section 125 of CRPC. Now the female partner involved in live-in relationships will enjoy the legal stature of the wife.

On such similar thoughts the Apex Court *Chanmuniya v Virendra Kushwaha*,<sup>21</sup> "held that such right for maintenance under CRPC is broadened to protect a woman and established the right of a woman in a live-in relationship for maintenance under section 125 of CRPC, stating that its main object in doing so is to prevent the man in such relationship to not take the undue advantage of women in Live-in on the facet of a de facto marriage without being legally obligated as in case of marriage.

*Kamala v Mohan Kumar*<sup>22</sup>: Here the court took the presumption of marriage on the instance of long cohabitation and affirmed the right of woman and child conceived from such relation entitled to maintenance. The Apex court explained that the aim of such interpretation of the meaning of "wife" is to promote the dignity of women and principles of social justice." The Courts have interpreted the word wife in a way to include the female partners of Live-in relationships, this is done to protect women and prevent physical abuse and other crimes against women in Live-in relationships.

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<sup>20</sup> *Chinmayee Jena v State of Odisha* Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 57/2020; *Madhu Bala v State of Uttarakhand* (2020) Cri LJ (NOC 268) 82

<sup>21</sup> *Chanmuniya v Virendra Kushwaha* (2011) 1 SCC 141

<sup>22</sup> *Kamala v Mohan Kumar* (2019) 11 SCC 491

## ISSUE OF CHILD BORN OUT OF LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIPS

*Balasubramanyam v Suruttayan*: In this case, the Apex court laid down the presumption of marriage, if a man and woman cohabit under one roof for a considerable period. In this case, the SC declared that if a man and woman live under Section 114 of the Evidence Act. Hence, children conceived from such relationships can be construed as legitimate which makes them entitled to a share in the ancestral property.

*Bharatha Matha v Vijeya Renganathan*: In a similar situation, the Apex court gave designating grants of share in parent's property to the children born from live-in relationships, the Court held that they are not illegitimate, and the Supreme Court granted a share in parents' property to the children born from live-in relationships".<sup>23</sup> The legal position of a child born without wedlock from Live - in relation was a major concern as they are dependent on their biological parents and the partners of the Live-in might not want to take any responsibility as such for the child. A serious and concrete provision has to be made to protect the innocent kids born in such situations. The Supreme Court has been trying to protect such children by giving such positive decisions for the children. However, a law is more beneficial in such cases as the number of such relationships and cases related to such relationships will increase in the future.

## CRITICISM

### CONFUSING AND UNCLEAR JUDICIAL VIEW

#### Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 Misinterpreted -

*Reshma Begum v the State of Maharashtra*<sup>24</sup>: The High Court, Bombay, held that the definition of domestic relationship under section 125 of CRPC can't be interpreted so extensively as to promote adulterous relationships. In this case, the court did not give relief under the Act." There are cases where courts have taken cognizance of the crime done, but sometimes the courts are of the view that the Act has been misinterpreted, and in certain cases, the relationship can't be

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<sup>23</sup> *Balasubramanyam v Suruttayan* AIR (1992) SC 756; *Bharatha Matha v Vijeya Renganathan* (2010) 11 SCC 483

<sup>24</sup> *Reshma Begum v State of Maharashtra* (2018) SCC Online Bom 1827

regarded as married and no such rights can be granted for maintenance or giving the status of marriage.

### **Difference of Interpretation between Lower Courts**

There are many areas that are unclear in this subject and just some Supreme Court Judgements on some particular cases will not be enough to make a detailed action plan for the lower courts for future reference. Also, a major trend is seen in the case of certain specific places which are not urban to reject such precedents and social sanctuary cannot be taken as the social network itself is adverse to such relationships. This is the major reason for the difference in the interpretation by lower courts in India.

### ***Gulzar Kumari v State of Punjab*<sup>25</sup> & *Ujjawal v State of Haryana*<sup>26</sup>**

In the recent two cases, the Court rejected the preposition of such a relationship despite Supreme Court precedents being available. This creates a total disregard for the judicial process in India. "In May 2021, following two controversial judgments passed by the high court of Punjab in the *Gulzar Kumar v State of Punjab* case and a similar case in High court Haryana, where the courts refused to protect such couples in live-in relationships, stating that it is immoral and not acceptable in society and it destroys the social fabric of Indian society at large." This shows how courts in some areas of our country are averse to the idea of accepting live-in relationships, much less giving them legal status.

**Same-sex Couples:** The cases of a male and female live-in couple can be a bit more acceptable and these cases might have precedents, but there are a whole lot of variations in such couples like a same-sex, gay or lesbian couples, where their rights or cases of abuser or violence are unanswered and these questions have to be addressed as they are very much prevalent in our society. For example, the IPC provides for rape under section 375, but it makes a man liable so

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<sup>25</sup> *Gulzar Kumari v State of Punjab* Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 4199/2021

<sup>26</sup> *Ujjawal v State of Haryana* Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 4268/2021

there is no relief or protection for so a male in a heterosexual relationship or a female in a same-sex live-in relationship.

**No recourse for Men:** There is no provision at present for men like the Domestic violence Act provides for women in such extended relationships, nor is maintenance or alimony provided under section 125 of CRPC. Similarly, no legal recourse for protection is present for the sexual abuse of a same-sex spouse. The law has been more gender biased in India right from the start.

## CONCLUSION

Indian society has been always a bit of an orthodox in its thought process, but we need to understand that all the old laid laws, customs, and usage have to be changed according to the change in lifestyle, ideas, and trends, to meet the social legal requirements of the current age the legal process and law have to be changed. However, this change has been criticized and debated on concepts of lack of legality or legal recourse in the system and any kind of status given by society. Younger people of this country are day by day making new ideologies and moving towards western culture, we cannot stop or ignore such choices of this generation. We have to protect their rights and make this society more sustainable in its choices. For this, the society and judiciary both have to change and develop such mechanisms to achieve progressive thought processes and to make such laws that incorporate these relationships to prevent abuse and protect youth.

Due to legislative ignorance, couples in these kinds of relationships are unprotected by the law. The current meagre legal guidelines in India for such individuals in live-in relationships are because of judgments made by courts in this matter. While such judgements provide certain guidelines for courts and people in this matter, it is not good enough. The absence of a legal framework in this matter and no definite law has led to different interpretations by various courts. It is of utmost necessity for the people and society that proper legislation is in place.