

A STUDY ON EVIDENTIARY CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING MARITAL RAPE

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ABSTRACT

Marital rape known as spousal rape, is non-consensual sex in which the perpetrator is the victim's spouse. It is a form of partner rape, of domestic violence, and of sexual abuse. Implementation of marital rape laws in our country would definitely increase the quality of life and reduce the cases of marital rape. Although the petition challenging the exception to IPC 375 is still being heard in the Delhi High Court, senior Supreme Court judges have argued that the right to say 'no' should be a right after marriage too. However there are certain factors that are to be considered like fake accusations of the spouse. The main objective of the study is to know whether the sample population considered forceful sex after marriage as still rape. The research has followed the empirical research method using a convenient sampling method. The sample size of the study is 240. The samples are taken from many parts of India through online and offline surveys. The results observed from the study is that the Millennials and Gen Z are the most aware about the issue marital rape and also insist in criminalizing marital rape. From the analysis majority of the society haven't experienced marital rape and it has seen a downfall from previous decades or it can also be due to very less awareness and the lack of liberation to speak about the injustice. Social issues are very delicate problems of society, utmost care and sensitivity provided will help us to find a solution for the problems. Successful societies are those that create conditions that lead to better health, well-being and resilience for individuals and communities.

KEYWORDS: Rape , Implied consent, Non consensual , Domestic violence, Perpetrator

INTRODUCTION

Marital rape known as spousal rape, is non-consensual sex in which the perpetrator is the victim's spouse. It is a form of partner rape, of domestic violence, and of sexual abuse. Throughout history till the 70's most countries granted husbands the right to have sexual intercourse with his wife whenever he desires to. However in the 20th century many countries lifted this rule and criminalized marital rape after constant voice out from anti rape movement , demanding that they should be given sexual autonomy over their own bodies. The concept of marital rape in India is the recapitulation of what we call an 'implied consent'. The Indian penal code also communicates the same. Section 375 defines

offence of rape with the help of six descriptions. One of the exception to this offence is "Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape". Evidentiary challenges in addressing marital rape can be significant due to the intimate nature of the crime and the dynamics of the marital relationship. Some common challenges include: Lack of physical evidence: Unlike other forms of sexual violence, marital rape often occurs in private settings without witnesses, making it challenging to gather physical evidence such as DNA or bruises. Consent issues: In marital rape cases, perpetrators may claim that sexual activity was consensual, leading to challenges in proving lack of consent, especially if there is no evidence of physical resistance. Delayed

reporting: Many victims of marital rape may delay reporting the abuse due to fear, shame, or feelings of guilt. This delay can weaken the strength of evidence and make it harder to prosecute perpetrators. Emotional manipulation: Perpetrators of marital rape may use emotional manipulation or coercion to control their victims, making it difficult for victims to speak out or for outsiders to recognize the abuse. Legal barriers: In some jurisdictions, laws may contain exemptions or lesser penalties for marital rape, further complicating the legal process and discouraging victims from seeking justice.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes legal reforms, specialized training for law enforcement and judicial personnel, support services for survivors, and efforts to challenge societal attitudes and myths surrounding marital rape.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 is aimed at protecting women from violence in domestic relationships. Marital rape victims have to take recourse from (PWDVA). Married women are protected by several laws, is the most common argument against the criminalisation of marital rape. The government as of now only criminalizes marital rape if the wife is below the age of 15. The government hasn't taken much initiative regarding marital rape.

The social factors that affect marital rape are due to less awareness of the issue marital rape itself, many women and men don't understand that forced sexual intercourse after marriage is still rape. Another social factor is the general dominance a man inherits in this society makes him feel he has the right to have forced sex. Societies that celebrate toxic masculinity or even men who are hypermasculine have higher chances of normalising marital rapes. If a man has grown up in an environment where he has seen his father enact the same behavior with his mother, the chances of him mimicking his father will be greater. Psychological factors

such as low self esteem of men or women makes them carry out marital rape. Such people may not realise the gravity of their actions unless the spouse walks out on them. Economic factor like unemployment is also a reason for marital rape. A 2002 study confirms the odds of marital rape are greater among unemployed men. Being unemployed may dent their self esteem which will bring chances of violence in the bedroom.

In the present time we can see many women voicing out the injustice and filing petitions. Although the petition challenging the exception to IPC 375 is still being heard in the Delhi High Court, senior Supreme Court judges have argued that the right to say 'no' should be a right after marriage too. In another case, the Gujarat High Court gave relief to a man accused of marital rape that there no law accuse him under but made it clear that the offence is an injustice and must be criminalised.

When we compare the marital rape laws of India with other countries, we can see that India is one of the few countries with other countries like Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, China and few more has still not criminalized marital rape. Countries like Brazil since 2005, the law criminalizes rape of men and women, including spousal rape. In Canada marital rape was first criminalized in 1983.

Rape does indeed happen between girlfriend and boyfriend, husband and wife. Men who force their girlfriends or wives into having sexual intercourse are committing rape. The laws are blurry, and in some countries marital rape is legal. But it is still rape.

OBJECTIVES

- To determine the reasons why victims do not file a complaint.
- To determine the reliability of evidence in marital rape
- To know the evidentiary challenges in addressing during marital rape cases

- To understand the level of agreeability on why men feel women do not have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

EVES R, 2020 has examined violence against women and rape in marriage. This research was conducted in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, where 100 men and women were surveyed and asked questions. The empirical data collected by the researcher concludes that Many male coffee farmers in the highlands of Papua New Guinea believe they have a right to sex with their spouse without regard to her wishes. The author also conveys that Changes brought by modernisation are transforming traditional understandings of conjugality, causing some disparity in partners' understanding of what they have agreed to. Too many women continue to endure marital rape, but some signs of improvement are detectable.

Mojahed A 2020 Intimate partner violence (IPV) profoundly damages physical, sexual, reproductive, and psychological health, as well as social well-being of individuals and families. We sought in this systematic review to examine the risk factors according to the integrative ecological theoretical framework for IPV for women living in the Arab countries.

Bagwell-Gray ME 2015 Intimate partner sexual violence (IPSV) is a significant aspect of intimate partner violence (IPV). While intimate partners commit one third of sexual assaults, IPSV is often overlooked in studies about IPV and in research on sexual violence. There are difficulties identifying, defining, and measuring IPSV, and research lacks consistency in terminology and measurement. The purpose of this article is to review the terms, definitions, and measurements associated with IPSV.

Logan TK 2013 This article has two overall goals. First, to examine the current state of sexual violence research to highlight several shortcomings in the knowledge on partner sexual violence. Second, to describe several factors to consider in future research to

facilitate a more in-depth understanding of partner sexual violence.

Bhat M 2013 Marital violence has been recognized globally as a grave public health concern with devastating consequences affecting the physical, reproductive, sexual and psychological health of women. This article is a narrative review about marital violence in India, an understudied subtype of domestic violence. We include both theoretical and empirical studies of legal definitions, incidence and prevalence . In addition to examining the sociocultural context and correlates of marital violence in India, we discuss the implications of current knowledge and recommendations for reducing and responding to marital violence.

Srimati basu, 2011 has focused in staging rape and marriage in indian law. The research dars on the fieldwork in Kolkata in 2001 and between 2004-2005, observing the family courts and women grievance cell. The author concluded that 2 in 5 married women has experienced marital rape or forcefull sex in marriage. The author felt that marital rape should be a criminal offence in India to move forward as a better nation.

Jody Clay-Warner and Linda Renzulli, 2009 has focused on criminalizing spouse rape. Data has been gathered from secondary sources in order to gather the most appropriate information. 50 states have been focused on this research. The findings are instricitive for the for the researchers in twenty seven states that still lack strong marital rape law.

Ferro C 2008 The current study extends previous research on marital rape and acceptance of general rape myths by comparing the perceptions of undergraduate college students to those of college alumni who graduated from the same university three decades earlier. Participants read a hypothetical rape scenario that depicted the perpetrator as either the victim's husband or neighbor and completed three measures of different aspects of rape myth acceptance. Results indicated that although participants reported fairly low levels

of support for different aspects of rape myths, certain rape myths were more strongly endorsed than were others. Furthermore, rape myth acceptance was stronger for marital rape than for acquaintance rape and for undergraduates than for college alumni. Practical and theoretical implications of this study are discussed.

Elaine K. Martin and Casey T. Taft , 2006 represents a comprehensive review of marital rape, including its legal history and numerous aspects of its perpetration and victimization. The NCVS and NVAW survey data was used for arriving at conclusions. The researchers have concluded that Studies comparing rates of marital rape to stranger rape, acquaintance rape, date rape, and intimate partner violence have shown that marital rape is the most common form of rape.

Bennice JA 2003 Despite the increased recognition that the topic of marital rape has generated in the past 2 decades, the literature in this area remains sparse. This article provides a comprehensive review of the current state of the marital rape literature. First, the lengthy history of legal, cultural, and professional invalidation of marital rape victims, and the resulting negative treatment implications, is discussed. Second, marital rape research is reviewed, including prevalence, descriptive, and comparison studies. This review highlights the seriousness of marital rape, in terms of prevalence and posttrauma distress, as well as the limitations of extant research. Finally, barriers to treatment and recommendations for professionals are discussed.

Auster, Carol J; Leone, Janel M, 2001 attempted to study the issue marital rape and have examined both the victim and the perpetrators social and psychological characteristics. This survey was conducted with a sample of college students . The authors analysis was to examine the effects of gender and fraternity/sorority membership on how highly late adolescents , conceptualize marital rape. Their analysis of the

data collected revealed that there was very less tolerance against women more generally.

Keith Burgess-Jackson, 1998 has focused on determining the arguments in marital rape. According to the author there is no good reason to treat non-consensual intercourse between husband and wife differently from non-consensual intercourse between strangers. There is a good reason to punish and criminalize marital rape.

Lisa Eskow, 1996 examines the historical roots and lingering traces of the marital rape exemption, which shields husbands from prosecution for sexual assault of their wives. Presenting interviews with sex crimes prosecutors and activists, Eskow constructs a case study. Drawing on these and other findings, the author suggests legislative reform strategies and creative lawyering tactics to facilitate more effective prosecution of marital rapists.

Rebecca M. Ryan, 1995 has examined sexual violence against married women. The author was able to arrive at conclusions by empirical data from 121 women. The legal image of marital rape forces a husbands to reevaluate their thoughts and decisions about rape and marriage.

Irene hanson frieze, 1993 has made a study regarding when and in what family surroundings do women experience marital rape. The author was able to arrive at conclusions by data gathered from 300 women who are from shelters for battered women and has filed a legal action against the abusive husband. Reasons to occur are due to husbands with violent sexual desires and little evidence that women provoke the rape by refusing reasonable sexual request.

Victoria RGarnier 1983 The legal definition of rape most commonly used in the United States – ‘sexual intercourse by a male with a female not his wife without her consent’ – gives legal permission for men to rape their wives. This article integrates the legal and psychosocial

aspects of marital rape and the marital rape exemption. That rape is an act of aggression against women is established, and the effects of intimate rape are explored. A brief legal history of the marital rape exemption is included, followed by a look at the arguments both for maintaining and for abolishing this rape exemption. The societal influences that make rape and abuse seem 'okay' are discussed, and steps that have been taken towards change in the United States are outlined. Suggestions for further change in the rape laws and penalties are offered in the conclusion.

Michael D.A. Freeman, 1981 has examined violence against women and rape in marriage. Author comes to a conclusion that it is time for the juries to exempt the law which states it is not a criminal offence if a woman is being raped in marriage. The removal of the exemption would be a symbolic endorsement for the integrity and self determination of women.

Bethany A. Munge (2007) This finding is particularly salient for wives in long-term marriages as compared to wives in short-term marriages. Additionally, participants perceived rapes within long-term marriages as more traumatic than rapes within short-term marriages. ("Website," n.d.)

Anna Scheyett(1998) Marital rape is a serious problem in this country. However, in 36 states, husbands are protected from prosecution by a

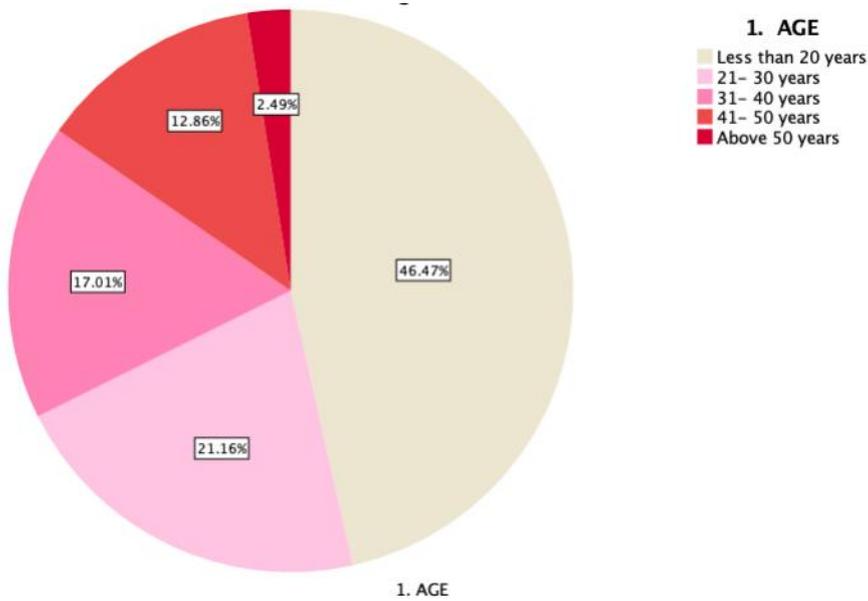
marital rape exemption. The State is reluctant to abolish the exemption because of the fear that abolition will further the disintegration of the patriarchal family and will shift the balance of power between women and the male State. ("Website," n.d.)

Bonnie L. Yegidis(1988) Comparative analyses were conducted between the group of women who had ever been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused by a male partner and the group who had not been so abused in relation to selected social and historical variables. The results showed that a key factor in determining current abusive relationships was the male partner's history of any type of family violence. ("Website," n.d.)

METHODOLOGY:

The research method followed here is a (empirical research). A total of 240 samples have been collected out of which all the samples have been collected through google forms survey and offline survey. The samples are taken in and around Chennai through online and offline surveys. The independent variables are age ,gender ,educational qualification ,occupation and marital status. The dependent variables are awareness regarding the social issue marital rape, experience with marital rape, satisfaction of marital rape laws in India and level of agreeability towards men feel "women do not have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage".

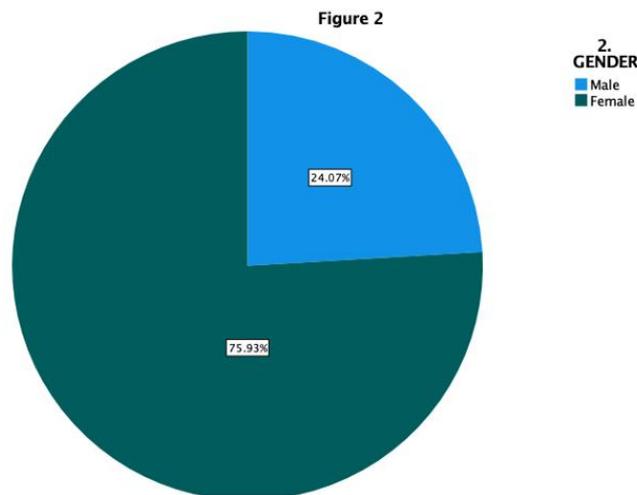




ANALYSIS:

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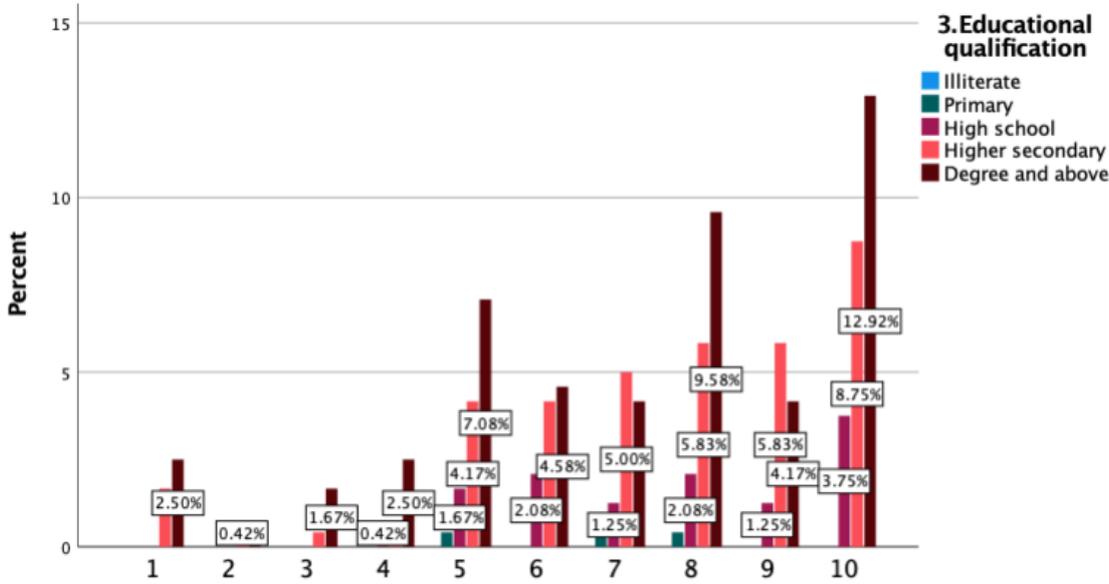
Figure 1 shows the age distribution of the sample population. The population is divided in 5 categories



Legend

Figure 2 represents the gender distribution of the sample population.

Figure 3

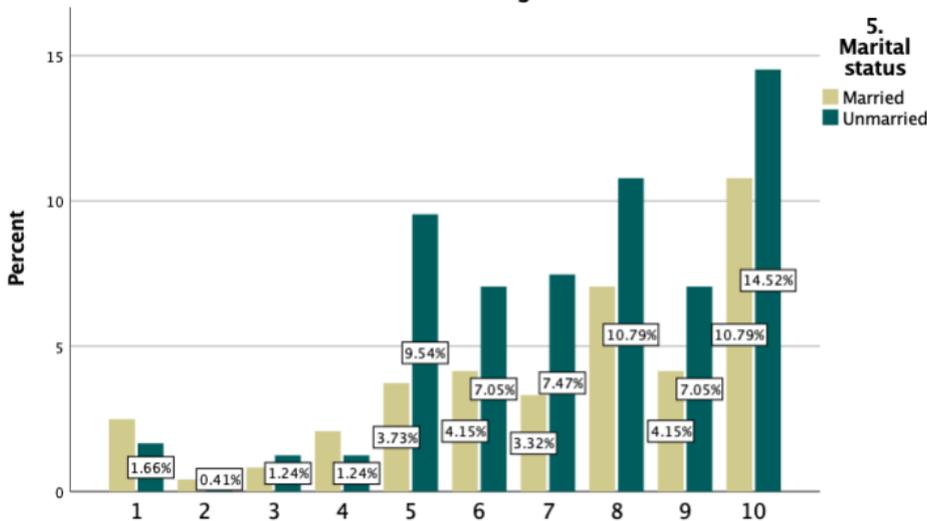


6. On a scale 1-10 how aware are you regarding the social issue marital rape? 1 being least aware and 10 being very much aware about the issue.

Legend

Figure 3 represents the overall education qualification of the sample population and how aware they are on a scale 1 - 10.

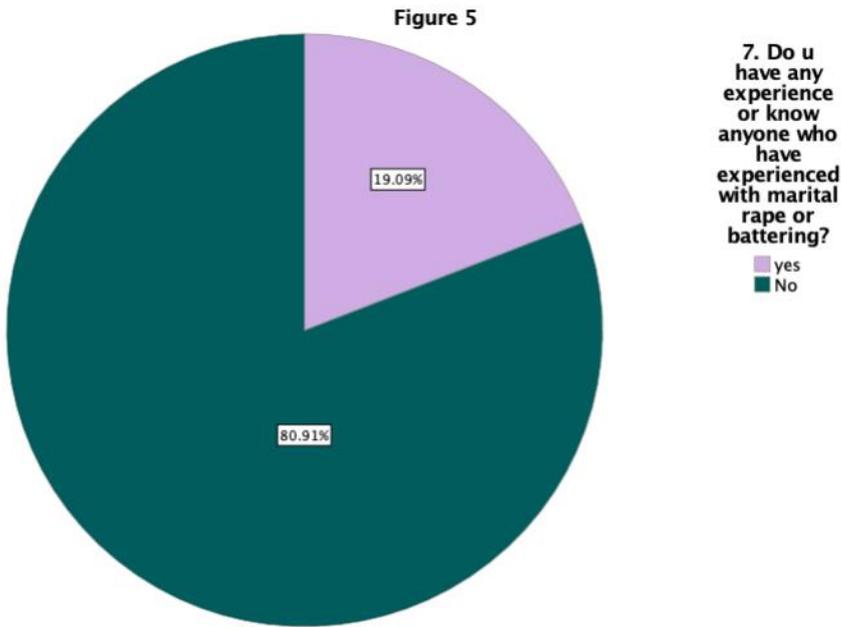
Figure 4



6. On a scale 1-10 how aware are you regarding the social issue marital rape? 1 being least aware and 10 being very much aware about the issue.

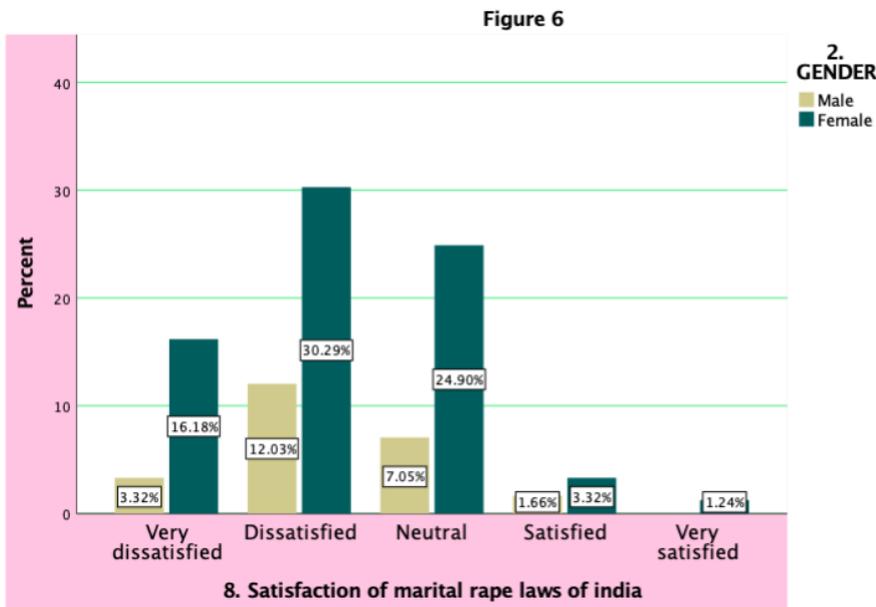
Legend

Figure 4 represents how aware are the sample population who are married and unmarried regarding the issue marital rape.



Legend

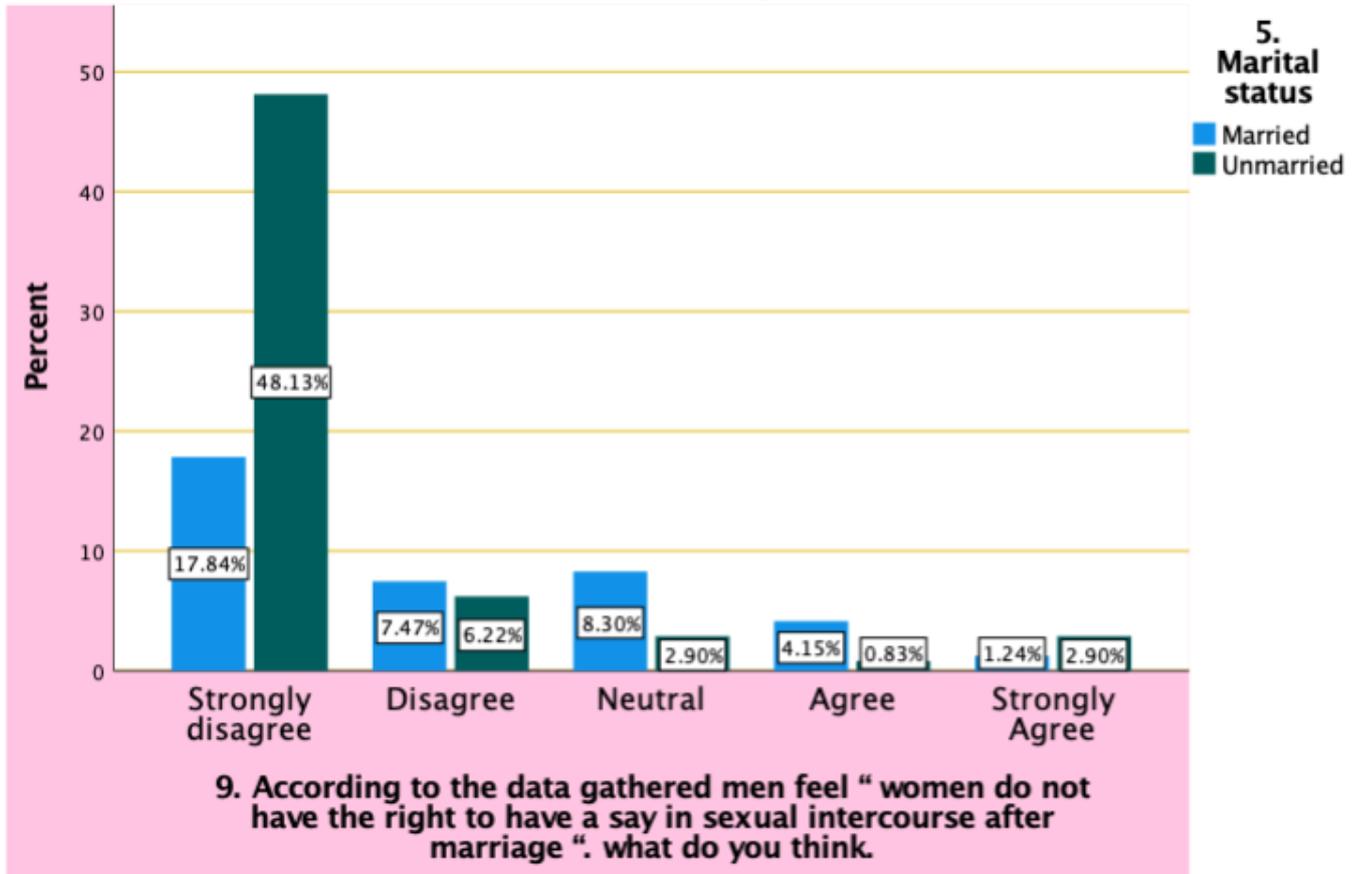
Figure 5 shows if the sample population has experienced with marital rape or any form of battering .



Legend

Figure 6 represents the gender view on the level of satisfaction on the marital rape laws of India.

Figure 7



Legend

Figure 7 shows the level of agreeability between the married and unmarried on the data gathered “ women do not have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage”.

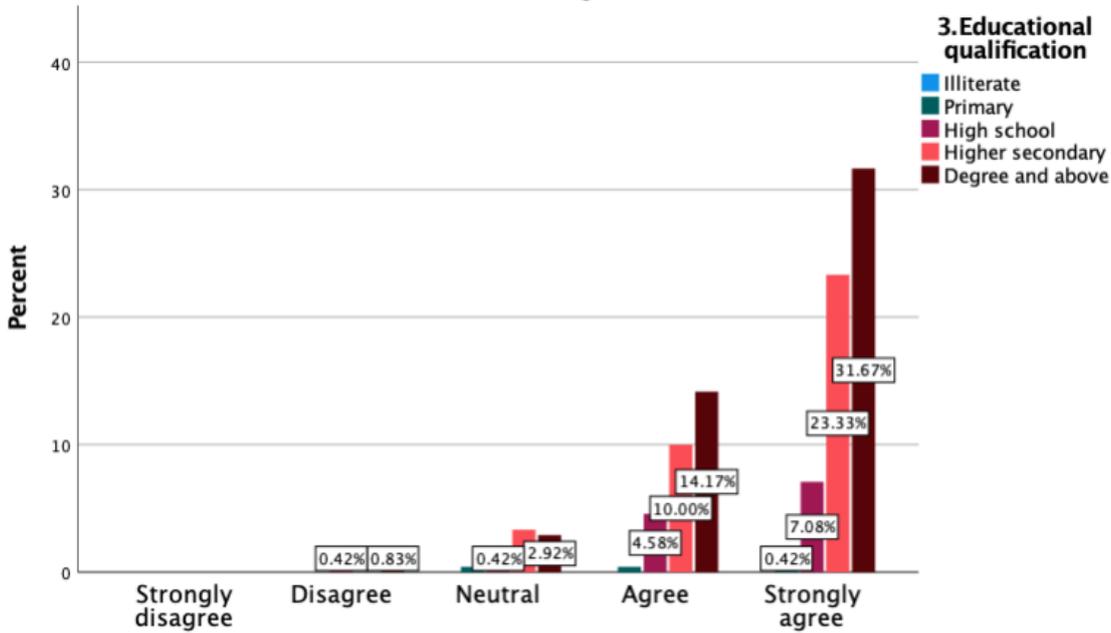
Figure 8



Legend

Figure 8 shows why victims of marital rape and battering dont file a complaint.

Figure 9

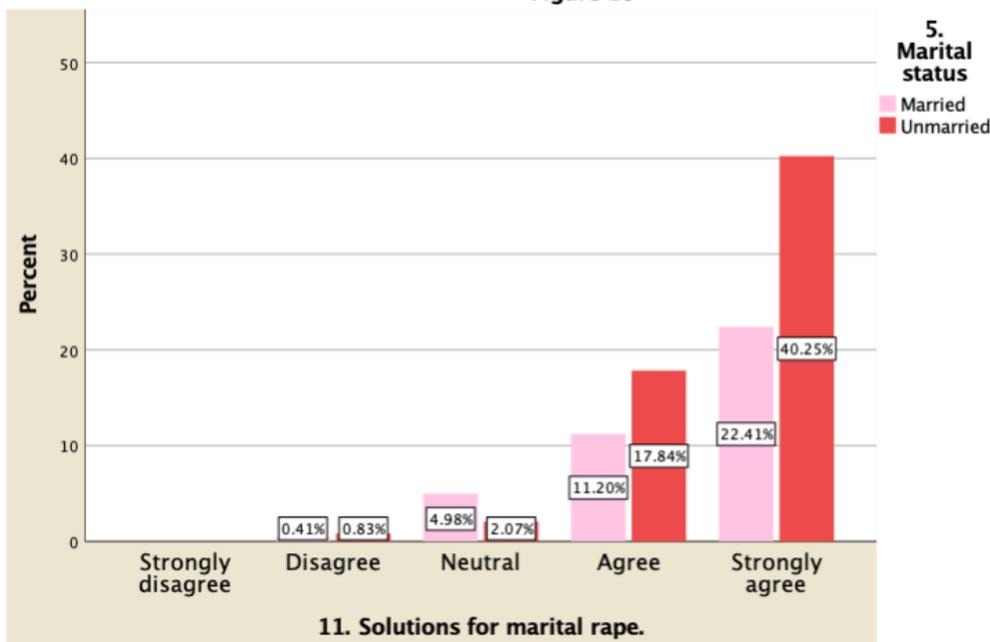


11. Solutions for marital rape.

Legend

Figure 9 represents the educational qualification and the level of agreeability on the solutions of marital rape.

Figure 10

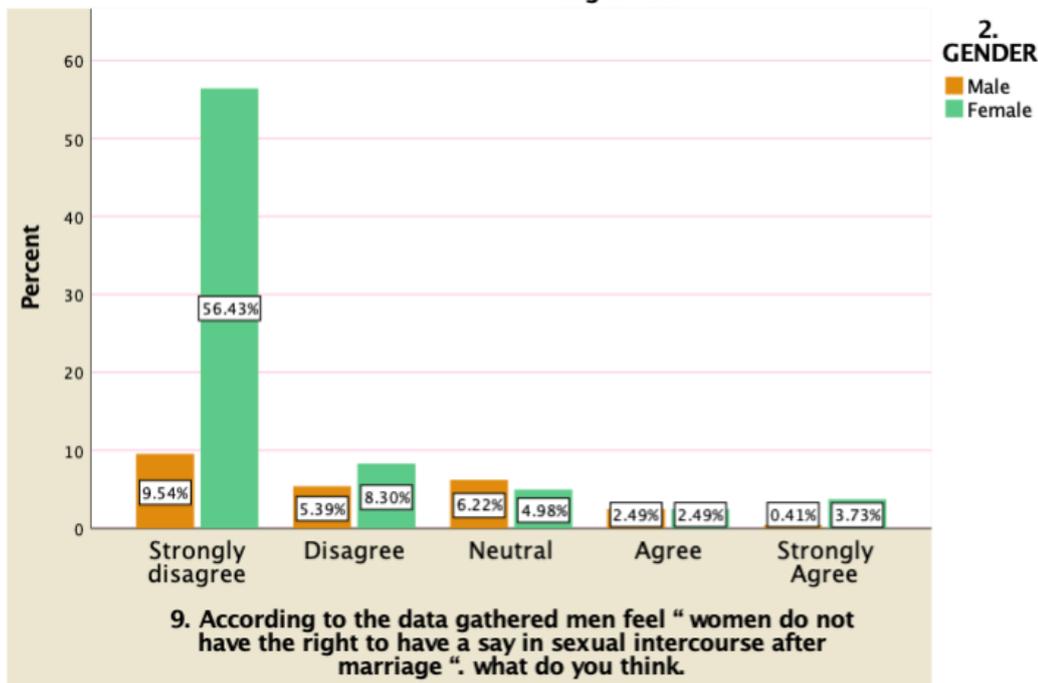


11. Solutions for marital rape.

Legend

Figure 10 represents the marital status and the level of agreeability on the solutions of marital rape.

Figure 11



Legend

Figure 11 shows the level of agreeability of the data gathered "women do not have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage" and the level of agreeability on that statement on the basis of gender.

RESULTS:

(Fig.1) shows that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group category of 20 years and below and followed by 21- 30 years.

(Fig.2) 75 percent of the sample population are female.

(Fig.3) The figure shows the awareness of the issue marital rape based on the educational qualification of the respondents. It shows that the most aware are the respondents with the educational qualification of degree and above.

(Fig.4) The complex graph represents the awareness of the issue marital rape based on the marital status of the respondents. It depicts that the most aware of the issue marital rape are the majority of respondents who are unmarried.

(Fig.5) Pie chart represents that 80 percent of the sample population have not experienced or know anyone who has experienced any form of battering or marital rape.

(Fig.6) Female being the majority of the respondents on the basis of gender , they have largely responded that they are dissatisfied with the marital rape laws of India. And 16 percent of females are very dissatisfied with the marital rape laws of India.

(Fig.7) shows the level of agreeability between the married and unmarried on the data gathered "women do not have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage". And it shows that unmarried respondents strongly disagree with the data gathered.

(Fig.8) represents why most marital rape victims do not file a complaint or report the injustice. According to the sample population fear of bringing shame to the family is why victims do not file a complaint .

(Fig.9) shows that respondents under the educational qualification degree and above strongly agree on all the solutions on reducing marital rape. This shows that the most educated are the ones who are more aware.

(Fig.10) shows that respondents who are unmarried than the married strongly agree on all the solutions on reducing marital rape.

(Fig.11) women strongly disagree on the data gathered “women do not have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage.

DISCUSSION:

(Fig. 3) Respondents having an educational qualification of degree and above have responded that they are the most aware of the issue marital rape in the society. This shows that the most aware are the most educated on this issue too. And it's seen in the graph that the level of awareness and level of education goes hand in hand.

(Fig. 4) majority of the sample population who are unmarried are more aware of the issue marital rape than the married sample population. The unmarried sample population mostly fall into the age group category of less than 20 years and 21-30 years, these respondents are part of the Millennials and Gen Z, therefore having more exposure and awareness. Therefore making them the most aware of the issue.

(Fig. 5) From the data collected 240 respondents have not experienced or know anyone who have experienced with marital rape or battering. This shows that majority of the society haven't experienced marital rape and it has seen a downfall from previous decades or it can also be due to very less awareness and the lack of liberation to speak about the injustice.

(Fig. 6) majority of the female respondents are dissatisfied with the marital rape laws of India. According to data women have experienced marital rape or battering more than men, hence this can be a reason why majority of the female sample population are dissatisfied with the marital rape laws of India.

(Fig. 7) More unmarried respondents put forward their opinion that women do have a say when it comes to their sexual intercourse in marriage. This is because the sample

population has a majority of unmarried respondents. With a similar ratio even the married respondents feel that women have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage.

(Fig. 8) Fear of bringing shame to family is said to be the main reason for not filing complaints regarding the injustice. Here we can observe that the society in general is still narrow minded and also considers marital rape as not rape. Thus the majority of respondents feel that fear of bringing shame to family is the main reason.

(Fig. 9) The sample population with the highest educational qualification strongly agrees to all the solution for reducing marital rape. This shows that, the more awareness and education a individual acquires he or she is more intellectual and broad minded when it come to the issue marital rape.

(Fig.10) majority of the sample population who are unmarried strongly agree to the solutions provided for marital rape than the married sample population. The unmarried sample population mostly fall into the age group category of less than 20 years and 21-30 years, these respondents are part of the Millennials and Gen Z, therefore having more exposure and awareness.

(Fig.11) shows the level of agreeability between male and female on the data gathered “women do not have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage”. And it shows that 56 percent of female respondents strongly disagree with the data gathered. 9 percent of male respondents strongly disagree with the data and the rest are taking a stand by saying they disagree and are neutral. This shows that largely men do not feel that marital rape is rape and its a punishable offence and a women does not have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage. This can be caused due to the upbringing of individuals in a society generally. We can also conclude from the graph that due to this narrow mind thinking, marital rape is still prevalent in parts of india.

LIMITATIONS:

Consequences faced for this research are , many of them were unable to spend time to fill the survey. The data is collected through online and offline mode. So some of them only respond to the survey while others just ignore it. Marital rape being a sensitive issue many might have been hesitant to attempt the survey.

CONCLUSION:

Based on the results of the analysis done here, respondents of age group 21-30 years are the most aware of the issue marital rape. They also show a good response on why marital rape should be a punishable offense which is the objective of this research conducted. Education also plays a part in the awareness of marital rape. From the analysis majority of the society haven't experienced marital rape and it has seen a downfall from previous decades or it can also be due to very less awareness and the lack of liberation to speak about the injustice. Fear of bringing shame to family is said to be the main reason for not filing complaints regarding the injustice. This shows that the society in general is still narrow minded and do not consider marital rape as not rape. The sample population with the highest educational qualification strongly agrees to all the solution for reducing marital rape. This way we can conclude that education does play a big role when it comes to finding a solution for a social problem. With the above analysis on whether women do have the right to have a say in sexual intercourse after marriage majority of the respondents have agreed to this statement. This shows that individuals are aware that sexual intercourse without the consent of the spouse is rape. Social issues are very delicate problems of society, utmost care and sensitivity provided will help us to find a solution for the problems. Successful societies are those that create conditions that lead to better health, well-being and resilience for individuals and communities. The reliability of evidence in marital rape cases is often a significant

challenge due to the intimate nature of the crime and the complexities surrounding consent within a marital relationship. Factors such as delayed reporting, lack of physical evidence, and the presence of societal stigma can further complicate the process of gathering and assessing evidence. To address these challenges, it is crucial for legal systems to adopt victim-centered approaches, provide specialized training for law enforcement and judicial personnel, and implement measures to support and empower survivors throughout the legal process.

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